

# NOAH AND GOD: GOD'S GREAT PRESERVATION (SALVATION) OF LIFE GENESIS 08:01–14

## *Introduction*

Imagine the feelings and emotions of Noah and his dear family, the restlessness that must have gripped their minds and hearts. Is it even possible to imagine what they experienced?

=> Imagine being caught in the heaviest torrential rain to ever strike the earth, a rain so heavy that you could not see your hand in front of your face. Imagine a torrential downpour that heavy falling for forty days and forty nights upon the earth.

=> Imagine being caught in the middle of quake after quake — quakes so violent that all the subterranean waters broke loose and shot up from the caverns, rivers, lakes and springs that lie underneath the crust of the earth.

The forty days of the erupting earth and torrential rain must have been a terrifying time, a time so terrifying that the small band of survivors often fell to their knees, individually and jointly. Their hearts must have cried out continually for the mercy of God as they went about their daily duties of survival and of taking care of the animals. After the violent storm and eruptions of the earth for forty days, everything apparently quieted down to some degree, although the water still rose and still churned and raged on for a total of 150 days (Gen 7:24).

Noah and his dear family had plenty of work to do. Picture them caring for, feeding and cleaning up after the animals and after themselves. But keep this in mind: they were enclosed in a box-like structure, three stories high and 150 yards long, the length of one and one half football fields. They had to take care of the animals and themselves for 150 days, floating within the shell of the ark. They were bound to feel...

- cooped up
- confined
- restless
- shut in
- almost imprisoned

Here and there — sometimes — nerves were bound to become edgy and words sharp. Emotions were bound to be ruffled and feelings were bound to be hurt. The little band of survivors were believers, but they were human beings, sinful human beings who had been saved only by God's mercy and grace. They were, therefore, just like us, subject to such human emotions and feelings. There must have also been times when they wondered, "How much longer will the flood last? How much longer will we be cooped up? How much longer before God will deliver us and let us step on the earth again? And, what will it be like: no one left — no man, no woman, no child, no animal — just us, our family, the eight of us?" Imagine the thoughts that crossed their minds and the conversation between them as they sat around together after a long and hard day's work. Imagine the

---

questions, apprehension, anxiety, fear and perhaps even trembling. Just four men and four women left upon earth. Can we imagine their feelings, emotions and conversations? Is it possible?

Now, note the great message of this passage, for God saved this courageous family. God saved these eight souls who had been so courageous in following and worshipping God in the midst of an immoral and lawless society. This is the Scripture that covers *Noah and God: God's Great Preservation and Salvation of Life*.

I. Scene 1: God remembered and moved in behalf of Noah and the animals (vv. 1-5).

II. Scene 2: Noah's great patience and faith (vv. 6-14).

### **I. *Genesis 08:01–05 God Acts on behalf of Noah and the Animals***

There was the first scene: God remembered and — moved on behalf of Noah and the animals. God never forgot Noah. God is *Elohim*, the Almighty God, the Lord and Majesty of the universe who created and sustains all things. Consequently, God has perfect intelligence and memory. He never forgets. When Scripture says that God remembered Noah and the animals, it means that God cared for His creation, cared for the people and animals He had created. God remembered and thought upon them; He loved them and He was *now ready to act on their behalf*. His mind had now reached the point when His love and care was to be demonstrated: action was now to be taken; something was now to be done for them. God was not going to leave them in their predicament. God remembered them; He was now going to deliver them and save them.

Again, God never forgot Noah; He never forgets anything. But it had been 150 days since God had spoken to Noah; 150 days since God had instructed him. It was almost like God had forgotten Noah, for one hundred and fifty days is a long time. Imagine being cooped up in a box-like structure — the ark, a house, any place — for 150 days. Did Noah feel forsaken, as though God had forgotten him? He was the leader of the small band of survivors, the only eight people left upon earth. Was Noah feeling the pressure, being questioned by them, feeling the responsibility, feeling all alone, wondering why God did not meet him and give some direction? Any or all of this is possible, and most likely the feelings and thoughts did arise at various times during the 150 days. But now, God remembered Noah: it was time to act...

- to show concern and to have mercy
- to preserve and save life, both the life of man and of the animals

Therefore, God remembered Noah and the animals: He had mercy and compassion for them. How? God did six significant things for Noah.

1. God caused a wind to pass over the earth. Wind is “air in motion.” (*Funk & Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary*, Vol. 2. Lippincott & Crowell Publishers, 1980, p. `327). This particular wind, just like all else with the flood, was a very special wind stirred up by God to help recede the water from the earth.

- => Was a hot sultry wind to help increase the evaporation of the water quicker than usual?
- => Was it a strong wind to help move some of the water to its proper channels and beds?
- => Was it a wind to simply help dry the earth?
- => Was it a wind to help drive away and dissolve the massive clouds that hung over the earth?

We are not told. All Scripture says is that the wind was the work of God, a special wind created by God Himself to help recede the waters.

2. God stopped the subterranean water from pouring forth upon the earth. He closed up the caverns, rivers and lakes lying right underneath the earth's crust. God was demonstrating His mercy to man by stopping the surging forth of subterranean water upon earth.
3. God stopped the torrential rain (v. 2). The Hebrew word *yikkale* is emphatic: it means that the torrential rain was stopped; it ended. The rain no longer fell upon the earth. In mercy, God stopped the water from building up upon the earth any longer.

4. God caused the waters to begin to recede. Note when: after 150 days (v. 3). The waters remained at their peak for 150 days. Genesis 7:24 makes this clear. Now after 150 days the waters began to recede. (H.C. Leupold. *Genesis*, Vol. 1, pp. 306, 310-311). The commentator Victor Hamilton gives a clear translation of verse three:

*The waters returned from off the earth: they began to withdraw at the end of a hundred and fifty days (v. 3).* (Victor Hamilton. *The Book of Genesis*, Vol. 1, p. 299).

5. God rested the ark upon some peak in the mountains of Ararat (v. 4). What peak? What particular mountain did the ark settle upon? Scripture does not say; it uses the plural: *the mountains of Ararat*. This is the mountain range found...
  - in the present nation of Armenia or eastern Turkey
  - in the ancient Assyrian kingdom of *Urartu*

The highest peak in the mountain range is Mt. Ararat itself which towers some 17,000 feet high. Note that the exact date is given when the ark rested upon the mountain peak: on the 17th day of the 7th month.

6. At last, God gave Noah and his dear family sight of the mountaintops (v. 5). The Hebrew points out that the waters were decreasing rapidly, miraculously. God, in His mercy toward man, was at work. He was causing the water to recede so that Noah and his dear family could be saved and repopulate the earth. It was now the first day of the 10th month, two and a half months after the ark had first rested upon some mountain peak. Imagine their joy when they first felt the ark rest upon dry land, and now imagine their joy as they are able to look out some hatch or trap-like window. What they see causes their hearts to leap with joy, for they see the peaks of surrounding mountains. They know as never before that God is merciful, that He is

receding the water and saving them. This small band of believers must have done exactly what any believer would have done: praised God and rejoiced in Him for His great salvation.

**Thought 1.** Note that the exact time is given when the ark brought the passengers to safety. Christian believers are told that “when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His son...to redeem them....” (Gal 4:4-5). There was and is a preparation — a set time — for God's people to be brought to safety. (See note, Gen 8:6-14.) As the points of this note show, God remembers His people; God remembers every living thing. What He demands is faith and patience in Him as He carries us through the trials of this life and our coming departure from this earth.

**1 Pet 5:7** *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

**John 14:1-2** *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.”*

**Ga1 4:4-6** *But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.”*

**Rom 8:15-17** *For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit, that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

**Thought 2.** God delivers His people through the trials of this life. Sometimes the journey may be long and hard, even as Noah's was. But God still delivers us through all the sufferings of life, if we just trust Him as Noah did. This is the reason Scripture tells us to joy and rejoice through the trials of life: God delivers and saves us.

**Phil 4:4** *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*

**1 Pet 4:12-13** *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*

**James 1:2-4** *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,*

**Hab 3:17-18** *Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Saviour.*

**Acts 5:41** *The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.*

*Acts 16:23, 25* After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.....About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.

*2 Cor 6:10* Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

*Heb 10:34* You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

**Thought 3.** God can control nature, the rain, winds and storms of the earth. He can control all the trials inflicted upon us by nature or man when it is His will to do so, when it fulfils His purposes.

=> Think of this: how many storms — how many devastating acts of nature and of evil men — would have never happened if we had prayed like we should, prayed much and prayed faithfully?

=> Ask this question: if we truly sought God and walked with God as Noah did (see Gen 6:9), would God move on behalf of the earth and of mankind more often? Would He save us more often from the devastating storms and evils of life?

*James 4:2* You do not have, because you do not ask God.

*Mat 7:7* “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

*Mat 21:22* “If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”

*John. 15:7* “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.”

*Eph 3:20* Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

*Psa 65:2* You who answer prayer, to you all people will come.

*2 Chr 7:14* If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

*Isa 43:2* When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

*Isa 65:24* Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

*Jer 33:3* ‘Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.’

## II. *Genesis 08:06–14 Noah's Great Faith and Patience*

There was the second scene: Noah's great faith and patience before God. His faith and patience are clearly seen in the six events pointed out in the outline:

1. Note the great faith and patience of Noah.
  - a. Noah — in faith — patiently waited forty days after seeing the mountaintops before sending the raven out to search for dry land (v. 6).
  - b. Noah — in faith — patiently waited seven more days before sending a dove out to search for dry land. The time frame of seven days is not actually given in verse 8, but note verse 10. The Hebrew says that Noah waited “*another seven days*” and “*again*” sent forth the dove. This points back to a seven day waiting period for sending each of the birds out (v. 8).
  - c. Noah — in faith — patiently waited seven more days before sending the dove out again (v. 10).
  - d. Noah — in faith — patiently waited seven more days before sending the dove out again (v. 12).
  - e. Noah — in faith — patiently waited twenty-nine more days before removing the covering of the ark (v. 13).
  - f. Noah — in faith — patiently waited fifty-seven more days until the earth was completely dry (v. 14).

Noah's great faith and patience in God is unquestionable. This is the stress of these nine verses. Noah was trusting God and patiently waiting for God to dry out the earth so that he and his dear family could leave the ark and begin their new life upon the earth.

Imagine how difficult it was for them to keep waiting and waiting! They had been inside of the ark for almost a year, never even allowed to go out on the deck. They were bound to feel cooped up and confined, caged and shut in, almost imprisoned. And now, the water was receding: they could see the water level dropping and exposing more and more of the mountains and land every day. How excited they must have been! The urge to throw open the door and to step out on dry ground must have gnawed and gnawed at them. Yet how fearful they must have been, for they had no idea what lay ahead! The judgment of God had fallen and destroyed all life upon earth, both man and beast — all life except the few people and animals left upon the ark. What would life be like with no other people upon earth? What were they to expect — what kind of relationship with God — from now on? What would God now expect from them? So far as we know, God had not given Noah any new message or revelation since He had locked Noah into the ark. Excitement and a desire to get out of the ark were bound to fill their hearts, yes; but an apprehension, uneasiness, anxiety and fear were also bound to be attacking their thoughts and emotions.

But through it all — through all the mental anguish and emotional uneasiness — Noah trusted God and waited patiently upon God.

**Thought 1.** What a dynamic example for us, a dynamic example of faith in God and of patience with God! No matter what confronts us, the apprehension, uneasiness and fear could never match what Noah suffered. Yet, through it all he trusted and patiently waited upon God. May God grant to us the same faith and patience that Noah demonstrated.

**Luke 21:19** *“By standing firm you will gain life.”*

**Rom 12:12** *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*

**Heb 10:36** *You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.*

**James 1:3-5** *Because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*

**James 5:7-8** *Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.*

**Psa 31:19** *How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you.*

**Psa 34:22** *The LORD redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him.*

**Psa 37:5** *Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this.*

**Prov 3:5** *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.*

**Isa 26:3-4** *You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal.*

**Isa 50:10** *Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God.*

**Thought 2.** Note how Noah did not become impatient and run ahead of God. He did not rush the will of God. It was God's will for him to leave the ark, but when? What Noah needed was faith and patience in God...

- faith that God would clearly show him when to leave the ark
- the patience to seek after God and to wait until God did show him

This Noah did, and this we must do. We must have faith and patience that God will clearly show us His will and show us when to act.

2. Note that Noah waited seven days each time he sent the birds out to search for dry land (vv. 7, 8, 10, 12). This definitely points toward the Sabbath, the fact that Noah sent the birds out on the day already sanctified by God, the day of worship. Noah sent the birds out in *hope, great hope in God*. No better day could be chosen to send them forth than the day of worship. To have chosen the Sabbath day, the day of prayer and

worship, was only natural. We — every genuine believer who had experienced what Noah had experienced — would have done the very same thing: sent forth the birds in hope, prayer and worship on the very special day God had set aside for the worship of God. (See note, Gen 2:3.)

**Thought 1.** The significance Noah placed upon the day of worship should speak to us. How often we neglect the day of worship, the very day God Himself set apart for us to concentrate upon Him, to rest and seek Him.

**Gen 2:3** *Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy [set it apart], because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.*

**Exo 20:8** *Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.*

**Exo 34:21** *“Six days you shall labour, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the ploughing season and harvest you must rest.”*

**Isa 56:2** *Blessed is the one who does this — the person who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps their hands from doing any evil.”*

**Isa 58:13** *“If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD’s holy day honourable, and if you honour it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words,*

*Isa 58:14* *Then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.” The mouth of the LORD has spoken.*

**Acts 20:7** *On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.*

**1 Chr 16:2** *On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.*

3. Note several small details about the six events of this passage.
  - a. Noah probably sent a raven out because it was a scavenger and could find food floating or lying about more easily than most other birds. Note the raven did not return to the inside of the ark, but flew back and forth, probably resting on top of the ark. Noah and the passengers probably heard the cawing of the bird as it roosted on the ark.
  - b. The dove is a bird that stays closer to the ground than most other birds. This is probably the reason Noah sent out a dove in search of dry ground. If the bird stayed out, Noah would know that the water had receded enough to expose some of the low lying land.
  - c. Note the tenderness of Noah and the dove. When the dove returned, Noah put his hand out the hatch and the dove flew in and lit upon his hand (v. 9). A man who is tender toward animals is usually a tender man.



- d. Note that the dove did not return until the evening hours on its second journey. As the late afternoon and early evening hours wore on, how expectant and hopeful the passengers must have been! They thought the dove was not returning! The water had receded enough for the land to begin drying out and the dove could now remain outside the ark. It would not be long now! They would soon be able to disembark and settle upon earth! What an increase of joy and expectancy must have surged through their hearts when the bird returned with the evidence: a fresh olive leaf plucked from a tree (the Hebrew says that the leaf was a fresh or new leaf). The survivors now knew beyond a doubt that God had saved them. There was peace between God and the survivors of faith. Those who truly believed and followed God had been saved from the judgment upon an evil world.
- Thought 1.** James Montgomery Boice points out that this experience was so moving that the picture of a dove carrying an olive branch is the sign of peace even today. (James Montgomery Boice. *Genesis*, Vol. 1, p. 298).
- e. When the dove did not return on its third trip, the survivors knew beyond all question that the water had receded and the earth would now be drying out rather quickly.
- f. Twenty-nine days later Noah removed a portion of the top of the ark, looked out, and saw that the water had completely receded. The earth was drying out.
- g. It was 57 days later before the earth was completely dried out (see *The Flood*, Gen 8:6-14 for a chart on "The Time of the Flood"). ■

### GENESIS 08:06–14 THE FLOOD

The chart below is based upon the following facts. The calendar in Noah's day seems to be made up of 12 months of 30 days each.

=> It is said to be 150 days that the waters remained at their peak (Gen 7:24).

=> It is said to be 150 days — probably a period of 5 months (30 days each) — between the beginning of the flood to the time the ark settled on Mt. Ararat (Gen 8:4).

Both of these references seem to point to a period of five months of thirty days each. The following chart is based upon twelve months of thirty days each. This means that Noah and the other survivors were in the ark for...

- one year and 10 days according to the calendar year of Noah's day
- one year and 5 days according to today's solar year

### THE TIME OF THE FLOOD

*Flood begins. The rain and subterranean waters break loose: (2 months and 17 days)*  
Gen 7:11.

*Flood continues for 40 days: Gen 7:12.*

*Flood prevails for a total of 150 days: Gen 7:24*

*Ark settles on Mt. Ararat on the same day the waters begin to recede (150 days after the flood began): (7 months and 17 days); duration 150 days; Gen 8:4.*

*Mountaintops are seen 73 days later: 10 months and 1 day; Gen 8:5.*

*Raven sent after 40 days: 263 days; Gen 8:6-7.*

*Dove sent after 7 days: 270 days; Gen 8:8. See Gen 8:10.*

*Dove sent after 7 more days and returned with a tree branch: 277 days; Gen 8:10.*

*Dove sent after 7 more days and did not return: 284 days; Gen 8:12.*

*Earth's surface is seen to be drying 29 days later: (1 months and 1 day); 313 days; Gen 8:13.*

*Earth's surface is dried 57 days later: (2 months and 27 days); 370 days; Gen 8:14. □*