

## The Great Flood (Part 2)

God Commissions Noah

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If you will indulge me, I would like to begin this sermon by reviewing the most critical verses of the entire Flood narrative. These are, basically, the ones over which we have already gone; hence, the request for your indulgence. I want to look at a few more things that are in these verses. In my estimation, since these verses set the stage for all that follows (chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9), if you do not have a good grasp of Genesis 6:1-2, then you really miss the underlying reasons for why the Flood took place. These verses essentially give us the reasons for God's decisive destructive judgment on the pre-Flood world.

These first four verses contain numerous significant details, explicitly or implicitly instructing us about the true extent of humanity's corruption.

**Genesis 6:1-2** Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

For now, I just want verse 1, but I read verse 2 in order to complete the sentence. To begin with, verse 1 seems a bit strange when you sit down and think about it. The phrase *now it came to pass* suggests the passage of time. Usually, when you read something similar in a storybook, and occasionally in the Bible, *it came to pass* usually means, "after a while," or "after a time," or "after some years had passed." The question is, though, "How much time?" It is rather indeterminate. It is just, "after a while," or "after a time."

The next phrase helps to give us some idea: "When men began to multiply on the face of the earth." We have a bit of a clue as to how much time is passing. This phrase implies human reproduction—but not just reproduction. It implies population increase, multiplication, abounding—a lot. In other words, men were spreading to all parts of the world. It was not just that all of them were somewhere gathered in one big clump somewhere to the east of the Garden of Eden. It means that they had spread around. They had gotten so numerous that they had go out and inhabit the empty places of the earth. The idea here is that they had spread out to fill the globe by this point.

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We do not know how the geography of the earth was then, whether the same as today or different. There are some people who think that it was the plate tectonic "Pangaea"—one large all encompassing piece of land, undivided into any continents yet. By walking or riding a horse or something, they could go to any part of the earth at that time.

It is a safe bet to speculate that the writer means at least a few generations from creation. That is the time, after a few generations, when high birthrates would cause considerable population growth. It would take several generations before there would begin to be a big jump in population, but we have to remember that population actually does not multiply but is, rather, geometrical! You do not just add people. You do not just double their number; but after a time, it is exponential in increase. When you reach a certain critical point, suddenly the population will explode.

This is certainly the case before the Flood, when you had perfect climatic conditions as far as we know, and the earth was young with near perfect soil conditions, so food production would seem to be easier and of high quality. Then we add the fact that people lived to be 950 years, and they were able to conceive and have children anywhere from maturity on up to at least 500 years, because that is how old Noah was when he conceived his sons. That is the oldest recorded age for fatherhood before the Flood.

Thus, you are talking about the ability, within a few generations, to have a huge population explosion. Did I not say in that one sermon that there is the chance that by 1650 after creation (that is the Flood's date), that there could have been as many as 12 billion people on the earth? It just depends on all the assumptions. There came a time when the human population tipped over, and suddenly there was this spilling forth of children. That is the time that is being talked about here in Genesis 6:1.

The strangest part about this verse is the next phrase: *and daughters were born to them*. What does that mean—that up until this time there was asexual reproduction and there were only sons? Of course not. We know for sure that Adam and Eve had at least two daughters, because they had at least two sons who married, Cain and Seth. Of course, it says that they had many more sons and daughters. Josephus and several others say that Adam and Eve had 23 daughters. There in the first generation you have daughters being born to men. Then what can this phrase mean?

The first phrase suggests the passage of time. The second phrase delineates it a bit more closely to the time of the population explosion. Then there is this third phrase that talks about the birth of girls.

The simplest and most logical answer connects these phrases into a reasonable conclusion. The ideas are that 1) time passed, 2) population increased, and 3) females were born. What I conclude with my feeble brain is that Moses is telling us that a whole lot of women were available to marry—a bunch. Humanity had come to a point in its population growth when men, who had the power in a patriarchal society, had a wide selection of women to court.

Mankind in this time of what I call the tipping point had passed the point of marriage to sisters, first cousins, young aunts, and nieces. It had come to the point when a man could find a woman to whom he was not related in such a close fashion. Everybody knew that they all came from Adam and Eve. By this time, they had stopped worrying about marrying for survival and begetting children. They had come to a point in mankind's history where people lost track to how closely they were related and began to look at women in a whole new light.

This idea of people losing track of how closely they were related is another reason why I believe that this may have occurred about the same time as Enoch, who was in the sixth generation from Adam. If you set out to do a family tree, by the time you get to the sixth generation, you have people fairly distantly related from each other; by six generations, any two people would not necessarily believe that they were closely related. Add another generation to that and things get even further apart. Therefore, I think it was about the time of the sixth generation, maybe 650 or 750 years after creation, that this may have occurred.

We think, "Eight hundred years? Wow! That is 32 generations at 25 years apiece." Remember, though, in that day and age, when people lived to 900 years old, a generation might have been considered 100 years or so. We must look at things from their perspective just a bit. I just wanted to give you an idea of the timing. I do not want you to go into verse 2 yet, since that would take too long. I will leave that for another sermon.

At this point, what we understand is that there was a population explosion, there was this no more worry about being closely related, and there were many who were marrying for more than family survival reasons. We can take from all this that, by this time, they had gone beyond the pioneer stage of life in the pre-Flood world. They were very settled, and they were very prosperous and had time for leisure. They had time to let their minds wander. That is what happens when you become prosperous. You either have people working for you or your work is not as strenuous as it used to be, and you gain time for these other pursuits and endeavors. Some people do art; some do sports; some read and write; and some look at women. Verse 2 tells us that one of the reasons

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had to do with female beauty, but what that entailed and how Satan and his demons took advantage of it I will leave for the next sermon.

For the remainder of this sermon, we will pick up where we left off last time in the midst of Genesis 6, and I hope to finish this chapter today.

**Genesis 6:11-13** The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth."

Notice that these three verses split into two parts. In my Bible, they actually run as the end of one paragraph. Really, though, the new paragraph should begin with verse 13, not 14, because the first two verses (11 and 12) describe from God's point of view the corruption of the earth and the violence that was there. In the last verse (13) God is directly addressing Noah, which He does through verse 21. The break here is probably wrong.

What we have, then, in verse 13 is the introduction or the preamble to God's instruction to Noah concerning the work of faith that he would have to do. In some respects, verse 13 is to Noah what verses 1 and 2 are to us: It gives God's reasons for why He brought the end of the earth upon mankind. He does not take it as far back with Noah as Moses did with us. Moses gives us the reasons before—what caused the violence and what caused the corruption—whereas God just starts up with Noah talking about the violence. These are God's reasons for commissioning Noah as He does in verse 13.

As we study the Flood narrative and we go through all of this, please pay special attention to the universal or all-encompassing terminology that is throughout these four chapters. Many scholars, if you read their works, consider these universal terms as hyperbole; they think that it is just a big exaggeration. However, we know that God does not use words lightly. He tells us in Deuteronomy 8:3 and then in Matthew 4:4 that we are supposed to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Therefore, we need to pay attention to the fact that there are terms like *every*, *all*, *never*, and, in other places of the Bible, *forever*. Unless there is a modification to the term by a phrase or situation, *all* means "everything"; *forever* means "for all time"; *every* means "each one of its kind"; and *never* means "never, not ever."

These are important terms for our study, because they nullify the idea that this was a local, limited flood. If you say, "All the creatures on the earth died," how could one rather small flood limited to Mesopotamia, let us say, have killed every living thing on the earth? It could not have. That would mean that the *all* and the *every* in those phrases would be lies. "Not all flesh died. Not every living thing died, but only those that were in the flood."

It is the same situation for our discussion a sermon or so back about the mountains: all the mountains were covered to the depth of fifteen cubits. (Genesis 7:20). You cannot have it any other way. Either all mountains were covered, as Scripture says, or they were not all covered. Follow my logic: If one of the smallest mountains at that time was covered, that would mean that the entire earth was under water up to a certain point. You cannot build water up into a pyramid to cover just the mountain. It is going to seek its own level, which would mean that the whole earth was under water up to a certain point. I do not know what the figure is right now, but it only takes so many feet of water before the whole earth is covered—and it is a rather small number of how many feet of water it takes to actually cover the entire surface of the globe up to a certain point.

Pay attention to these universal terms and phrases. Unfortunately, there are many ostensible Christians and intellectuals who believe, holding to a scientific, rationalistic approach, that it was a local flood. In reality, this is only uniformitarianism: believing that all things continue as they were from the creation, as if it has just always been, "Slow and steady wins the race. Nothing catastrophic has ever happened like the Flood of Genesis 6." What this really does is dismiss God, His abilities, His providence, His sovereignty, His ability to intervene in the affairs of mankind. This is an evolutionary approach that essentially gives credence to conclusions of men rather than the very Word of God.

In this section (verses 11 through 13), we see a few universal terms. All flesh had corrupted their way—all; every one—and there is also the end of all flesh. Every fleshly thing was going to die. Even in verse 11, where it says that the earth was filled with violence, uses a universal term or phrase, as well, because all flesh had fallen into carnality and sin. The phrase *filled with violence* means "full of, filled up with," as if the earth were a container. It was full; there was not any room left for more corruption. It had gotten just about as bad as it was going to get.

As the *Living Bible* puts it, "Mankind was rotten to the core." Other translations use terms like, "violence was everywhere." There was no burg, town, or mountain village, no place anywhere that was free from the scourge of violence and corruption. To a limited extent, even Noah falls under this judgment. Because he was a man, he sinned; he was

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not perfect. He did things wrong. However, as verse 9 tells us, "he was the best of men of his generation." He was the best of his kind, the best of his generation. As it says in verse 8, he found favor with God.

Scripture says that he was an especially righteous man. If you look in verse 22, Noah did according to all that God had commanded him. Genesis 7:5 says Noah did all that God had commanded him. In Ezekiel 14:14, it says that Noah, along with Job and Daniel, was among the most righteous who ever lived (up to that time), and yet they could only "save themselves" by their righteousness—not really save themselves, but be saved because of their righteousness.

Thus, when God said "all," He means all. Even Noah was under that curse until God gave him favor. Because man was universally corrupt, as He said in verses 11-13, He would totally—another universal term—totally destroy mankind completely from off the earth. The only exceptions to that were Noah and his family, and at that only because they had found grace. They were saved by grace through faith, just as we are.

These next verses are memory scriptures for us, but I want to read them just a bit differently this time. I want to put these scriptures into Noah's day.

**Ephesians 2:8-10** For by grace [they] were saved through faith, and that not of [themselves]; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest [anyone of them] should boast. For [they] were His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that [they] should walk in them.

See? It works the same way for Noah as it does for us. It is really no different today. All humanity today is corrupt before God to some extent. The only reason that we have any hope of salvation, like Noah, is by God's unmerited pardon of us. Before our calling, nothing commended us to God, except perhaps our potential to listen to Him. He arranged that too, because He enabled us to believe.

We might be like Noah, the best of our generation. Who knows? We do not know God's judgment. I doubt it, but it does not matter. Even though we may be doing things as well as we can and we are mature spiritually, we have nothing about which to boast before God because it is entirely according to grace that we have any hope of salvation.

Consider this: Reading Genesis 6:13 again, think of this as God speaking to you instead of to Noah:

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**Genesis 6:13** And God said to [you], "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth."

**Genesis 6:18** "But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. [And every living thing of all flesh you shall bring into the ark with you, and then everything else will die.]"

Think about that. He said this to you. How would you feel if God appeared to you and spoke to you with this proposition? "Christian, I am going to kill everyone on the earth because they are so corrupt, except you, your spouse, and your children." How would you feel? God has seen all the wickedness on the earth, and He forewarns us that He will eradicate mankind from the earth through a disaster, except for you and your immediate family.

What would we feel? Awe? Surely. None of us hears God's voice very often, do we? Probably never. Surely, we would have a feeling of awe that God would appear to us.

Gratitude? Would we feel grateful that God chose us, to give us the opportunity of salvation and deliverance? Certainly! You bet!

Would we feel grief? I am sure that we would, because even though He would save us and our immediate family, there might be hundreds or thousands of people that we personally know, that we would grieve to lose, especially our more distant family members.

Would we feel separate and alone? You betcha! We would know without a shadow of a doubt that we were set apart. This would work both ways. It would be positive in the sense that we knew that it was God who was doing this and had put us into a different category and that He was going to help us; but on the other hand, we would be separated from all the rest of humanity. We would know—and as soon as we would start building that ark, everyone else would know it too.

What about humility and unworthiness? I mean, we feel that now, just by looking around and seeing the good works that other people do, who are maybe nominal Christians—but they do better works sometimes than we do, with what little they know. Of course, we would feel very humbled to know that God had chosen us, though very unworthy of it, because in our heart of hearts, we know what we are like inside.

Would we feel obligation? Absolutely! If God chose us out of all the billions of people on the earth, we would feel we should do whatever He says to the minutest detail, because our life was on the line and He saved us. Now we owe Him everything.

Would we feel motivation? Certainly! We would want to get out and do whatever He said to do. We would know that if we did not do what He said we are supposed to do, there would be no deliverance! The proposition came with terms to be met.

Notice again in verse 18 where He had established a covenant with them. A covenant is two-sided. God would do something, and they would have to do something, too. What did they have to do? Build the ark! If they did not build the ark, they would not be saved. Would that not motivate you, if you had to build the boat that was going to save you from the Flood? I am sure that it would!

I am sure that there are many other feelings and emotions that we would have as we began to think on these things a bit more deeply. I am sure that many of these Noah felt himself. Even in trying to imagine us in Noah's shoes, it is almost impossible to realize just what he felt at the time. However, of all people on the face of the earth, we should be most able to comprehend it. Why? God has offered us a similar proposition. It is not that there is going to be a Flood and we have to build an ark, but it is pretty much the same in a spiritual sense. He has graciously offered us deliverance from certain death.

Peter tries to get us to understand this in his first epistle. I would like to read a long section here to get the understanding of just what is going on, because, remember, God has given Noah a proposition to build an ark in order to be saved, but here Peter gives us an understanding of that God has offered us:

**I Peter 3:18—4:11** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

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that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Did you see what Peter does here? The apostle exhorts us to think about what happened with Noah in the Flood as a type of what occurs to each one of us through the process of salvation. We also live in a world like his, influenced by disobedient spirits who hate God and who also hate us; and we also live among the people of the world, who are neck-deep in the filth of the flesh, as Peter says here, or as John says, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. However, God has plucked us out of that world of demonic hatred and of sin; and He has allowed us to be baptized in water, which is an anti-type, as Peter says, to the waters of the Flood.

There is a difference, though. You see, the waters of the Flood, he says, removed the filth of the flesh through death. It wiped the earth clean through death. They paid the penalty for their sins through death.

Baptism is different. It does not pay the penalty of our sins—that is what the blood of Christ does. Baptism, Peter says here, is the answer of a good conscience toward God. Baptism clears our conscience and initiates us by a covenant into the life of Christ. The baptism and the blood of Christ go together. The effectual one is the blood of Christ, because of the great sacrifice, but going through the ritual of baptism clears our conscience. We need that physical thing, that physical activity because we understand it from a spiritual and mental point of view that God has forgiven us of our sins, but we need, because we are carnal, to go through a physical ritual like baptism so that we can

identify with Christ.

Remember what Paul talked about in Romans 6 and what baptism is? That it is a type of Christ's death and resurrection. We have to go through a very similar thing—we have to die, getting buried in the waters of baptism, and then we have to be brought up out of them as if we were resurrected unto a new life—and that clears our conscience. That puts a marker of separation between the life of sin that was and the new life in Christ. Thus, we are cleared.

The water does nothing. It does nothing to purge us of the filth. It is barely enough to get the sweat off us when we are in there. It is not that kind of purging. That is all done through the blood of Christ. However, the water does act as a means of showing us that we are clean. It is a ritual. It is a type.

When we come up out of the water of baptism, what are we to do? We are to live a new life. We are a new creation. Old things are done and gone. They are dead and behind us. Now it is our obligation to do everything that we can to satisfy God's requirements of us, to do everything we can to please Him, to do everything we can to do those works that He created for us to do.

As Peter goes on to say, having been saved (or, putting it back into the narrative of the Flood, having a seat reserved for us on the ark), we are duty-bound to live like Christ: to cease from sin (I Peter 4:1). Cease from sin and do the will of God, despite what others may think, as Peter says, even those with whom you used to run around and party. We have to be faithful to the One who saved us, to the One who offered us deliverance.

What do we do? Unlike Noah, we have no ark to build. What we do have to do is build righteous character. We have to build the mind of Christ in us. We have to begin to think and act like Him. We do this, Peter says, primarily through our relationship with God—through prayer, first of all. That is the first thing that he mentions.

What do you do (verse 7)? Since we are right here at the end of all things, be serious and watchful in your prayers. Keep that relationship with God pristine and growing. Do not ever fall back; do not ever let go. Then he says that we have to show love toward the brethren. What does this follow? It is the first great commandment, as well as the second great commandment. First you love God with all your heart, soul, and mind; then you love your neighbor as yourself. Then he goes on to break it down a little bit about being hospitable, not grumbling, and serving.

Those are the things that we have to do. Those are the things that build character. We

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build character by prayer and by absorbing the mind of God and His speaking to us through His Word. We build character by loving the brethren and serving them. We build character, but it is not easy.

Getting back to Noah and the work that he had to do once he had been given this great proposition from God, it says in Hebrews 11,

**Hebrews 11:7** By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

In one verse, Paul says the same thing that Peter said in about 15 verses. He condenses it down to the life of Noah. Think of this, not just about Noah, but about yourself: God's warning and instruction about this future unprecedented calamity motivated Noah to act in faith to build the ark, to ensure his household's rescue from the judgment by water that would condemn the whole world. It says that his act condemned them. That was the only safe place, and he built it. By saving himself, his wife, his sons, and their wives, he condemned the whole world—yet by doing so, by condemning the whole world, he also proved to God that he was worthy to inherit what God had promised those who live God's way faithfully. Notice:

**Hebrews 11:7b** . . . prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

He proved to God that he was worthy to inherit what God had promised those who live faithfully God's way.

What this shows us is that the story of Noah and the Flood provides a template for our own process of salvation. We can look at what Noah went through and then plug ourselves in there and see what we have to do.

**Genesis 6:14** "Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch."

Moses did not include blueprints in the Bible. It would have been nice, but he just had to

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write it down in words, and he had to write it very simply for us. However, he recorded enough information to give us a rough sketch, and we can fill in the "planks."

First, God told Noah to build an "ark." This is the Hebrew word *teba*. This is the same word used in Exodus 2:3, 5 to describe the floating basket of bulrushes into which Moses was placed and set afloat on the Nile River to be found by the daughter of Pharaoh. We have a little ark in the story of Moses, which was only big enough to hold the baby, and we have a huge ark in Genesis 6, both being called *teba*, or an ark.

*Teba*, the scholars tell us, probably derives from an Egyptian word *tebt* or *thebt*. In Egyptian, it was a large, sea-worthy ship or barge used for transporting large objects. For instance, they would go way up the Nile River, and they might find a nice chunk of stone of some kind. They would find a way to cut it out and bring it back down to the water, and then transport it back to Egypt proper, and they would use an ark, or *tebt* to do this.

It is a large, sea-worthy ship or barge used for the transport of large objects, like obelisks, or other royal needs and processions. The essential idea of this word is that it is sea-worthy box or chest, meaning it was box-shaped. Because it had the shape of a rather long and low rectangle, it received great stability to float. It was obviously a craft that would not founder in rough seas.

I have seen a few experiments done with various shapes of this kind. One that I saw was going down a river with strong current in which somebody had built up a mountain of rocks so that the ark would head right into it. What happened was that it came up and gently hit this mound of rocks and then gently swung around it and went on. Despite the turbulence of the river, it did not turn over but was very stable.

It was a very stable craft even in rough water. Remember also that Noah's ark was being designed for use in 40 days and 40 nights of deluge rain, with fountains opening up in the deep and elsewhere, and probably winds and other things going on. This shape kept it stable.

I should also remind you that it was probably flat-bottomed or nearly so. It was box-shaped. Remember, it had no need to sail; all it needed to do was float. God would see that it would set down where He wanted it to go. No need of sails, no need of direction, no keel, no rudder—it is a box.

Second thing: God tells Noah to make it of gopher wood. It is not called gopher wood because of some little rodent, but because it is only a transliteration of the Hebrew word.

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They left it untranslated into the English, and spelled it the way it sounded to English ears. It occurs once in the Bible; this is the only place in the Bible in which this word appears. The meaning is somewhat under debate about what this gopher wood is. There are two good possibilities, and I think the first one is more likely of the two.

The first one is that it might refer to cyprus trees and wood. Some say cedar; some say pine or some other resinous wood; but to me, cyprus seems to be the best bet. Cyprus is excellent for building watercraft because it is straight-grained, easily worked, very hard, and dense. Most importantly, it is very durable and resistant to rot. The doors to St. Peter's Basilica were made of cyprus wood, and they lasted over 1100 years. When they were taken down, there was no decay in them after 1100 years. It was an extremely durable wood.

Cyprus grew in great abundance in upper Mesopotamia and Assyria after the Flood. While Alexander the Great was in Babylon, he ordered a whole fleet built for his next adventure, and it was built of cyprus wood. Perhaps there was some in Noah's area before the Flood. We do not know. We do not know where Noah was before the Flood; the Bible does not say. Maybe he was close to the Garden of Eden or maybe not. He could have been a long distance away. Men had covered the face of the earth. However, he did eventually end up in Ararat.

Secondly but less likely, is that gopher wood might refer to a type of laminate, like plywood. They make trusses out of laminate nowadays, where they glue pieces of wood together with the different grains of the woods going different directions, and it provides a stable and strong piece of wood. I believe that this is much less likely.

Thirdly, verse 14 says that the ark was to have rooms or compartments in it. Literally, in the Hebrew, it says they were to have "nests" in them. This makes some sense because there were going to be thousands of animals of many different sorts in the ark, and they would need their own cages or some place for them to be housed for an entire year. Noah and his sons had to make hundreds of bulkheads within the ship. They probably also divided up the rooms into small pens of some sort or cages for all these various types of animals. What happened was that the inside of the ark was a virtual honeycomb of small rooms. This construction would have added capacity, strength, and stability to the structure of the ark.

I can understand, if the ark is still there up on Mt. Ararat, why it is still there. Cyprus wood and honeycomb room structure would mean that there was much more than just a frame of weak woods.

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There is more. The last thing mentioned in verse 14 is that it was to be covered inside and out with pitch. *Covered* is the Hebrew word *kapar*, which means "to coat" or "spread over," like we did at the priming and painting party. They used pitch, bitumen, asphalt, tar, or some other kind of petroleum-based product, which made it waterproof. We know that the Middle East is awash in petroleum. They had ready availability to it in places where it had seeped up to the surface of the ground in tar pits and such like. They could take up and use what they needed, coating the ark with it.

We know from this scripture that they used this pitch for sealing the ark, and in Genesis 11, they used pitch for mortar. They took bricks and laid them with tar. You know how sticky it can be. It kept out the elements.

The impression is that the ark was not just "caulked"; they did not use it just to chink between the planks or however the outside was done. Rather, there was a continuous covering of pitch over the entirety of the ark inside and out. Who knows? Maybe one year they put a half-inch layer on, and then the next year they added another, and so on. They had 120 years to complete the thing. Who knows how thick this stuff was and became? Not only that, but it was pitched inside also. There were two major layers of pitch on the ark. It was enveloped in a coating of tar.

**Genesis 6:15-16** "And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks."

How big the ark was depends on the size of the cubit that they used. Moses does not tell us that the cubit was so many fingers long or such. We do not know; we have to guess. We know that there were two or three or eight or twelve different kinds of cubits in use in the Middle East in ancient times. Egypt had its own; Israel had its own; and Babylon had its own. You could use a 17½-inch cubit, or an 18-inch cubit, and you could go all the way up to 22-inch cubits depending on whether it was regular or royal cubits and so on and so forth. We do not know. Most scholars tend to err on the side of conservatism and use the 18-inch cubit. I will, too.

If this is the case, we have a box-shaped boat that was 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet deep or high. Let us use our church building here for comparison's sake. This building is 100 feet long by 70 feet wide. The ark is just a little bit wider at 75 feet than this building is. So add five feet to the back of the building there. From the air

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conditioners all the way to the front wall is 75 feet. However, lengthwise, this building is only 100 feet long. This means that we would have to add 3½ more buildings of our current dimensions to the building we now have, another 350 feet. Also, this building is maybe 30 feet high. We would have to add another 15 or so more feet above the roof.

That was a huge undertaking! Think of it. We have 7000 square feet in this building of ours. That does not seem like an awful lot when we compare it to the ark.

I want to mention one more thing. You know the big ships that used to sail in the early 1800s with the full rigging and sails? The British had a 72-gun man-o'-war that was a huge ship. If you were a Frenchman, you would not want to be caught anywhere near one of these "72s." Well, the ark was more than twice the size of one of these ships! The ship that they used to lay the first transatlantic cables was the first ship of modern times to be larger than the ark of Noah. That was in 1870 or thereabouts. It was a huge, huge, huge box!

We find out at the end of verse 16 that it had three decks. What this means is that the ark with one deck at the bottom had roughly 33,000 square feet. But with three decks, it would be three times as much space, or roughly 99,000 square feet of floor space. However, it also had headroom. You did not use just the floor. You could, in many cases, stack these animals two, three, or four high. Remember that between the decks may have been 13 or 14 feet, but let us just count the full area. What we come up with is 1.5 million cubic feet of space inside the ark. This was so large that it is estimated to displace 43,000 tons of water and had a payload capacity of 32,800 tons. This boat would carry anything you wanted it to carry.

I forgot to get some details that I will have to remember for next time, about how many train cars could have fit inside the ark. It is astounding. It runs into several hundreds. Let us not forget that this was with the smallish cubit of 18 inches. It might have been built with the large cubit of 22 inches, and it would have been even more massive.

The ark had a window, actually probably a series of windows, perhaps in the uppermost cubit of the ark right below the roof or just under the uppermost cubit. From the way that it is written here, it is not certain exactly where. We do know that there was probably not just one window. There was probably a series of windows along the side to let in light. Life needs light. If they were going to be in there for a year or so, they needed the light for their vitamin D synthesis, and they needed to see what was going on. Thus, there was some sort of window to let the light in.

Others believe that this thing about the window in the ark, "finish it to a cubit from above,

" means that it was a roof that sloped only one cubit from the center of the ark. If so, the ark had a very shallow pitch to the roof—18 inches to 37 ½ feet. It is hard to know, though.

Whatever it means, Moses is telling us that that light could enter the ark through some sort of transparent or translucent substance. Now do we go so far as to say that could make glass or tempered glass? Remember that if you are going to have windows on a ship this big going through the violence of the Flood, it had to withstand 40 days and 40 nights of such a thing. The glass had to either be very thick or tempered somehow. Who knows how good their technology was? It could have been windows like hatches that were opened for light and air when wanted and closed when necessary.

There was also a door in the side, which had to be big enough to facilitate the loading and unloading of cargo, not just animals—and there were some big ones, too. It had to be able to take in the various foodstuffs for man and beasts, according to God's commandment. This had to be a fairly large door. It may have gone all the way to the bottom with no ramp on it, or it might have been a short ramp. We would say, "No! That part is going to be under water. We want the door to be up out of the water." However, we learn later in Genesis 7:16 that since God shut them in, we do not need to worry about whether it would seal properly or not. God made sure of the seal better than Noah could have done.

By the way, it is certain that they stored their heavy things on the bottom deck, because this was better for their buoyancy. With those things on the bottom, it kept their center of gravity low.

**Genesis 6:17-21** "And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every kind will come to you [keep that in the back of your mind] to keep them alive. And you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten. . ."

Not only did they have to bring the animals into the ark, but they also had to take of all food that was eaten. What does this mean? Did they have to take fruit trees and various

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of the agricultural things so that they could plant them again later? Perhaps.

**Genesis 6:21-22** ". . . and you shall gather it to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them." Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.

This statement of God's in verse 17 is actually reassuring. I know it sounds scary ("I myself am bringing the flood of waters"), but it is a really reassuring thing. What He is doing is telling Noah that the Flood will not be some so-called natural disaster; in fact, it is going to be a catastrophe directed by God Himself. That is reassuring because if it were some sort of natural catastrophe, well, anything could happen without any oversight and direction. However, with God's hand in control of things, Noah and his family need have no fear whatsoever that the Flood would accidentally swamp them and kill them.

God is saying, "I am bringing the Flood on the earth. I am controlling the water. I am controlling the wind. I am controlling the rain. I am controlling everything. Everything will go according to **My** plan. **I Myself** am bringing this flood upon the earth. I am sovereign. Everything will work out according to plan."

Then, God reassures them with this covenant by solemn promise to keep them alive and all the animals in the ark, too. What God is doing here is that He is trying to answer all of Noah's questions and doubts right up front. Remember, that this section took place about 120 years or so before the actual Flood occurred. God is going to give Noah plenty of time to get things done, but it is going to be a long time yet in the future. Maybe it was not a long time to Noah, since he was already about 480 years old at this time, but 120 years is still a significant amount of time. This was a future, unprecedented disaster; and God is front-loading everything here so that Noah would have all the answers he needed right away, to boost his faith, to get him going, to soothe his mind to keep any fears away.

He does what He tells us in Hebrews 13:5 and Joshua 1:5: "I will be with you, Noah, all the way through to the other side of this great Flood. I will not forsake you; I will not leave you. I would never leave you nor forsake you." God told that to Joshua, and He tells that to us, too. He basically told that to Noah here at the end of Genesis 6.

One last little point in verse 17: "the flood of waters" is from the Hebrew phrase, *ham'mabul mayim*. *Mabul* is used only in connection with the great Flood of Noah. This phrase means, "a flowing" or "deluge," but the underlying idea of the root word is,

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"destruction." It is a destroying flood. We could literally translate this phrase as, "I Myself am bringing the destruction by waters," which implies God's decisive and destructive judgment upon mankind. "I am doing this! I am bringing on the judgment that they so richly deserve!"

Speaking about those who do not believe in the great Flood,

**II Peter 3:5-7** For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water [that is what we are reading about in Genesis 6]. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved [this present evil world] by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Thus, there was a *ham'mabul mayim*, the Great Flood that was a great destruction by water. However, Peter says that there is another destruction, another great judgment coming, but this one will not be by water but by fire. Are we not in Noah's shoes?

**Genesis 6:22** Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.

The implication is that as soon as God stopped speaking and as soon as Noah's knees stopped trembling, Noah began to prepare and to work without delay. He followed every instruction from God in exacting faithfulness. He did not deviate one bit from his assigned task or any other detail. He did exactly as God instructed. Now there is a man of faith to emulate in these times!