

GENESIS

Chapter 8

The Flood Subsides

But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. 2 The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, 3 and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated, 4 and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. 5 And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen. 6 At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made 7 and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. 8 Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. 9 But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. 10 He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. 11 And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. 12 Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore. 13 In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. 14 In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out. 15 Then God said to Noah, 16 “Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. 17 Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” 18 So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. 19 Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark.

8:1 So far the flood narrative has been an account of judgment; from this point on it is a story of redemption. (CSB)

God remembered Noah. Though he had not been mentioned since 7:16 or heard from for 150 days (see 7:24), God had not forgotten Noah and his family. To “remember” in the Bible is not merely to recall to mind; it is to express concern for someone, to act with loving care for him. When God remembers his people, he does so “with favor” (Ne 5:19; 13:31). (CSB)

Describes God’s intention to act kindly. When God remembers His people, He does so “for good” (Ne 5:19; 13:31). (TLSB)

Hbr *zakar*, “to recall” or “keep in mind.” God could not forget His covenant with His people. When He “remembers” them, He actively works to keep His promise to protect and save them. (TLSB)

and all the livestock – Wild and domestic animals were also remembered. (TLSB)

wind. The Hebrew word translated “Spirit” in 1:2 is here rendered “wind” and introduces a series of parallels between the events of chs. 8–9 and those of ch. 1 in their literary order: Compare 8:2 with 1:7;

8:5 with 1:9; 8:7 with 1:20; 8:17 with 1:25; 9:1 with 1:28a; 9:2 with 1:28b; 9:3 with 1:30. Ch. 1 describes the original beginning, while chs. 8–9 describe a new beginning after the flood. (CSB)

Start of drying process. First of a series of parallels to the creation events of chapter 1 (cf 1:2, “Spirit”). (TLSB)

It appears that ocean basins were lowered, bringing about corresponding shifts of huge land masses. This may very well account for the formation of our highest mountains, most of which are fossil-bearing, strong evidence that they were formed by the action of water. (PBC)

8:2 *closed* – Cessation of currents from below are necessary for the waters to abate. (TLSB)

8:3-4 Their mission accomplished, the waters returned to their place above or below earth. The grounding of the ark after 150 days was the first measure of progress. (TLSB)

8:4 *mountains*. The word is plural and refers to a range of mountains. (CSB)

Ararat. The name is related to Assyrian Urartu, which became an extensive and mountainous kingdom (see Jer 51:27; see also Isa 37:38), including much of the territory north of Mesopotamia and east of modern Turkey. The ark’s landfall was probably in southern Urartu. (CSB)

Exact location uncertain; probably the mountainous region north of Mesopotamia and east of modern Turkey. (TLSB)

We can see the Creator’s marvelous provision here, too. For a vessel as big as the ark to come to rest on an even keel in mountainous country is nothing short of a miracle. And the site God selected – near where three continents come together – could hardly have been a more strategic spot for Noah’s descendants to disperse to the east and west, to the north and south. (PBC)

8:5 *mountains were seen* – Although the tops of mountains were visible, Noah was not eager to leave the ark. (TLSB)

8:7 *raven* – Noah used birds to secure information. The failure of the scavenger bird to return tells Noah that there is more than blank waste of water outside of the ark. (TLSB)

to and fro – Perhaps from carcass to carcass. (TLSB)

until the waters were dried up – The ravens stayed in the area of the ark until conditions improved. (TLSB)

8:8 *dove* – More particular than a raven about a place to land. (TLSB)

8:9 *no place to set her foot* – Wet and muddy ground would not be a good place for a dove to land, nor would high altitudes. (TLSB)

8:10 *another seven days* – Same length of time allotted for entering the ark (7:4, 10). (TLSB)

8:11 *in the evening* – Delayed return indicated dry ground on which the dove could land. (TLSB)

dove came back ... freshly plucked leaf – Olives do not grow at high elevations, and the fresh leaf was a sign to Noah that the water had receded from the earth. The modern symbol of peace represented by a dove carrying an olive branch in its beak has its origin in this event. (CSB)

The dove brought a new leaf from a species that prefers lower altitudes. (Olive seeds would have had a few months to sprout after the waters began to recede.) This was God’s sign that the land could welcome and sustain Noah and the animals. (TLSB)

8:12 *another seven days* – Remarkable patience! (TLSB)

did not return – Testimony that the waters had for the most part subsided. (TLSB)

8:13 *six hundred and first year*. The date formula signals mankind’s new beginning after the flood. (CSB)

Based on Noah’s life. Emphasis on “first” signals a new beginning for humankind. (TLSB)

removed the covering – We must marvel at Noah’s patience of faith. Although he and his family had been confined in the ark 285 days, he waited still another month before removing a portion of the ark’s covering. (PBC)

Noah, though cautious as ever, concluded that the ark’s roof could be removed. (TLSB)

8:14 *second month on the twenty-seventh day of the second month*. More than a year after the flood began (see 7:11). (CSB)

earth had dried out – After one year and 11 days, the earth was dry enough for occupation. (TLSB)

8:15 *then God said* – Just as he entered the ark when instructed, Noah waited for word to leave it. (TLSB)

8:16 *go from the ark* – The ark was intended to be a shelter, not a home. (TLSB)

8:17 *swarm on the earth* The animals and birds could now repopulate their former habitats. (CSB)

Swarm means to “breed abundantly,” a word ordinarily used of insects. God’s words of 1:22 are repeated for a new day on earth. (TLSB)

8:19 The exiting from the ark was as orderly as the entering. (TLSB)

The detailed listing of all the animals and birds that left the ark once again shows the detailed concern the Creator has for all his creatures. It also serves to reassure us that despite less than ideal living conditions aboard the ark no species was lost. (PBC)

8:1–19 Noah demonstrates extraordinary patience and willingness to listen and obey God while confined in the ark for more than a year. People of faith do not always demonstrate such patience and often act on their own, even under less trying circumstances than those of Noah. But God is patient when His people are not; in Christ, He provides forgiveness and deliverance when His people do not have the patience of Noah. • Thank You, gracious Lord, for Your patience and forgiveness when we do not trust as we should and when we act on our own without patience. Amen. (TLSB)

God's Covenant with Noah

20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. 21 And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, “I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. 22 While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”

8:20 *burnt offerings* – Only offerings that used entire animal, indicating joyful thanks and complete dedication. (TLSB)

8:21 *smelled the pleasing aroma*. A figurative way of saying that the Lord takes delight in his children's worship of him (see Eph 5:2; Php 4:18). (CSB)

Pleasant because it was offered in faith and sincerity. Melancthon: “He was pleased with the sacrifice of Noah, his prayer, his thanksgiving, his praise, and his teaching” (Chem, LTh 2:569). (TLSB)

curse the ground. Although the Hebrew here has a different word for “curse,” the reference appears to be to the curse of 3:17. (CSB)

Never again will there be a worldwide catastrophe through flood. (TLSB)

the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. For almost identical phraseology see 6:5. Because of man's extreme wickedness, God had destroyed him (6:7) by means of a flood (6:17). Although righteous Noah and his family had been saved, he and his offspring were descendants of Adam and carried in their hearts the inheritance of sin. God graciously promises never again to deal with sin by sending such a devastating deluge (see 9:11, 15). Human history is held open for God's dealing with sin in a redemptive way—the way that begins to unfold with the call of Abram (12:1). (CSB)

“There is a distinction between man's nature and original sin. This applied not only when he was originally created by God pure and holy and without sin (Genesis 1:31), but it also applies to the way we have that nature now after the fall” (FC Eph. 1:2). Chemnitz: “There were not in the world at that time any other humans than righteous Noah and his family, and yet even of them he says (this word about evil) ...He is speaking not only of the thoughts, but of the make-up or imagination of the human heart” (LTh 1:288). (TLSB)

8:22 Times and seasons, created by God in the beginning (see 1:14), will never cease till the end of history. (CSB)

Positive side of God's promise (v. 21). Normal succession of times and season will continue until the Day of Judgment. (TLSB)