

Following the Biblical Stream:

By Philip Busby

Last time, we talked about the instructions God gave to Noah for the building of a floating fortress of safety; and as we come down the verses of Genesis chapter 6, we come to verse 17, where God says, "And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of water upon the earth,..." Noah had been told the end of all flesh had come before God, but this is the place where God specifically tells Noah just how that would come about. God had started by telling Noah, He would destroy man "...with the earth." In the following verses, God instructed Noah to build a waterproof box for safety; and it's finally, here, in verse 17, that God tells Noah the destruction will come by way of a flood!

This verse makes it clear to us, this is no naturally occurring flood. God was not going to use a natural cycle of some kind to destroy a portion of the world. God says "...I, even I do bring..." We should also not miss the fact God said He would bring not just "a flood" but "...a flood of waters.." He didn't say water but waters. You see, water is water. It doesn't matter if the glass is half full or full, it's still just water. By saying He would bring "waters" upon the earth, God was referring to the fact He had separated the water during creation! In Genesis chapter 1, God separated the water below from the water above, creating an atmosphere for this planet. Then God went on to separate the water which was left on the surface of the planet into bodies of water so that the dry land could appear. What God was telling Noah when He said He would bring a flood of waters is, He would use whatever water from wherever it was in order to flood the earth and accomplish the goal. This was not something nature could do, this was something nature was completely prevented from doing by some of the very first commandments of God!

This information leaves us with the simple question we are so often left with if we really read the Bible for what it says, and that is simply the question of, do we believe God is what He tells us He is? Many people make the argument that Noah's flood was nothing more than a freakishly large flood still isolated to one area of the planet. This, like so many other things, is an attempt on man's part to deny or refuse to acknowledge God's ability. God can do more than just time what He does to coincide with natural cycles He knows are coming. God, yes God, brought a flood of waters on the earth, and the goal is clearly laid out as verse 17 continues. The intent was, "...to destroy all flesh," This tells us, God was not going to destroy the structure of the earth. Genesis 1 tells us, God created the heavens and earth, but the earth was void and without form before God introduced the elements which organized the planet into a living system. God's intent with the flood was not to destroy the form or order of the earth which He set in motion, but to destroy all the flesh. In other words, God was going to wipe clean the earth in a way which destroyed everything, but the system He originally established for life would remain!

Now, God goes on to be even more specific in this verse by going through a few more points about the flesh His plan was going to destroy. God said this flesh breathed the air in order to live, "...wherein is the breath of life,..." He also specified "...from under heaven;..." The corruption God was going to wipe out was contained on this planet. Thus, it would be the flesh of this planet that would die. God had created this earth and all its cycles for the purpose of creating man. Now God's intent was to wipe out the human race, and in doing so, all the living things God had created for man would die with him. This was an emphasis of the fact, there was no reason to believe, any plan, but the plan of God He was

about to give to Noah, was going to save your life. When this event was all said and done, there would not be open fields of green grass with cattle grazing. There would not be abandon fruit orchards to eat from, and the local fishing hole would not be waiting for you to come catch its bounty. To survive the coming destruction, you would have to do more than ride out the storm; you would have to be prepared to replant the seeds of life. The flood would be complete and absolute.

Then verse 18 tells us the exception which proves this rule. God says, "But with thee (Noah) will I establish my covenant;..." Noah was the man God established His covenant with, and this covenant would not be among men, it would be for men. God was setting a new standard of involvement! A great preacher once said "God will do nothing but in answer to prayer." This may seem to be true in many ways, and it's certainly true that God still allows man a free will. However, since the days of Noah, it has not been God's policy - so to speak - to be hands off except for those requests made by man. This covenant God was saying He would make with Noah was a covenant to tell us this.

It's fascinating how devoid of past knowledge and understanding the church has been in the past centuries. The anti-Semitic view of the Vatican taught many people that the Jewish people were rejected by God and that the "Christian" was the new chosen people of God. To this very day, many Christians are quite lacking in "Old Testament" knowledge, believing only the "New Testament" is of importance. This is truly odd in light of the fact Jews have a tremendous law to study which was given directly to them and which we would not even have available to learn from if it were not for them; yet Jews constantly talk about this covenant God made with Noah. The Jewish people understand that no matter how much they are to be living the covenant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that covenant only exists by being built on the covenant God made with Noah because that covenant was made with the only surviving man and his family from the other side of the flood! The importance of which is, he is our connection to Adam and the covenant God made by creating mankind. Many Christians may fall for the idea that the covenant God made with Abraham was and/or is only for the Jew, but how do we explain the lack of interest in the covenant which predates that covenant made with the patriarch of the world?

This covenant God made with Noah is actually much the same as the one He made with Abraham, from the standpoint that it's a living covenant. It was not just about the fact Noah needed to make it to the other side of this flood, but that he needed to know where to go from there. When man sinned and was driven from the Garden of

Eden, he began to learn things through trial and error - so to speak. This is the story of Cain and Abel's offering to God. Cain brought an offering of plant increase. Was this appropriate? Yes. How do we know this for sure? By the simple fact that God commands the children of Israel to bring the first fruits of their fields to Him! In fact, nothing of the new harvest was to be eaten in Israel until the feast, held in the first month of the God commanded calendar, simply called "First Fruits." At this Feast, the first sheaves of the earliest harvest would be brought to the temple and offered before God. In fact, this feast is the feast laid out by God Himself to represent the resurrection of Christ. The only reason more Christians don't know this is because they celebrate the pagan overlain holy day commanded by the Vatican instead.

Now, what did Cain's brother bring? Abel brought a lamb; and because the lamb was a blood sacrifice, it was consumed by God. This fact was not laid out in a law, but it was a truth nonetheless. You see, a lamb is a sixth day creation. It's not equal to a man but is in the same flesh category. Thus, Abel's lamb was a good representative of the truth that the wages of our sin is death; but if we give ourselves to the Lord, He will take us unto Himself! (Rom. 6:23) What Cain and Abel learned that day is that plant offerings and blood offerings are treated differently. One is representative of the work of our hands, and the other is representative of our lives. Both should be given to God! The problem is, Cain was upset about this for the simple fact it was his brother's and not his offering which received the attention he wanted. This shows us just how fast man fell deeper and deeper into the jaws of sin before the flood. Now, God would make a covenant with Noah and his family to intervene in man's existence by laying out His laws and giving us the choice to see Him through those laws. This is - for lack of a better term - a less organic approach, because before the flood, man had come to the place where he was learning nothing from God because men simply ceased to care about those simple everyday fellowship with God moments. If you bring no offering, if you lift up no worship, if you take no time to have a conversation with God, then you receive nothing, you find nothing, and no doors are opened to you. However, the covenant God made with Noah would mean God's knowledge would be more and more right in front of us. It will always be our choice to seek a personal relationship with God and seek His ways directly; but through the covenants God made with men like Noah and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, He would put more and more of His ways out into the world for our viewing and consideration even if we never take the time to seek it for ourselves.

This, of course, began with the building of the ark itself. Noah's ark would not be built over and over as the sacrifices at the temple would be offered over and over and

Divorce & Remarriage

Part I

From Living Springs' Questions and Answers

My boyfriend and I have known each other for a few years, and we have been in a committed relationship for the past several months. He is divorced, and I have been separated for a couple of years. Now, my boyfriend and I have spoken of spending the rest of our lives together, and just a few weeks ago I filed for divorce. After doing this, my friend informed me that the Bible says I am still a married woman and he can no longer have a romantic relationship with me. He just suddenly ended our relationship, telling me his decision was based on what the scriptures say. I explained to him I've read things in the Bible about "divorce papers" and I have already delivered these "divorce papers." I told him that if he was interested in someone else he should just say so and not suddenly tell me the Bible says we can no longer be together. Can you help me with this? Does he really need to stop dating me because of what the Bible says? Can you find anything in the Bible that says we have to suddenly stop? Does this make sense to you? I want to know what the Bible says about love and being true to your word. He told me he would always be there for me and never leave. He told me we would spend the rest of our lives together. Now, he tells me this! Doesn't the Bible say things about going against your word?

Nowhere, will you find a more complex subject than divorce and remarriage. The Bible is actually pretty clear on the subject; but because of why marriage exists and what it's supposed to be, sorting out what people should do in their particular situations can be difficult at times. Many people get themselves into a big mess before or because they do not know or maybe at times do not care about the truth. However, it sounds like your case should be fairly straight forward.

Whenever I get a question like this, I like to break it down into its most basic points. You laid out a line of questions in the middle of the facts you gave, and they are these: 1. "Can you help me with this?" 2. "Does he really need to stop dating me because of what the Bible says?" 3. "Can you find anything in the Bible that says we have to suddenly stop?" And 4. "Does this make sense to you?" The second part of your question goes into the idea of promises and words, ending with your direct question of, "Doesn't the Bible say things about going against your word?" So, what we have here are

five questions which I want to answer as simply as I can and also talk about why the answers are what they are!

Your first question is, "Can you help me with this?" The answer to this question is probably more up to your point of view than it is anything else. This question's answer is based on what you consider help. If by help, you mean give you advise you can use to get your boyfriend back, then no, I can't help you with that; but if you're asking me to help you understand why he said what he did concerning scripture, yes, I can help you with that. As for the issues which make you question whether there may be someone else, that speaks to his motives and only he and God truly know those. What I will say is, probably the biggest reason you are so concerned about his motives is because of the suddenness of the action. You used the word "suddenly" several times in your question, and it seems obvious that the abruptness of your friends decision has left you feeling stunned. It's likely you are trying to explain this feeling by suggesting there is another person involved. While there is no way for me to tell you this is not the case, I can tell you it doesn't really matter. That may hurt now and be very hard to accept; but the question you are really hurting over is the question we all ask to some degree when a relationship ends, and we were not the one who ended it. It's not just the broad question of why, but the question of what does this breakup say about me?

We want to know if we did something wrong or what it was the other person found in us which was so unacceptable they no longer wanted to be with us. Because this examination is hard, we tend to want to blame external factors for the breakup. Because people want to spare the others feelings, they will often give an external factor for why they want to breakup, instead of simply being honest, which often leads the person who did not want to breakup, questioning the honesty of the other. If we have a very short relationship with someone, we can often blow the question off with the thought the person did not truly know us. If they broke up with us for reasons which speak against us, well, they did not know us well enough to make a right decision, and it's their loss. However, when we have known the person for a long time, and especially if we have been in a close

relationship with them, we can't say this. We feel we have allowed the person to know us better than most people will ever know us, and the thought that such a person would reject us is very disturbing. This feeling is emphasized in no greater way than in the case of a "sudden" breakup. It's simply hard for us to imagine why a person who has been with us for so long can suddenly walk away for any reasons which are not mutually understood.

This is what you are feeling, and this is why you are questioning things like, is there another girl? The problem is, we just can't know for sure what the truth may be. Your friend may be a dirty rotten liar, but there is nothing we can do if that is the case. Further, there is the fact, if he is nothing but a liar, you are certainly better off without such a person in your life. What I can help you with are the next questions you asked, and those are the ones which deal with the real question here: and that is, can my friend's excuse for breaking up with me be the real reason? The answer to that is simply, yes! Why? Because your friend could be getting his advise from any number of ministries or people whom he believes know the Bible. If your friend truly believes he has heard good instruction from God's Word on the issue, he very well may have been compelled to end his relationship with you and do it as quickly as he could!

If this is the case, then your friend has done nothing wrong in ending his intimate relationship with you or in the fact he did it quickly. If we feel we are in violation of God's will, we should change our actions and there is no excuse to be dilatory about it! What it would seem your friend has done wrong is in leaving you behind with what appears to be very little effort on his part to explain to you what caused him to come to this conclusion. If he has learned something true, then he should be willing to, at the very least, attempt to share it with you; because this truth would apply to your life in much the same way it does his. However, we still can't judge your friend. He is struggling with an issue which is between him and God. If your friend truly loves you in the way you described, it may be just too painful for him to be with you and not be "with" you. If he feels it's wrong for him to be with you in the intimate way he has been, the temptation to do the wrong action may be just too strong for him to even attempt to have a friendship with you. The Bible tells us to, "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." II Timothy 2:22 It also tells us we must put God first in everything we do. (Mark 12:30) If we are going to live righteously, we may have to give up some things we love very dearly! Your friend may not only be telling the truth as

he sees it, but attempting to do the right thing in every way he understands.

All this is also connected to your last question about keeping your word. However, I believe a further discussion on that will mean more to you after we cover your other questions, so let's leave it for later. Your second question was, "Does he really need to stop dating me because of what the Bible says?" and your third question does not really need to be separated from this one. It was, "Can you find anything in the Bible that says we have to suddenly stop?" This is the big issue! Everything about where to go from here really hangs on these questions because this is the part your friend did not or could not stay around long enough to explain to you. Whether he is leaning on truth or false doctrine is of great importance to the way you move forward from here!

Because of the fact I only want to base my answers on what the Bible has to say and teach people where it says it, there is only one difference between these two questions for me. Again, it's that word "suddenly" you used in the second of the two, and we have already covered it for the most part. One of the biggest problems people have in our world today is they believe they can hold on to God with one hand while holding on to the things of the world with the other. One of the greatest explanations I have ever heard for why we should raise our hands in praise unto God is because when you surrender you put your hands in the air. You show you are holding on to nothing and become vulnerable to being searched. This is the way we should live our lives before God. If God convicts our lives of something, we should not put God off or tell Him we will deal with it in our own time. We should live our lives with our hands raised and open, dropping everything we are holding on to and allowing the Lord to search our being for those things we are still carrying with us which are unpleasing to Him. Even in a marriage where one spouse finds the Lord, that spouse must be willing to give everything to the Lord in spite of what the other one thinks. Again, our lives are first and foremost lived unto our Creator.

One of the most profound things about living this life is that we live in time. This means we put one foot in front of the other. What actions we will take in the future are entirely up to the choice we make in that moment not the decisions we made for that moment. Many plans have been laid without being realized because we simply do not take the actions we planned to take for one reason or another. Then there is the other side of time's truth which is, once an action is taken it's

in the past, and there is nothing we can do to change it no matter how much we may want to. That is the difference between sinning and being sinful: the moment by moment choices we make. We are not necessarily sinning at every moment just because we are corrupted by past sin. There was nothing Adam and Eve could do once they had eaten of the fruit God told them not to eat of. They had sinned, and they would have to suffer the consequences of that sin. So, they attempted to make choices about where to go from there. They did not do a very good job of handling their new circumstances, but where they really blew it was in hiding from the very God they needed help from to know what they should do next. (Gen. 3)

It may sound silly, but it's an inescapable truth that wherever you go, there you will be; and today is the first day of the rest of your life! Neither you or your friend can do anything about anything you may or may not have done which has been inappropriate before God up until now. That's just a fact. The way you change your life is to find the truth and base the choices you make from then on, on what you have learned. Paul puts it this way, "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Romans 6:2 The answer is, we cannot. If we choose to do wrong knowing it's wrong, we are continuing to live in sin, not being dead to it! If your friend believes he learned a truth about righteous living, he has an obligation to live by it immediately. (James 4:17) So, yes, if your friend believes the Bible tells him he should not be with you because he is a divorced man and/or because you are a divorced woman, he really has a need to stop dating you.

Now for the question I believe we have all been waiting for, what does the Bible say about divorce and remarriage? To understand divorce and the issue of remarriage you must first understand what God intended for marriage in the first place. This is a subject which is very confused in our world of political correctness; and this is, in no small way, due to our confusion about the place of sex in our lives. Our world today wants us to believe a sexual relationship is a necessary part of our lives, and because of this, we must find a relationship one way or another. Some would even suggest an adult without a relationship will go mad. While it's true a person without a relationship may go mad, it's not true that they have to! It all depends on what we are living for.

We need to be clear on the fact God's Word doesn't say things at random. It doesn't meander and tell us things which have no point. This means when God tells us the specific story of our creation and includes statements about His own thought process, God is trying to

help us understand something! In Genesis, God creates the heavens, the earth, light itself, and every living thing on this planet by speaking words. Then God says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:" Genesis 1:26 To do this, God reaches down and specifically forms man from the dust of the ground. Then God breathes the breath of life into that man. God had finally created the being for which all the other elements He had created over those six days was for. God created a man, and that is exactly what God had intended to do!

Now, it's important to note that when creating all the other living things, God had commanded those things to bring forth after their kind. He had created plants with seeds and animals consisting of male and female. They were to procreate and be abundant on the earth. However, when God created man, He only created one! What does this tell us? It tells us God created humans not simply as part of what we would call the ecosystem, or even as a functioning group. God created humans as individuals! This is a point which we, in our observation of the natural world, seem to miss. It may be our flesh's nature to see the world as a group, and God certainly teaches us to care for our neighbor, but God created individuals. When we live our lives only in the flesh, we, many times, act like animals; but God did not create us to simply follow the herd, pack, or flock.

It was only after the full and complete creation of Adam, and God's placement of Adam in the garden God had planted that God tells us His determination that it was not good for man to be alone.(Gen. 2:18) Some will tell you this is an edict to marry, but that could not be further from the truth. God was not simply looking for a way to make man a part of a herd. God determined man should have the chance to interact with other creatures in the flesh. This was not about procreation, it was about socialization, which, contrary to the world's message, does not include sexual relationships. This is why the immediate solution to the problem of Adam being alone was not the creation of another human, but the searching for a helpmate among all the creatures God had already made. In doing this, the point was made again that man was special. There was nothing among the animals which compared to Adam. His interaction with them would always be as a master. There was no equal. Thus, God's solution was to put a deep sleep upon Adam and take a piece of him to form another human. Eve was not a new creation as Adam was, she was exactly what Adam recognized her as being, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.(Gen. 2:23)

In determining the formation of another human from a piece of the one already in existence, was the answer to

man not being alone; God followed the physical pattern He had already laid down in creation. God not only created another human; God created the second human as female. This meant Adam could not control the population of the planet by dividing himself; but with a commitment to each other, Adam and Eve together could choose to share a part of themselves in a process which would produce more individual humans. Their offspring would also be a mixture of males and females, giving their offspring this same choice. The pattern God had laid down was not one which said every human must be married, but a choice to become one flesh with someone of the opposite sex, which comes with the possibility of creating a child who is literally a fruition of that truth. "Therefore," the Word tells us, "shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Genesis 2:24

The option of procreation was not given for the sake of pleasure in spite of the fact God made it pleasurable. The point of a physical relationship was not part of man's social structure or a necessity like food and water. It was so that more humans could be brought into this world, as those individuals committed to raising them wanted to do so, and this is not a choice which should be taken lightly. It's a serious commitment and responsibility to raise and nurture a child born to those who make the choice. This is what the institution of marriage is all about, and why the Bible teaches us that a sexual relationship should only exist between a male and a female who have made the commitment to be together for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer until death do we part. Children need this commitment, and everyday life clearly shows us this!

Simply put, sex was created for the purpose of procreation. Therefore, it has no place between two people who were not created to accomplish procreation. Sex was not simply created to be a physical pleasure. It has a purpose, and that is why it also should not be a part of any relationship where procreation is inappropriate even if possible. It does not matter what your "sexual preference" is. Incest, homosexuality, rape, adultery are all misuses of a gift God gave us for a specific purpose.

Does this mean people who are married have a responsibility to have children? No! What it means is that marriage is the appropriate institution for the raising of children. A man truly leaves his father and mother when he chooses to take a wife, and he, with her, creates a new unit. In this new unit, leadership roles exist and responsibilities are worked out and shared between the

two. They literally build a life "together," and together they are to ride out the good times and bad. This solid union creates an institution which can harbor offspring until they are ready to face the world on their own. Because marriage is the right institution in which children can be raised and nurtured, a physical relationship can be freely enjoyed between a man and his wife. In marriage, the prerequisites for the possible results of your physical relationship have already been met! The problem comes back to those simple facts of time we talked about earlier. No matter what we say we want to do, only what we choose to do moment by moment comes to pass; and that brings us to the issue of divorce.

Next time, we will discuss why God allowed a bill of divorcement in the law of Moses, and what Jesus had to say about that allowance. We will also cover what a Biblical divorce truly means, and talk about the contrast between Biblical divorce and how man's law sees divorce. This will further lead us into a discussion about how divorce affects our relationships with children and family as well as the future relationships we may choose to have with the opposite sex, which is the base of the question which was asked in this Q&A. Finally, we get to a discussion on what the Bible tells us about keeping our word, and the conflict which seems to exist when we make promises to do things God's Word tells us we should never do in the first place.

If something you read here causes you to have other questions or if you would like to receive teaching on another subject altogether, we invite you to visit our Q&A page at www.livingspringsinstitute.org and submit a question of your own. While you're there, you can also sign up for a FREE subscription to this publication by visiting the Shaqah section of our site, where you can also find all the back issues of Shaqah. If you would like to receive printed copies of this publication for yourself or to give to others, you will want to visit our Resource Shop as well. Thank you for reading, and I hope you will look for Part II when - Lord willing - we continue this Q&A in the next issue of Shaqah.

Until next time, may you gain God's strength to continually find and live in His will for your life!

Questions submitted to the Institute, answered by Philip Busby.

Following the Biblical Stream: continued from pg 2

as yearly feasts would be held year after year. However, the ark would be a very eye-catching illustration of God's salvation, and the truth God was explaining right from the opening words of His covenant with Noah. God had just explained in verse 16 that everything in the earth was going to die. That was the simple truth of the flood God would bring. However, the covenant with Noah was to bring himself, his family, and animals into the ark, "...to keep them alive with thee;..." God would expand on just how many of the animals he was to bring, but verses 18 & 19 are the basic facts of what needed to be done for life to even survive and continue on the earth. This is why Noah was told to bring himself, his wife, his sons and their wives into the ark. Noah was not told just to bring himself into the ark but his entire family unit. This would give the base needed for man to continue if he so chose. Now, we have covered in this study the fact the Bible tells us Noah was the one man who found grace in the eyes of the Lord. It doesn't say Noah and his family or Noah and his three sons. So, the question which may arise in some people's mind is, what would have happened if Noah's sons didn't want to go on the ark? Well, the answer to that, I believe, is seen in Abraham's family. At the time God made His covenant with Abraham, Abraham did not even have a son which is a fact that did not escape Abraham's attention! (Gen. 15) However, God told Abraham He would take care of this problem by giving Abraham a son even in his and his wife's old age. Of course, the Bible tells us Abraham and Sarah tried to take care of the problem by their own might, but God said only His provision would be accepted.

God's provision was the birth of Isaac, and then we see another answer to our speculative question. Isaac has two sons, but the elder son (Esau) did not care about the covenant of God for their family. However, his younger twin brother (Jacob) wanted it so badly he did not always use the most upright methods in order to get it. God could deal with Jacob's imperfections by teaching him the right way to go about things; but God could not deal with Esau's problem, because Esau was not interested in the things of God. Thus, God's covenant with Abraham went through the younger son and the elder was left out in spite of the fact he was a blood-born part of the covenant to begin with! (Rom. 9:13) If one or all of Noah's sons would have refused to go on the ark with Noah, God would have made a way. The beauty of it all is, while God will not force His ways on any man, or woman, God does know the future! This is a large part of the truth Paul was explaining when he talked about the fact, those God did foreknow, He also did predestinate. (Rom. 8:28-31) The covenant was with Noah, but the message was whosoever may come!

In the end, we find all of Noah's sons did board the ark just as God had commanded and the human race continued. However, just as God said at the time of creation that there was a need for more than just human life on this planet, so it was true on the other side of the flood. Thus, verse 19 shows us the covenant was a covenant of life as God intended it on this planet. God tells Noah he will also be taking on the ark, flesh of various sorts necessary for the survival of the animal population. This is why it is pointed out there would need to be male and female. Now, just as we talked about with the building of the ark, God is not very specific about just how this is to be accomplished and the details about what this means. What we see again is simply the laying down of the most basic concept. Noah is being given a chance to understand what God is trying to accomplish, so Noah is not just a slave following orders but a partner in God's plan. This is an exciting aspect to what we see in God's Word, and sadly one which we often missed altogether!

Even in our own lives, we can hear God's voice or read His Word and take what He is saying as simply overwhelming instead of taking the time to realize God is giving us a chance to see His ultimate plan. God is trying to make us all partners in His plan for human existence, not overwhelm us with more than is individually possible. This is why the Bible tells us that our strength is nothing, but with God all things are possible. (Matt. 19:26) It's not by our might or our power but by God's Spirit that the work is done. The beauty is, God wants us to be there with Him. This is why we need to become as little children when we come unto God. (Luke 18:15-17) We understand this from the standpoint of saying we need to trust like a little child trusts, but we do not often think about the exuberance part. Children know there is much out there to see and find, so they often want to go everywhere their parents are going and see what it is they are doing. Many children are so desirous to see and know everything, they get themselves into trouble. If only that was the kind of trouble we got into all the time: trouble which comes from being so exuberant about knowing more of what God knows! God chastises those whom He loves, (Prov. 3:11-12) and unlike the weakness of a human parent who can't often stop a child before they do something damaging, God knows how to direct us in perfection! (Rom. 8:28)

Now, unlike the construction of the ark, the next verses of Genesis 6 tell us some of the details about what God wanted Noah to accomplish with the animals. God tells Noah he will be taking birds, cattle and the creeping things with Him. This brings us to the question, if all flesh was going to die, if everything which had the breath of life was going to be destroyed, what about fish, and those things which live in the water that are not fish, such as whales? Well, all those things were in the hand of God. Again, God was making Noah a partner in His plan. Jesus

told His disciples to go into all the world, (Mark 16) but the handful of men standing there hearing those words could never have talked to every living human on the planet! We, many times, think the answer to this dilemma is the aspect of time. We talk about how later generations would go deeper and deeper into the uttermost parts of the earth, but people die everyday! Later generations of believers can only reach later generations of non-believers. The real answer is, God sent The Holy Ghost, and then as well as now, it was not by might nor by power but by God's Spirit that all men would be and are reached! (Acts 2)

It was God's statement that everything in the earth would die, and later as Noah waits to leave the ark, long after the rain had stopped, he sends out birds as a test. It was encouraging when one comes back with an olive branch, because it meant the plant life was returning. The world's system was disrupted in a severe way! Today, we see how even minor changes in environment can put species of animals and plants at great risk if not totally destroy them. Just think about a worldwide flood! There is no reason to believe that just because certain plants and animals live in the water anyway that they could survive the flood. However, Noah was not alone, and God would not put it all on Noah. Noah was told to take those things he could reasonably care for, and God took care of the rest.

Noah was also not given the task of taking every specific species. Noah was instructed to take "...after their kind,..." Now the animal population is so varied on this planet today that it's hard to even conceive what this would actually mean. How do you determine which species is the right base animal in each category or even what categories exist? When I think about this, I have to chuckle at the fact those who believe in evolution have been trying to figure this kind of thing out for a long time now; and if you go back through their research, you will find they have changed their minds many times. They love to say, "scientists now know..." but if you want to know what they "know," you'd better stick around because it changes about as often as the weather. Here again, it's good to state, God did not create the world by the process of evolution; a process like evolution could not have existed until God created the world! Also, God tells us in the creation process that plants and animals procreate after their kind. (Gen. 1) Noah could not take a horse and some day expect to have milk cows again, but he could take a basic breed of cattle and end up with several breeds which are more specifically suited for certain climates and uses than another. As to the question of sorting this all out, again, there was God. God tells Noah in verse 20 "...two of every sort shall come unto thee,..." Noah did not have

to sort this out at all. All Noah had to do was place in the ark those animals God sent to him!

Verse 21 tells us Noah was to take stock of all food that was eaten, and gather it unto him. Note here that Noah was not told to just take simple food staples with which they could survive. If it was one of us loading the ark, we would likely try to take just those foods high in nutrients which also have a long shelf life. We may not be very happy with the food available on the ark, especially after the first several weeks; but it would only make sense that we take those things which insure we still had something edible months into the ordeal! However, that is not what Noah was told. He was to take note of all the food the different living things ate and take those things with him. It was important that Noah sustain the food chain. Animals on this planet work together; and if Noah maintained a balance on the ark, he would see amazing things. Some of the creeping things Noah had on the ark would not have to be specifically fed if the cattle were fed right; and if the animals received the proper nutrients, there would be many baby animals living on the ark before it was all over. Noah's ark was more than just a rescue vessel of survival. Noah's ark was to be the kind of thing which scientists who desire to reach out into space can still only dream of. A living system was being built inside the ark; and Noah, with his family, was going to see and experience things many scientists today would give their right arm to obtain!

Chapter 6 ends with verse 22 where we go back to a very simple and basic fact. It tells us, after being told all this, Noah did not question or whine; he simply did, "...according to all that God commanded him, ..." Noah listened to the instructions of God; and as overwhelming as many of those instructions must have seemed, he moved forward. This verse starts with the words, "Thus did Noah..." and ends with the words, "...so did he." Noah put his hand to the work God had asked him to do; and as impossible as that work was for one man, even if he had three sons and four women helping him, Noah accomplished the task.

For the true believer in the ways of God, living in this world will only get harder and harder as the world waxes worse and worse; but fear not nor be dismayed, for the God who created all things is on your side. The story of Noah shows us, even on a global scale, Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world! (I John 4:4)

Until next time, Shalom!