

Shiur L'Yom Sheni¹

[Monday's Study]

READINGS:	<i>Torah Noach:</i>	Genesis 6:9-22
	<i>Haftarah:</i>	Isaiah 54:1-10
	<i>B'rit Chadasha:</i>	I Peter 3:8-17

The earth was corrupted in Elohim's sight, and the earth was filled with oppression.
[Genesis 6:11]

Today's Meditation is Ecclesiastes 1:1-11;
This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the *Gevurot*, the Prayer of His Powers.

Last week in the parsha of beginnings we read the chronicle of the first ten generations of mankind. We rediscovered the fact that *Adam*, the first man, sired three sons - *Kayin* [Cain], *Hevel* [Abel] and *Shet* [Seth]. Hevel, of course, was murdered by Kayin, leaving no natural descendants. Kayin and Shet, however, both established substantial lineages on the earth.

As last week's parsha drew to a close we were taken by the writer of Torah on a high-speed journey, fast-forwarding, as it were, generation by generation all the way from the Creation of the Universe as we know it to that infamous era we have come to call '*the days of Noach*'.

All we learned about the man named Noach last week however could be summed up in a few words. We learned that he was of the lineage of Adam's third son, *Shet*. We learned that Noach's great-grandfather *Hanoch* [Enoch], '*walked with God*', and then '*was not for God took him*'. We learned that Noach's grandfather *Metuselah* [Methuselah] lived a whopping **969 years** [the Biblical record for longevity]. And we learned that at his naming ceremony his father [whose name was *Lamech*] prophetically declared concerning him:

zeh yinachamenu mima'asenu ume'itzvon yadeinu
"He will comfort us in the labor and anguish of our hands

min-ha-adamah asher erarah Adonai
caused by the soil the Holy One cursed."

This one, it appears, is going to be '*special*'. But special *in what way*? Exactly **how** was his life going to *nacham* [i.e. *comfort, console*] mankind?

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Hmmmmn. **We need to know more — much more - about this man** – and about the part he is destined to play in the redemptive plan of the Holy One for mankind on the one hand, and for Creation on the other.

Fear not. Before this week is over we will indeed know more – much more - about not only this man named Noach, but also about the world-changing 950-year span of years in which he lived. Come along with the Rabbi's son and let us go **back to the future**, as it were - and explore the amazing secrets of the 'Days of Noach'!

But What Does the Story of Noach and the Flood Have to Do With Us?

Some may ask: "*How is that kind of information - about a character in ancient history - important to us a couple of millennia hence?*" Permit me to address that question.

First of all, if you believe Y'shua of Natzret is the Messiah then you should know that He taught that the 950-year period in which Noach lived is *fraught with prophetic significance*. In the Olivet Discourse Y'shua stated concerning the final days before Messiah's appearance at the end of day, "***. . . as the days of Noach were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be***". **Matthew 24:37**. Hence if we want to recognize the 'signs of His coming' and understand what kind of conditions will prevail in the world when Messiah makes His glorious *end-time re-appearance* we absolutely must understand the conditions that prevailed in the time of Noach.

Secondly, we will find this week that even beyond the prophetic implications, Noach's story has much to teach us right now concerning how we are to relate *to our families – to events going on around us – and to Creation*.

Our goal this week therefore will not be just to become more familiar with Noach, or more conversant with the details of the story of his life and times, or even more aware of the risks of surrendering the human will to greed and lusts. All of those insights will merely be by-products of our true goal. Our true goals will be to come to better *know the Holy One and to trust Him more, to acknowledge and appreciate His love for and covenant with us, and hopefully to draw closer to the divine destiny and purpose for which we have been brought forth at such a time as this*.

To help us accomplish these goals the Holy One has inspired Moshe to write a lengthy set of chronicles describing *the days of Noach*. These chronicles were

not written for Noach – or for Moshe. They were written for you and me. The Holy One wants us to see Noach, and the prophetic ‘end-times’ scenario in which he lived, through His eyes.

The Man Noach – Through the Holy One’s Eyes

This week’s Torah parsha starts by giving us a description of the man whose parents called him **Noach** [Noah]. The information we are given in the Torah does not describe the way Noach saw himself, nor explain the way his wife or children or friends – or even his descendants - saw him. The perspective and the insight that the Torah provides concerning Noach is not *human* but *Divine*. What we are told by Torah about Noach is how Noach was seen *by the Creator*. We are told how Noach – a man not unlike us – looked through the Holy One’s eyes of **chen** [grace].

Read these beautiful words, you who love the Holy One and who **sh’ma** the Holy One’s Torah, and understand – they describe how the Holy One sees *you*, as well:

Eleh toldot Noach

These are the generations of Noah:

Noach ish tzadik

Noah was a righteous man,

tamim hayah b’dorotav

faultless in his generation.

et-ha-Elohim hithalech Noach

Noah walked with God

[Genesis 6:9]

Note how the Divine perspective starts with “generations”. The Holy One sees *far beyond your present situation*. He sees all the *high points of your life* - because He planned them for you long, long ago. And He sees *even beyond your life* – to your children, and your children’s children forever. You who **sh’ma** the Holy One, and your seed, have the **chen** of the Holy One working in and for you.

Let’s look at this description of Noach – and all those who find **chen** in the Holy One’s eyes - phrase by phrase. We should not remember Noach as a man who built an ark and survived a flood; we should remember him the way the Holy One wanted him to be remembered: *As a righteous man, faultless in his generation, who walked with God*. Otherwise we will try to be like Noach by building our version of an ark, instead of emulating his character.

Essential Noachic Attribute #1: He Was A Righteous Man

First of all, we are told that Noach was a ‘*righteous man*’ - in Hebrew, ***tzaddik***, *tzade, dalet, yod, kuf*, Strong’s Hebrew word #6662, pronounced ***tzad-deek***². In Genesis 18:23 we learn that this means the opposite of ***rasha***² - the word we translate as ‘wicked’.

Biblically, we can say a ***tzaddik*** is ‘*righteous*’. But that does not mean he is sinless. It means he is ‘*justified*’. It means he has *no sin or blemish that is not atoned for, forgiven, cleansed and washed away*.

There is no way for us to make *ourselves* righteous. If we are righteous in our own eyes, we are ***rasha*** to the Holy One. He despises and rejects any form of righteousness other than that which flows from intimate relationship with and submission to Him.

So the righteousness the Creator pronounced over Noach was not based on great *deeds Noach did* or what great *sacrifices Noach made*. Nor was it based on how passionately Noach ‘worshipped’ [publicly or privately], or on how much time he devoted to study and prayer, or on how well he ministered in whatever giftings with which he had been blessed. Nor was it based on whatever degree of moral purity or cultural impact Noach attained or maintained. Righteousness, for Noach and for us, was found in and trusting in the Holy One’s goodness and ***chen*** [grace], and thereby surrendering to the Creator’s will, ***sh’ma***-ing His voice, and doing what He said – and *nothing else*. It was so in the beginning, and it will be so until the end.

Essential Noachic Attribute #2: He Was ‘Blameless’ in His Generation

Secondly we are told that in the eyes of the Holy One Noach was ‘blameless’ among the people of his time. The Hebrew word we translate as ‘blameless’ is ***tamim***, *tav, mem, yod, mem sofit*. The root word, ***tamam***, *tav, mem, mem sofit*, means *totally utilized*. If you have the ‘*pedal to the medal*’ in your car your engine is ***tamam***. It is ‘maxed-out’ in today’s vernacular. Noach – within the constraints that come with living in a totally depraved society - made himself ***totally available to the Holy One***. He served and worshipped Him with all His heart, soul, mind, and strength. He was, like ***Kalev*** [Caleb] in later days, *whole-hearted* in his devotion. He was fully engaged in his assigned mission.

² ***Rasha*** is *resh, shin, ayin*, Strong’s Hebrew word #7563.

Why? Because, I surmise, he had child-like faith that the Creator's way was always *the best possible way*. And because I believe his *heart panted after his Beloved*.

Some English translations use the word 'perfect' to translate *tamim*. This may have been a good translation in the English language of King James' day, but it is not today. Today the English word 'perfect' is considered to mean 'sinless', and 'without fault'. Noach was *not that*. But his passions and energies were consumed in his relationship with the Creator of Heaven and Earth. And as aforesaid he had no sins or shortcomings for which he had not received atonement.

Are you surrendered to the Holy One's plan to make you 'blameless in your generation'?

Essential Noachic Attribute #3: He Walked With the Holy One

Finally, we are told that Noach '*walked with God*'. What an awesome idea. But what does it mean? The phrase our English Bibles translate as '*Noach walked with God*', is, in Hebrew, *et-ha-Elohim hithalech Noach*. The Hebrew verb at the root of this phrase is *halak*, *hey, lamed, kaf sofit*. This is the word Torah used in chapter 5, verse 24, to describe the way in which *Chanoch* [Enoch], Noach's grandfather, related to the Holy One. It was said of Chanoch, he "*walked [halak] with the Holy One, and he was not, for the Holy One took him.*"

Walking with the Holy One is the easiest - and the hardest - thing in the world. It means that *wherever He goes, we go*. It means *whatever He is doing, we are doing*.

Y'shua of Natzret said '*I only do what I see My Father doing*'. That requires a *surrendering of self-will - a willingness to focus on the Holy One's every movement, and a cultivated sensitivity to His every verbal and non-verbal cue*.

Have you ever watched a couple of really good ballroom dancers dance together? They often seem to move as one. How do they do it? The man leads, and the woman follows. The woman learns to respond to the man's non-verbal cues and to flow with his movements. She *yields to his will* and as a result *flows with his movements*. *He moves, she responds*. After awhile she begins to *anticipate his movements, and memorize the steps*. But *she does not start any step until he does*. She *does not make any movement except in*

response to His movements.

That is what it is like to walk with the Holy One, Dear Reader. Think of your life as a ballroom floor. Let the Holy One take you into His arms. Start like a little child, standing on the tops of His shoes, so to speak, and letting Him drag you around like a rag doll. Then gradually start to respond to His movements one at a time.

When you begin to hear the music of Creation play, *I hope you'll dance*. Just watch the dips and try not to get dizzy in the spins. Don't step on your Divine Partner's toes - and He won't step on yours.

The Days of Noach – Through the Holy One's Eyes

After describing Noach the Torah proceeds to give the reader a thorough description of the condition of earth [Hebrew *eretz*] and mankind in the days of Noach. As viewed through the eyes of the Creator Torah tells us:

V'tishachet ha-aretz lifnei ha-Elohim

The eretz was corrupt before God,

V'timale ha-aretz chamas

and the eretz was filled with violence.

Vayar Elohim et ha-aretz v'hineh nish'chatah

God saw the eretz, and saw that it was corrupt,

ki-hish'chit kol-basar et-dar'ko al ha-aretz

All flesh had perverted its way on the earth.

[Genesis 6:11-12]

The Holy One summed up the state of the world which mankind had in 10 generations built out of His perfect Creation with three descriptive phrases: it was *corrupt*, it was *filled with violence*, and it was *perverted in its way*. Let's look briefly at each of these descriptive phrases in turn.

1. The Utter Corruption of the World Man Had Made

The word our English Bibles translate as 'corrupt' is, in Hebrew, a derivative form of the Hebrew verb root ***shachat***³. The word has the connotation of *decadence, perversion, destruction, and damage*. It is especially used to refer to the prevalence of the closely related phenomena of *voyeuristic obsession with*

³ *Shachat* is spelled *shin, chet, tav*. Strong's Hebrew word #7843, it is pronounced *shaw-khat*.

human sexuality and indulgence in idolatry (Rashi⁴). In Genesis 9 the verb form of this word is used to describe what the raging flood waters did to the plant life of the earth [Genesis 9:11], and to the flesh of the men and animals who died in it [Genesis 9:15]. In Genesis 13 and 19 the same word is used to describe what the Holy One did to S'dom and G'morrah. **Genesis 13:10; Genesis 19:29.**

The clear implication from the Hebrew is that in the ten generations since Creation man had not just *corrupted* the earth – he had **destroyed** it. A thermo-nuclear device could not have done worse.

Man's *pursuit of his own way* and his *obsession with his own appetites and lusts* proved to be the ultimate weapon of mass destruction.

2. It was 'filled with violence'

The second phrase Torah tells us the Holy One used to describe the world in Noach's day is **t'male . . . chamas**. Our English Bibles translate that as '*filled with violence*'. The word our English Bibles translate as violence in this passage is **chamas**, *chet, mem, samech*, Strong's Hebrew word #2555, pronounced *khaw-mawce*⁵. Strong's identifies this word with not only violence, but cruelty, and oppression, and injustice.

The word our English Bibles translate as 'filled with' is an ultimate form [hence the prefix *tav*] of the word **male'**, *mem, lamed, alef*, Strong's Hebrew word #4390, pronounced *maw-lay'*. This word means to *fill up to the brim, to the maximum*. The word is used in Genesis 1:22 to describe the proliferation of fish and sea creatures in the sea. Especially with the *tav* prefix it means *to fill [or be filled] too full to add any more*.

The world could not get any more *cruel*. The world could not contain any more *oppression*. The world could not bear any more *injustice*. Something HAD to be done.

3. It was 'perverted in its way'

The third and final phrase Torah tells us the Holy One used to describe the world in Noach's day is **ha-shachit . . . at dar'ko**. Our English Bibles translate

⁴ **Rashi** [Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchak of Troyes], was a very prominent Jewish sage who lived in France and Germany in the Eleventh Century - the era of the Crusades. Rashi is considered by many Jewish theologians as the greatest Torah commentator of all.

⁵ Note the similarity to the Arabic word *Hamas* – the name taken by the most violent arm of the Palestinian Liberation Organization/Palestinian Authority.

this as ‘*perverted . . . in its way*’. The operative verb is again *shachat*⁶. As we saw earlier, the word is usually translated as ‘*to corrupt*’ but literally means ‘*to so badly corrupt as to completely destroy*’. The word our English Bibles translate as ‘way’ is *derech*, *dalet*, *resh*, *kaf sofit*, Strong’s Hebrew word #1870, pronounced *deh'-rek*. This word implies *direction* and *manner* of travel or lifestyle.

The world was not just ‘messed up’ - it was *in the throes of a death spiral*. Unless something happened, and soon, man would self-destruct – and all the earth and its creatures – would perish.

Think the Flood was bad? Think of *the alternative*, Dear Reader! Now perhaps if you can picture *what the world would have been like without the Flood* you can begin the process of attempting to understand the Holy One’s *grace* and *love*.

Who REALLY Destroyed the Earth and Its Life forms in Noach’s Generation?

Many people think – and teach – that when He brought the Flood the Holy One - the Creator of Heaven and earth – turned upon His own Creation and destroyed all life except for the lives of the 8 human beings and the multitude of animals that got a ‘ticket’, as it were, on the ark. That is, however, only partly true.

The whole truth is that it was *man, acting independent of the Holy One, that really destroyed the earth* – and so corrupted it that it could simply no longer continue to exist without radical reformation. The whole truth is that the Holy One’s intervention was an *act of grace* – a painful but necessary surgery that was the world’s – and mankind’s – only hope of survival.

Do you understand now? The life that would have gone on – for a day, a year, or a millennium – but for the Flood, *would not have been a life worth living*. And man would not have – could not have – redeemed it.

So as you study the Flood do not think of the Holy One’s act in sending the waters as a horrible act of an angry, irrational, unapproachable deity bent on destruction. See it for what it *is* – an act of tough love wrought by a merciful Creator who is both hopelessly in love with the creature called man and fully devoted to that creature’s survival and fulfillment.

⁶ *Shachat* is spelled *shin, chet, tav*. Strong’s Hebrew word #7843, it is pronounced *shaw-khat*.

The Divine Apprehension of Noach - A 'God-Encounter of the Torah Kind'

The Holy One is not *aloof*, and He does not [except when it serves some specific purpose] make a practice of *hiding* – or concealing Himself - from mankind. The Holy One *pursues* mankind with passion, and *seeks to communicate and interact with* mankind in wonderful ways.

Much of Torah is therefore about '***God-encounters***'. In the Garden, at the threshold of Kayin's tent, in the field of Hevel's blood, and at place after place and time after time thereafter, the Holy One has apprehended and confronted man – and communed with him in life-changing ways.

I cannot imagine life without *God-encounters*. I hope you have had many of them. I pray that you will have many, many more in the future.

If you have not had one lately I encourage you to diligently seek His Face - and make whatever adjustments to your lifestyle and priorities it takes to make yourself available for Him to visit you and be sure He has your undivided attention. I am confident that *He will not disappoint you*.

The Holy One is, however, sovereign. He – and He alone - sovereignly chooses *when* and *where* and *how* to manifest Himself to and communicate with any particular human being or group thereof. We should not expect Him to appear on demand for us like a genie from a bottle.

Oh, we can *ask for* God-encounters. We can – and should – in preparation for God-encounters *humble ourselves* and *submit our lives to do His Will*. We can *lay down our ministries and our reputations and our priorities and our theologies and doctrines*, and just *trust in Him*. Once we have done those things however, only He has the right to decide whether to come to us as *a mighty rushing wind*, a *powerful earthquake*, a *burning bush* like Moshe's, or a *raging fire* like Eliyahu's [Elijah's] – or to merely manifest Himself through a *still, small voice*.

Make no mistake however, Dear Reader - the Holy One has a God-encounter - and probably a *series* thereof - in mind for you. When He comes, our job is to throw everything we have ever known away, prostrate ourselves before Him in worship, grab hold of the hem of His garment – and *not let go 'til His Will is perfected in us*.

Noach's first God-encounter is described for us in Torah. The Holy One – as always - initiates the contact. He says to Noach:

Ketz kol-basar ba l'fanai ki-male'ah

An end of all flesh has come before Me.

Ha-aretz chamas mipeneyhem

The world is filled with [man's] crime.

V'hineni mash'chitam et ha-aretz

I will therefore destroy them with the earth.

Noach could not call any human being to help him deal with this. Theology, doctrine, and opinion would not assist him. Man's advice or opinion simply did not matter.

Oh there are times for such things as advice and counsel and instruction of course. But legitimate God-encounters like Noach had make all such secondary sources pale in comparison.

Making B'rit [Covenant]

We have discussed, albeit briefly, the fundamental nature of the 'God-encounter'. The 'God-encounter' is the foundation of all spiritual revelation. And the capstone of the entire structure of revelation – that upon which every aspect of it hinges, is the ***b'rit***. The Holy One told Noach:

V'ha-kimoti et-briti itach

I will establish my covenant with you . . .

The Holy One does not, you see, just come to *converse with*, or even to *bless*, a man, or a woman, or a child. He comes, when He comes, to do something much more lasting and meaningful - He comes *to cut covenant*.

Failing to understand and appreciate that truth about the Holy One and His dealings with man, and to lay hold of the awesome implications of that truth, is perhaps the single greatest mistake of our world, its cultures, and its institutions.

A covenant [***b'rit***], you see, is not just a promise – it is ***a spiritual union***, like a marriage. It is something eternal, unchanging, and absolutely trustworthy and one hundred per cent certain and sure. It is binding in every conceivable way – not just legally, morally, or ethically - but SPIRITUALLY. A ***b'rit*** with the Holy One *changes everything* about us and our lives. It is *attitude altering*, and *perspective changing*, and *behavior modifying*, and *purpose- and priority-*

reshaping. It is that which gives substance and predictability to our relationship with God. It is more valuable than anything else we possess - or could ever possess - this side of Heaven.

Do **you** have a **covenant** with the Holy One, Dear Reader? Has He met with you and pledged to you not only His undying and unchanging love, but also the eternal protection, provision, and guidance, of your soul? Has He sealed this pledge to **you** with the gift of the *Ruach HaQodesh*, a measure of the breath of His own Mouth?

Has He committed to you the vastness of His resources, and the incomparable strength of His Right Arm? Have you experienced what it means to have an eternal covenant with the Creator of Heaven and Earth?

If not covenant, then *in what do you trust?* If covenant with God is not for you, then *who is it for?* If now is not the time for you to cut or renew covenant with the Holy One, then when is the time?

Every time you see, in Torah [or any part of Scripture] where the Holy One has cut a covenant with someone – Noach, Avraham, Ya’akov, David, Israel under Moshe, etc. – ask Him if you may be included – i.e. *grafted in* after the fact – to that covenant. Be careful in this regard however. Do not demand that the Holy One *change the covenant* for you. Do not *seek to replace those already in covenant*. Just ask humbly to be permitted to *share the crumbs from the table of the children of that covenant*.

And don’t forget to ask the Holy One to *seal* your inclusion and grafting into the covenant in question forever, with a *visible sign*, or token. Noach, after all, received a **teivah** [ark], and ultimately a *bow in the clouds*. Avraham received a *mark in his flesh* [circumcision], and a *son of his own loins*. Ya’akov [Jacob] received *safe journey*, and *provision*, and *blessing*, from Beit-El to Paddan-Aram, and back again. David received a *kingdom*, and a *dynasty*, and a *house*. The slave population redeemed by the Holy One from Egypt with a mighty Hand, an Outstretched Arm, and great miracles – as well as all who embrace the covenant of Torah that redeemed slave population received at Sinai - received the 7th day Shabbat and the ‘festivals’, and an all-encompassing empowerment to serve the Holy One as His Light to the Nations.

In this ‘engrafting’ process, the covenant the Holy One made with Noach is a good place to start. The Holy One covenanted with the father of Cham, Shem and Yafet as follows, saying:

*You are to come into the **teivah** [ark],
you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you.*
[Genesis 6:18(b)]

Ask the Holy One to give you your sons, your wife, and your son's wives [or daughters husbands]. But do not expect them to come where you do not go. Noach was to go first, and lead them in the Holy One's way – they would come WITH HIM. The Holy One then continued:

*Of every living thing of all flesh,
you are to bring two of every sort into the teivah [ark], to keep them alive with you.
They are to be male and female.
Of the birds after their kind, of the cattle after their kind,
of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind,
two of every sort are to come to you, to keep them alive.*
[Genesis 6:19-20]

Ask the Holy One to bring to you, as he covenanted to bring to Noach, such as He desires to save, and such as He desires you to be responsible for and serve. It is not your job – nor would it fulfill the purposes of your covenant with The Holy One – for you to go out and try to *save the world*. He will bring **to you** those He wills. *Pray* for them. *Watch* for them. *Receive* them. *Care* for them. *Serve* them. *Feed* them whatever the Holy One gives you to feed them. As the Holy One said to Noach:

*Take with you of all food that is eaten, and gather it to you;
and it will be for food for you, and for them.*
[Genesis 6:21]

And then, if you do these things regarding those the Holy One brings to you, the Holy One will 'keep them alive'. *That is His covenant promise.*

When harvest season comes, labor night and day – not to save the world, but *for the absolute privilege and joy of getting the opportunity to co-labor with the Holy One in the miraculous ingathering of that which He causes the earth to produce for you*. Work hard at your schoolwork, and at your job or vocation – not for the praise of men, or for a feeling of satisfaction, or for monetary reward - but in order to honor the One who gives to the man with whom He is in covenant wisdom and insight and the ability to produce wealth.

Whatever the Holy One gives you to harvest, harvest *with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength*. And whatever He gives you, share it with those He brings your way. *It will be food for you – and for them.*

That is the way covenant [**b'rit**] with the Holy One works.

Amazing Secrets of Noah's 'Ark'

The Holy One did not tell Noah to make a plan to 'fix' – or 'save' – or improve - the corrupt world in which he found himself. What the Holy One said to Noah was very specific. Torah tells us He said:

Aseh lecha tevat atzei-gofer

Make yourself an ark⁷ of cypress⁸ wood.

kinim ta'aseh et-ha-teivah

Divide the ark into compartments.

V'chafarta otah mibayit umichutz b'kofer

Caulk the inside and outside with pitch⁹.

The sages teach that the construction of the *teivah* [ark] occupied Noah for 120 years. The Holy One gave him the design, the dimensions, the material specifications, and the finishing directions. Noah had to collect and assemble two things - ***atzei-g'fer*** [gofer wood] and ***kofer*** [pitch].

Do you notice any similarity between the two components that the Holy One said were to be used in the construction of the *teivah*? It is invisible in English. In Hebrew however the root verbs for both ***atzei-g'fer*** [gofer wood] and ***kofer*** [pitch] are very similar. One is ***g'far*** [*gimel, peh, resh*]; the other is ***kafar***, *kaf, pey, resh*. Both have to do with what we in English call 'covering'. ***G'far*** [the kind of wood to be used] is a verb root meaning 'to house'. It was a kind of wood used in houses [or perhaps a tree large enough to make one's house inside of]. ***Kafar*** is atonement – *the covering of sins*. It is the root of the phrase 'Yom Kippur' – the day of atonement, and for the ***k'poret*** [mercy seat].

Noah was therefore to make a *household of atonement*. The ark thus contained a message - to Noah, and to all mankind. There is a house in which the Holy One provides atonement.

⁷ The word our English Bibles translate as 'ark' is *teivah*. Literally this means *a box*. The sages say this indicates that it did not have the shape of a boat (**Abarbanel**)

⁸ The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as 'cypress' is *Gopher* in Hebrew. This word is usually translated as cypress because it has long been assumed that the Greek word for cypress, *kyparissos* (from *kaphar* or *gaphar*), is derived from the Hebrew. Some commentators disagree, however. Arbanel considers it a species of pine, and Ibn Janach, based on Saadia Gaon, opines that it is a species of boxwood. The *Targum* renders the Hebrew word gopher as *kadrom* or *kadros*, which the Talmud defines as a species of cedar (**Rosh HaShanah 23a**). The Talmud itself translates *gopher* as *mabliga* or *golmish*, both species of cedar (**Sanhedrin 108b, Rosh HaShanah 23a; cf. Arukh s.v. Adar**). The Septuagint, however, translates it as 'squared timber.'

⁹ The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as 'pitch' is *kofer*. The word also denotes asphalt or bitumen. See Genesis 11:3.

When the Holy One instructs Moshe regarding the building of the *Mish'kan* [Tabernacle], He is going to tell Moshe to build it *according to a pattern* – i.e. to pattern it after what the Holy One had shown Moshe ‘*on the mountain*’. After *what* was the *Mish'kan* – with the *k'poret* [mercy seat] and its *ritual for Yom Kippur* [atonement] – patterned?

Perhaps it was same thing after which the *teivah* of Noach's covenant with the Holy One was patterned. In My Father's house are many mansions.

The Biggest Secret of All

Torah does not say that Noach was a ‘great man’ *as the world judges great men*. He did not build any cities, establish any institutions of higher learning, found any new religion or religious movement, or even fight any wars. He did not hold crusades, or perform miracles, or in fact have any visible impact upon society at all. He did not win a single ‘lost soul’ outside of his own family. But Noach had one secret of success that led to his deliverance, and the deliverance of his wife, and each of his children and their households.

Do you want to know Noach's secret? Noach's secret is contained within the final sentence of today's aliyah.

Vaya'as Noach k'chol asher tzivah oto Elohim

According to all that [the Creator] instructed him,

ken asah

so he did [asah-ed].

[Genesis 6:22]

To ***asah*** means more than to ‘do’. It means to interact with raw material the way a potter interacts with clay. It means to make visible and tangible that which was only spoken or thought or believed. To ***asah*** the Holy One's instructions means to build them into something visible, tangible, for all to see.

Noach did not only build a *teivah* [ark], you see. He was the first¹⁰ to build – and model – a ***sh'ma*** lifestyle. He did not do or build what seemed right in his own eyes, or what would win accolades of men. He did not initiate anything. He merely responded to the instructions of the Holy One. He merely *yielded to whatever the Holy One said*, and *submitted to whatever the Holy One willed* – whatever the cost.

¹⁰ Except, of course, for Enoch.

Alas Noach's secret appears *all but forgotten* in the halls of culture, philosophy, and religion today. Today by and large men live their lives in pursuing acceptance by and recognition from other men, and ask the Holy One to bless their selfish pursuits. Today men build ministries¹¹, schools and hospitals modeled after secular business and entertainment practices, and insist not only that the Holy One use them but that His people spend their money and all their spiritual energy to support them. Today the 'Lord's work' tends to be pretty much just another form of big business – from corporate identity to governing boards to mortgages and retirement plans¹².

Where is the man – or woman – or child – who will lay aside his/her agenda, reputation, and 'ministry' to *just do whatever the Holy One says*? Where, today, is there a man like Noach, of whom it can be truly said: ***According to all that God instructed him, so he did*** [asah-ed]?

People of whom that can be said do not come along very often. There may only be *one* in any given generation. Enoch was like that. Noach was like that. Avraham was like that. So was Yosef [Joseph], for most of his life at least.

Are **you** the one for this generation?

Questions for Today's Study

1. Let's get started on our study of parsha ***Noach*** with the following basic questions:

[A] In Strong's and Gesenius look up the word "Noach [Noah]". Write the Hebrew word and its Hebrew verb root. Write the definitions of the word and its root.

[B] Who was Noach's father? grandfather? great-grandfather?

[C] What three descriptions does today's Torah give of Noach?

[D] List Noach's sons. From which of these three sons are you descended?

¹¹ Please do not read more into this paragraph than is here. The purpose of this paragraph is not to condemn or disparage any man, ministry, or religious organization. Good people are often involved in ministries and often serve in religious organizations. The purpose of this paragraph is solely to point out that ***there is always a stark – and often glaring and irreconcilable - contrast between the ways of man, on the one hand, and the ways of the Holy One, on the other.*** As the Holy One pointed out, "***Your ways are not My ways***". So it was when these words were spoken. So will it always be. Surely we can agree on this.

¹² This is not to say that governing boards or mortgages or retirement plans are evil in themselves. It is merely to show that the model of leadership and organization which modern religion follows today is very clearly *a worldly model*, not the Holy One's model.

2. Now let's dig a little deeper.

[A] In Strong's and Gesenius look up the words "righteous/just", "blameless/perfect" and "walked" as used in verse 9. Write the Hebrew words in Hebrew consonants with vowel markings. Search out the Hebrew verb roots, and write those as well. Then, for each word and its verb root, describe the Hebraic word picture you see developing.

[B] In your Bible Dictionaries, and also in Strong's and Gesenius, look up the names of Noah and his three sons. Write these Hebrew names in Hebrew consonants with vowel markings. Search out the Hebrew verb roots, and write those as well. Then, for each of these names and its verb root, describe the Hebraic word picture you see developing.

3. After describing Noah the Torah gives a description of the condition of **earth** [Hebrew, *eretz*] and **mankind** [Hebrew, *kol-basar* (literally, all flesh)] in the days of Noah.

[A] List the various descriptive words/phrases employed in verses 11-13, to describe the earth (*eretz*).

[B] List the various descriptive words/phrases employed in these verses to describe mankind.

[C] In Strong's and Gesenius look up the words "*corrupt*" and "*violence*". Write the Hebrew words so translated in these verses [per the KJV] and describe the Hebraic word pictures you see regarding those Hebrew words.

4. In verses 17-22 of today's aliyah the Holy One makes the first covenant with man since the garden of Eden.

[A] With whom besides Noah did the Holy One make this covenant?

[B] Summarize the basic terms of this covenant.

5. Describe the "calling" of Noah as we read about it in Torah. In so doing state what you think the Holy One *called Noah to do*, what the Holy One Himself *promised to do*, and *how that division of labors and responsibilities relates to whatever "ministry" we may do in the name of God today*.

6. This week's haftarah readings are from the prophet **Yeshayahu** [Isaiah]. In chapters 54 and 55 Yeshayahu is speaking prophetic words of the Holy One over a group of people who like Noah and his family found *chen* in the sight of the Holy One and made a fresh start, departing from the "norm" of society. In Yeshayahu's case it was the remnant of *sh'ma*-ing Jews [primarily descendants of Y'hudah (Judah)] who returned to the land of promise after the Babylonian captivity. Only a handful of the Jews returned. Those who did faced a

seemingly impossible task. *The rubble* was so great, and *the enemies* were so strong, that it seemed hopeless I am sure. The only thing they had to rely upon was . . . *the Word of the Holy One*. And *that was enough*.

The same holds true for us today. Those who *sh'ma* the Words of the Holy One in the Torah are called away from all that is “normative” in our society and to trust only in the instructions and covenant of the Holy One to sustain us. In today’s Haftarah we find bread upon which to survive and prosper:

*Sing, barren, you who didn't bear;
break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you who did not travail with child:
for more are the children of the desolate
than the children of the married wife, says the Holy One.*

*Enlarge the place of your tent,
and let them stretch forth the curtains of your habitations;
don't spare: lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes.
For you shall spread aboard on the right hand and on the left;
and your seed shall possess the nations,
and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.*

* * *

*In overflowing wrath I hid my face from you for a moment;
but with everlasting lovingkindness will I have mercy on you,
says the Holy One your Redeemer.
For this is [as] the waters of Noach to me;
for as I have sworn that the waters of Noach shall no more go over the eretz,
so have I sworn that I will not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.*

*For the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed;
but my lovingkindness shall not depart.*

[Isaiah 54:1-10]

[A] Who is the “barren woman”, and why is she to sing?

[B] How are the days spoken of by the prophet “as the waters of Noach” to the Holy One?

[C] The words the Holy One speaks through Yeshayahu in this passage are words of covenant [*b'rit*]. What all is the Holy One covenanting to do [and refrain from doing] in regard to those returning from exile and starting over on a Torah-based lifestyle?

7. In today’s opening Brit Chadasha reading for parsha *Noach* the stage is set for the main passage which we will study this week. *Kefa* [Peter] will define for us the basics of what a true Torah-based lifestyle must look like to others. Here is what he says:

*Finally, be all like-minded, compassionate,
loving as brothers,*

*tenderhearted, courteous,
not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but instead blessing;
knowing that to this were you called, that you may inherit a blessing.*

* * *

*For the eyes of the Holy One are on the righteous,
And his ears open to their prayer;
But the face of the Holy One is against those who do evil."*

[A] Make two columns on your paper. Above the column on the left, right "do". Above the column on the right, write "do not". Using the appropriate columns, list the ways in which Kefa [Peter] suggests in verses 8-11 that people should and should not act toward [and in relation to] one another.

[B] How does Kefa [Peter] say we should react when people speak evil of us?

[C] In what attitude should we, even in evil and treacherous times such as these, discuss with others the Torah truths that cause us to have hope?

*May you, as Noach, find **chen** in the eyes of the Holy One.
May you come to recognize His Words as your life source . . . and your life mission.
And May all your generations be **tzaddikim** [righteous ones].*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

*The words of Kohelet, the son of David, king in Y'rushalayim:
"Vanity of vanities," says Kohelet; "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."*

*What does man gain from all his labor
in which he labors under the sun [Hebrew, *tachat shemesh*]?
One generation goes, and another generation comes;
but the eretz remains forever.*

*The sun also rises, and the sun goes down,
and hurries to its place where it rises.*

*The wind goes toward the south, and turns around to the north.
It turns around continually as it goes,
and the wind returns again to its courses.*

*All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full.
To the place where the rivers flow, there they flow again.*

*All things are full of weariness beyond uttering.
The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.*

*That which has been is that which shall be;
and that which has been done is that which shall be done:
and there is no new thing under the sun.*

*Is there a thing of which it may be said, "Behold, this is new?"
It has been long ago, in the ages that were before us.
There is no memory of the former;
neither shall there be any memory of the latter that are to come,
among those that shall come after.*