

11-5-16 Message to Beit Adonai Yisroel – Noach
Torah Portion; Genesis 6:9-11:32 Noach (rest)
Haftarah: Isa 54:1-55:5
Suggested Acheron K'tuvim: 2 Peter 3:8-13

Be a Pioneer

Central question of this message: Will you strike out into uncharted territory when G-d calls you to do something that you have never yet done?

We are in the second portion of Torah today. Noach. Noach means “rest”, or “comfort”. It takes its name from the central character of this parasha – Noah.

Gen 6:9-12

9 These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.

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| בְּדִרְתָּיו | הָיָה | תָּמִים | צַדִּיק | אִישׁ | נֹחַ | נֹחַ | תּוֹלְדֹת | אֵלֶּה | 9 |
| in his generations, | was | perfect | just | a man | Noah | Noah: | the generations of | These | |
| 1755 | 1961 | 8549 | 6662 | 582 | 5146 | 5146 | 8435 | 428 | |

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| אֶת־ | הִתְהַלֵּךְ־ | הָאֱלֹהִים | נֹחַ: |
| with | walked | God. | Noah |
| 854 | 1980 | 430 | 5146 |

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| יָפֶת: | וְאֶת־ | חָם | אֶת־ | שֵׁם | אֶת־ | בָּנָיו | שְׁלֹשָׁה | נֹחַ | וַיִּזְלַד | 10 |
| Japheth. | and | Ham, | | Shem, | | sons, | three | Noah | And begat | |
| 3315 | 853 | 2526 | 853 | 8035 | 853 | 1121 | 7969 | 5146 | 3205 | |

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| חַמָּס: | הָאָרֶץ | וַתִּמְלֵא | הָאֱלֹהִים | לִפְנֵי | הָאָרֶץ | וַתִּשְׁחָת |
| violence. | the earth | and was filled with | God, | before | The earth | also was corrupt |
| 2555 | 776 | 4390 | 430 | 6440 | 776 | 7843 |

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| כִּי־ | נִשְׁחָתָה | וַהֲגִה | הָאָרֶץ | אֶת־ | אֱלֹהִים | וַיִּרְא | 12 |
| for | it was corrupt; | and, behold, | the earth, | | God | And looked upon | |
| 3588 | 7843 | 2009 | 776 | 853 | 430 | 7200 | |

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|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| הַשָּׁמַיִם | כָּל־ | בְּשָׂר | אֶת־ | וַדְּבַר | עַל־ | הָאָרֶץ: ם |
| had corrupted | all | flesh | | his way | upon | the earth. |
| 7843 | 3605 | 1320 | 853 | 1870 | 5921 | 776 |

There are some interesting Hebrew words I wish for you to see in the opening passage.

Noah is described as a “righteous man”. *“Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.”*

In Hebrew it reads, “*ish tzadik tamim*”. The “*ish tzadik*” is easier, and we easily translate that as “man, righteous”. But “*tamim*” is not so easy.

[OT:8549](#) **תָּמִים** **tamiym** (taw-meem'); from [OT:8552](#); entire (literally, figuratively or morally); also (as noun) integrity, truth:

[OT:8552](#) **תָּמַם** **tamam** (taw-mam'); a primitive root; to complete, in a good or a bad sense, literal, or figurative, transitive or intransitive (as follows):

Tamim can mean “entire”, or “complete”. But it also carries with it the concept of “simple”.

Then there is the next phrase, which our sages have found very interesting. “*in his time*”. Literally, the Hebrew word *b'dorotav* means “in the generation of him”.

Our sages have speculated that Noah wasn't all that much of a tzadik, but that he was a *relative* tzadik, when compared with all the other people at that time. They say that if Noah had lived in the generation of Abraham, he would have been considered as “worthless”. That's a pretty severe statement, and it suggests that G-d “grades on the curve” when judging righteousness. Maybe He does... maybe not. I don't know.

But it does remind me of a joke. Two hunters are out hunting bears. One is older and wiser, and the other is younger and more vigorous. The older man is the guide, and the younger man is the hunter. They both have back-packs, a fanny-pack with lots of other gear, and both are carrying a rifle.

They see a huge bear and stalk to within an easy range for a shot. They are maybe only fifty yards away. At this distance, they see that the bear is *much* larger than they first thought. It is without question a huge animal, and the older guide is wondering aloud if only a single shot will bring down the giant.

They engage in a whispered conversation regarding how the younger hunter will need to take his first shot, then get ready to quickly take a second, or maybe even a third shot to stop the charging bear.

As the younger hunter was shouldering his rifle, ready to take his first shot, he hears considerable noise behind him, where the older man is standing. He lowers his rifle, turns to look, and sees that the older guide has removed his backpack, his fanny pack, and has laid his rifle across them on the ground just behind the younger hunter. The older man is even taking off his hunting shirt in an obvious attempt to be as unencumbered as possible.

The young man turns and with some youthful bravado says, “Even after all that, you won’t be able to outrun that bear.” The older man replied, “I know. Y’see, I don’t need to outrun that bear. I just need to outrun YOU.”

That, for you fans of theoretical physics, is a simple illustration of the theory of relativity. Was Noah “relatively righteous”? Yes.

It does seem that the remainder of the earth’s human population was, relatively speaking, evil, because of another phrase in the same passage

“11 Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.”

The Hebrew word that is translated as “violence” is *chamas*.

[OT:2555](#) **חָמָס** **chamac** (khaw-mawce'); from [OT:2554](#); violence; by implication, wrong; by meton. unjust gain:

And what had this *chamas* done to the world of perfection that G-d had created? It had spoiled it.

The Hebrew word translated as “corrupt” in the passage is *shachat*.

[OT:7843](#) שָׁחַת **shachath** (shaw-khath'); a primitive root; to decay, i.e. (causatively) ruin (literally or figuratively):

It carries with it the concept of decay. What does something that is living do once it dies? It rots. It decays. That is how G-d described the creation that He Himself described as “good” in our first portion of the Torah.

How much of the world’s population was given over to violence and destruction of G-d’s creation? All. So, it might actually be that Noah was the “best of the worst”, as our sages speculated.

But Noah would prove himself to be in many ways much like Abraham, whose obedience was “reckoned to him as righteousness” (see Gen 15:6).

Noah wasn’t summoned to take a three-day journey to a place he’d never been before. Noah was summoned to create a massive structure which had never yet been built on the earth, and prepare it to withstand a storm which had never yet come upon the earth.

My best guess is that it took somewhere between 55 to 75 years (maximum) to build the ark (see <https://answersingenesis.org/bible-timeline/how-long-did-it-take-for-noah-to-build-the-ark/>). Since Noah is already 500 years old when he is first mentioned in the Bible (Gen 5:32), and since Noah entered the ark when he was 600 years old (Gen 7:11-13), the absolute maximum time it could have taken was 100 years.

And so, it is safe to say that during this entire time, Noah was “off the map”, in unexplored spiritual territory.

There have been a number of movies which have attempted to dramatize what happened during the building of the ark with regard to the other people on the earth. Most of them make me angry at some point, because they do violence to the true story. But one thing I think they get right is the way they characterized those in that society who viewed Noah, and his work. And that is with scorn and derision. I believe the people mocked him, and at the same time mocked G-d.

So, as Noah built the ark of gopher wood, maybe as an entire generation was born and grew up seeing it being built, what separated Noah from those people?

What made Noah “entire”, “complete”, or even “simple”? We also find that answer in the passage, *“Noah walked with God.”*

I suspect that Noah’s construction project began to be quite the tourist attraction of that day. Families would come from great distances to come sit on a hill overlooking Noah’s land, and eat picnic lunches as they watched the family working on this strange structure.

I suspect that some families would make this a regular vacation stop, on their way to other attractions, such as the theme park called “No flags over Texas”.

I even expect that there were some who tried to engage Noah or his family in conversations about what this structure was, what it was for, and the like. I am pretty certain that many of them even inquired about the G-d that had instructed Noah to do all this. And if they inquired, I suspect Noah witnessed.

But the Scriptures are silent regarding a great revival which took place because of Noah’s witness. I believe it is silent because no such revival happened. In fact, I am confident in saying that not even one person outside Noah’s family came to faith, or came alongside to help in the work. Why do I believe that? Because not one other person outside of

Noah's family was allowed onto the ark before the flood came. And I believe that if any had come to faith, they would have also been saved (see 2 Peter 3:8-9).

We know that faith leads to action (see James 2:18-20). And so, can we compare the actions of Noah and his family with the actions of those around them on the Earth?

Noah and his family were busy accomplishing a gigantic task for G-d. They were doing something that had never been attempted before... something that had never been dreamed of before.

What were the people of the earth doing during this time?

Matt 24:37-44

"For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. 38 "For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. 40 "Then there shall be two men in the field; one

will be taken, and one will be left. 41 "Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. 42 "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. 43 "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 44 "For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.

I think we can safely say they were engaging in “business as usual”.
Why? Didn’t they believe G-d?

Please consider the wording of this passage from last week’s portion.

Gen 6:3-4

3 Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."

I do not believe that these words define the average lifespan of mankind from that day forward. It simply hasn't proved true, and Scripture is always true.

I believe that G-d announced that He had just started the count-down clock to total worldwide destruction.

I am not so certain that it's really a matter of whether they believed that G-d would destroy the earth so much as it is that they thought they had more time to make up their minds on whether to follow Him.

I think the people said, "If Noah is right, then we've still got time.", or possibly, "It hasn't happened yet, so Noah's god isn't real."

That is not a societal theme that is found only in the days of Noah. Shimon Cepha encountered it as well, and warned us to stay on-task for G-d as we saw the evil surging around us in that age.

2 Peter 3:8-9

8 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about His promise,

as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

And what was true when Shimon Cepha wrote those words is true today. The world around us is decaying, and the people of the nations are more and more given over to violence and corruption.

But the lesson of Noah, as carried on by Shimon Cepha, is this: Be a pioneer.

Our sages noticed that Noah hesitated in coming out of the ark.

Gen 8:14-17

14 And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. 15 Then God spoke to Noah, saying, 16 "Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you.

They imagined a conversation between G-d and Noah where Noah said that he entered the ark only with permission, and would leave only after obtaining permission.

“Then God said to Noah, ‘Come out of the ark’. ... “Noah said to himself, Since I only entered the ark with permission (from God), shall I leave without permission? The Holy One blessed be He said, to him: Are you looking for permission? In that case I give you permission, as it says, ‘Then God said to Noah, Come out of the ark.’”

Rabbi Rabinovich, an honored scholar who yet teaches in Yeshiva in Israel, said of this passage that G-d has already given us permission to rebuild a destroyed world. We should not await additional permission.

Our sages have understood this hesitation of Noah to be why G-d began the Jewish bloodline not with Noah, but with Abraham. You see, it is clear that Noah “walked with G-d”. But G-d told Abraham “Walk ahead of Me.”

Gen 17:1-2

*"I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2
"And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I
will multiply you exceedingly."*

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|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| אֱלֹהִים God; <u>410</u> | אֲנִי I <u>589</u> | אֵלָיו unto him, <u>413</u> | וַיֹּאמֶר and said <u>559</u> | אַבְרָם Abram, <u>87</u> |
| וְהָיָה and be thou <u>1961</u> | לְפָנַי before me, <u>6440</u> | הִתְהַלֵּךְ walk <u>1980</u> | שְׁנֵי Almighty <u>7706</u> | |
| | | | | תְּמִיִּם: perfect. <u>8549</u> |

Our people, it seems, have made a pattern of venturing into uncharted territory. It seems to be a characteristic of our culture.

The world may hate Jews, but they do love Jewish innovations.

They use Google, Facebook, cell phones, Windows operating systems, Pentium and Celeron processors, the USB thumbdrives, emails, texting and voicemail.

They wear jeans, wear lipstick, use ballpoint pens, adding machines, and give their children teddy bears.

They want to blow us up with atomic bombs guided by lasers.

But they can only do any of that because those have been invented by Jews.

I don't know what your particular challenge will be that will draw you further out of your shell, and have you do something new for G-d. But trust me, it will come. And it may come very soon.

Moses the wanted murderer had to leave the familiar flocks of Midian behind, and go back to Egypt to bring out the people.

Jonah didn't want to go to preach a revival message to Nineveh.

David stood before Goliath with *five* stones.

Alex Yalenga put his life on the line when he witnessed to an Imam about the G-d of Israel.

Each of these followed in the steps of Noah, who kept going for wood, and building something that nobody had ever seen before, in preparation for a day that had never been seen before.

Albert Einstein faced universal criticism. He said, "If my theory of relativity is proven successful, Germany will claim me as a German and France will declare me a citizen of the world. Should my theory prove

untrue, France will say that I am a German, and Germany will declare that I am a Jew.”

Do you face criticism? Do you face opposition? Is the world against you? Good. That might just mean you are following G-d’s plan for your life. You are in good company.

The size of a person is measured by the size of that which can turn him from his purpose.

If your purpose is to serve G-d, and to advance His kingdom, then be bigger than anything that stands in your way.

These are the days of Noah. I firmly believe that G-d has again begun the count-down clock to the final destruction which will leave this planet not merely scrubbed clean by forty days of a calamitous “rinse cycle”. This time, there will be nothing left of what we call this earth.

Let’s finish reading the passage we began earlier.

2 Peter 3:8-13

8 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

What sort of person are you?

Are you a pioneer for G-d?

I think I hear a clock ticking down somewhere...

Verses for Parasha Noah

Gen 6:9-12

Matt 24:37-44

Gen 6:3-4

2 Peter 3:8-13

Gen 8:14-17

Gen 17:1-2