5786 - Genesis 6-11 - Noach (Noah)

Genesis 6:9-13

*[9]This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a **righteous** man, **blameless** among the people of his time, and **he walked** faithfully **with God**. [10]Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.*

*[11]Now the earth was **corrupt** in God's sight and was full of violence. [12]God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. [13]So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an **end** (**kets**) to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.*

THE INDICTMENT[1]

The story of Noah and the Flood opens with an amplification of the preceding verse (6:8). It makes clear that the election of Noah by God is not a capricious act but the result of the man's intrinsic moral worthiness.

> *[5]The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. [6]The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. [7]So the LORD said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created-- and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them." [8]But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD* (Gen 6:5-8).

9. *This is the line of Noah* The present rendering regards the characterization of Noah as parenthetical, with this phrase being completed by verse 10. It is preferable to translate "This is the story of Noah" **and to take the phrase as the caption to the entire narrative in which Noah plays a central role**. On the *'elleh toledot* formula, see Comment to 2:4.[2]

righteous ... blameless These cardinal (i.e., *of prime importance*) terms of biblical Hebrew, ***tsaddik*** and ***tamim***, are used here for the first time without definition, thus presupposing a clearly recognizable quality of virtue favored by God. As Ramban indicates, ***tsaddik*** has its origin in legal terminology and implies one who is adjudged to be "in the right," which is its meaning in such texts as Exodus 23:7, Deuteronomy 25:1, and Proverbs 17:15. Accordingly, the term ***tsaddik*** describes one whose conduct is found to be beyond reproach by the divine Judge.

—Exodus 23:7 (NAS)

> [7]"Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or the **righteous** (*honest* [NIV]), for I will not acquit the guilty.

—Deuteronomy 25:1 (NAS)

> [1]"If there is a dispute between men and they go to court, and the judges decide their case ... they (shall) justify the **righteous** (*innocent* [NIV]) and condemn the wicked,

—Proverbs 17:15

> [15]He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the **righteous** (*innocent* [NIV]), Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD.

The term ***tamim***, which is mostly found in ritual contexts, describes a sacrificial animal that is without blemish, as in Exodus 12:5 and Leviticus 1:3, 10. Only such an animal is acceptable to God, says Leviticus 22:17-25. As applied to human beings, ***tamim*** acquired a moral dimension connoting "unblemished" by moral fault—hence, a person of unimpeachable integrity. Such an individual enjoys God's fellowship, according to Psalms15 and 101:6.

— Exodus 12:5

> [5]The animals you choose must be year-old males **without defect** (or *blemish*), and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.

— Leviticus 1:3

> [3]"'If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, you are to offer a male **without defect**. You must present it at the entrance to the tent of meeting so that it will be acceptable to the LORD.

— Leviticus 22:17-25

> [17]The LORD said to Moses, [18]"Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites and say to them: 'If any of you—whether an Israelite or a foreigner residing in Israel—presents a gift for a burnt offering to the LORD, either to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering, [19]you must present a male **without defect** ... [20]Do not bring anything with a defect, because it will not be accepted on your behalf. [21]When anyone brings from the herd or flock a fellowship offering to the LORD ... it must be **without defect** or blemish to be acceptable. [22]Do not offer to the LORD the blind, the injured or the maimed, or anything with warts or festering or running sores. Do not place any of these on the altar as a food offering presented to the LORD. [23]You may, however, present as a freewill offering an ox or a sheep that is deformed or stunted, **but it will not be accepted in fulfillment of a vow**. [24]You must not offer to the LORD an animal whose testicles are bruised, crushed, torn or cut. You must not do this in your own land, [25]and you must not accept such animals from

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1 Nahum M. Sarna, Gen. Ed., The JPS Torah Commentary, Genesis, (The Jewish Publication Society), pp. 50-51.

2 The *'elleh toledot* formula is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Book of Genesis. In each of its other ten occurrences, it introduces what follows, invariably in close connection with the name of the person already mentioned in the narrative. Its use indicates that a new and significant development is at hand. Deriving from the *y-l-d*, "to give birth," the noun form would mean "begettings" or "generations," and in most instances it precedes genealogies that are sometimes interspersed with narrative material.

the hand of a foreigner and offer them as the food of your God. They will not be accepted on your behalf, because they are deformed and have defects.'"

— Psalm 15:1-5

[1]A psalm of David. LORD, who may dwell in your sacred tent? Who may live on your holy mountain? [2]The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from their heart; [3]whose tongue utters no slander, who does no wrong to a neighbor, and casts no slur on others; [4]who despises a vile person but honors those who fear the LORD; who keeps an oath even when it hurts, and does not change their mind; [5]who lends money to the poor without interest; who does not accept a bribe against the innocent. Whoever does these things will never be shaken.

— Psalm 101:6

[6]My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; the one whose walk is blameless will minister to me.

in his age In the face of universal corruption, he maintained civilized standards of behavior. The prophet Ezekiel (14:14, 20) refers to Noah as one of the outstandingly righteous men of antiquity. Nevertheless, as Sanhedrin 108a reports, some rabbinic sages read into the phrase "in his age" a hint of some qualification of his reputation: had he lived in the age of Abraham, he would have been overshadowed by the patriarch's superior character. By use of midrash, further support for this view is read into the use of the accusative *'et*, here "with," before "God," in contrast to *lifnei*, literally "ahead of," with the same verb as applied to Abraham in Genesis 17:1. Noah is regarded as needing a divine prop to sustain his integrity, whereas Abraham has moral autonomy. There is indeed a measure of justification in this unfavorable comparison, for, unlike Abraham's response to the case of Sodom and Gomorrah in 18:23-52, **Noah does not plead for mercy for his contemporaries**. Sensitive to this moral issue, rabbinic lore supplements the text by having **Noah warn his fellow men of impending disaster and call them to repentance**.

walked with God See Comment to 5:22 (below). The exceptional inversion of the Hebrew word order gives God pride of place in the sentence, thus accentuating the fact that the standards by which Noah's righteousness is judged are divine, not human.

— The regular formula, “he lived” (used of all of those who lived before the flood, in Genesis 5) is replaced by the description of how he (Enoch) lived. The idiom is used again only of Noah in 6:9 and, in a slightly varied form of the ideal priest in Malachi 2:6. It is expressive of a life spent in full accord with God’s will and in closest intimacy with Him.

10. The data given in 5:32 are repeated in order to draw attention to the destiny of Noah and his sons as the common ancestors of a renewed humanity.

11. *The earth* The use of such all-inclusive terms as “the earth," “man's wickedness," and "all flesh" in the indictment of humanity serves to justify God's actions. **The totality of the evil in which the world has engulfed itself makes the totality of the catastrophe inevitable**.

corrupt The key Hebrew stem *sh-ch-t* occurs seven times in the narrative.

corrupt ... lawlessness The universal corruption is further defined as ***chamas***. This term parallels “no justice" in Job 19:7 and is elsewhere the synonym of “falsehood," "deceit," or "bloodshed." It means, in general, the flagrant subversion of the ordered processes of law. From the divine enactments for the regulation of society after the Flood, detailed in chapter 9, it may be deduced that ***chamas*** here refers predominantly to the arrogant disregard for the sanctity and inviolability (sacredness) of human life.

before God In the judgment of the One who is the ultimate arbiter of human conduct. No higher authority than willful self-interest had determined human conduct generally.

12. *When God saw* See Comment to 6:5 (below).

(1) This phrase has juridical overtones, implying both investigation of the facts and readiness for action.

all flesh It is not clear whether this refers only to all humankind or whether it includes the animal kingdom as well, as in verses 17 and 19. Sanhedrin 108a has the idea that even the beasts had corrupted themselves through the intermating of species. From the regulation in 9:5, it would appear that the animals had become carnivorous, contrary to the implications of God's decree in 1:20. **The utopian visions of Isaiah 11:6-7 and 62:25, which see the animal kingdom as ideally herbivorous, support such a view**.

13. *God said to Noah* God speaks to him directly seven times in this narrative. In the Mesopotamian tales, the decision of the gods was to have been kept secret from man.

No date is given for the initial communication with Noah. From 7:11 and 4, however, it is clear that Noah received the order to board the ark **on the tenth day of the second month, that is, forty days after the New Year**. Because forty is a symbolic number in the Bible, and especially so in this story, it is reasonable to conclude that God was thought to have first communicated to Noah his decision about the impending fate of the world on New Year's day.

an end Hebrew *kets* is overwhelmingly used in biblical Hebrew in a temporal context, meaning "a set term," the completion of a fixed period of time, as in Habakkuk 2:3, Psalms 39:5, and Job 6:I1. Hence it can connote doom," as in Amos 8:2 and Lamentations 4:18. *Kets* later became a key term in the vocabulary of Jewish eschatology, the doctrine of a violent and radical change in the direction of history that brings an end to one era and signals the regeneration of humanity. In this context, the *kets* stems from the unbridgeable gap between man's willful course and God's revealed will.

— Habakkuk 2:3

[3]For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the **end** and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

— Psalms 39:5 (v. 4 in non-Jewish translations)

[4]"Show me, LORD, my life's **end** and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is.

— Job 6:11 (JPS)

[11]What is my strength, that I should wait? and what is mine **end**, that I should be patient?

— Amos 8:2 (JPS)

[2]And He said: 'Amos, what seest thou?' And I said: 'A basket of summer fruit.' Then said the LORD unto me: The **end** is come upon My people Israel; I will not again pardon them any more.

— Lamentations 4:18

[18]People stalked us at every step, so we could not walk in our streets. Our **end** was near, our days were numbered, for our **end** had come.

because of them They brought it on themselves. The impending catastrophe is not the product of divine caprice or nature's blind fury.

to destroy them The Hebrew employs the same stem as for the word “corrupt." The idea is that **humankind cannot undermine the moral basis of society without endangering the very existence of its civilization**. In fact, through its corruption, society sets in motion the process of inevitable self destruction.

with the earth This is how ***'et ha-'arets*** was understood by the ancient versions, Genesis Rabba 31:7 interprets that the topsoil of the earth is to be removed. This reflects the biblical idea that moral corruption physically contaminates the earth, which must be purged of its pollution.

1. ***righteous ... blameless*** *These cardinal (i.e., of prime importance) terms of biblical Hebrew,* ***tsaddik*** *and* ***tamim****, are used here for the first time without definition, thus presupposing a clearly recognizable quality of virtue favored by God.*

a. The Hebrew word for "righteous" is ***tzaddik*** (צדיק) ... which has rich and nuanced meanings:[3]

1) ***Straight*** or ***correct***—the root suggests something that is properly aligned or in its correct position.
2) ***Just***—acting in accordance with what is right and fair.
3) ***Innocent***—free from guilt or wrongdoing.
4) Unlike the English "righteous" which can sound self-righteous or pious, ***tzaddik*** emphasizes:
   a) ***Relational justice***—being right in relationship with God and others.
   b) ***Active goodness***—not just avoiding wrong but actively doing right (or good).
   c) ***Balance***—being properly aligned with divine will and human needs.
5) The Talmud describes different levels of *tzaddikim*, from those who struggle with temptation but overcome it, to those who are naturally inclined toward good. **The *tzaddik* is seen as someone who maintains proper relationships—with God, with community, and with the world**. **The word emphasizes justice and correctness rather than just moral purity**.
6) **IT DOES NOT MEAN “SINLESS.”**

b. The Hebrew word most commonly translated as "blameless" is *tamim* (תמים). It means to be:

1) ***Complete*** or ***whole***—not lacking anything essential.
2) ***Perfect***—in the sense of being finished or fully developed.
3) ***Unblemished***—without defect or flaw
4) ***Innocent***—free from moral corruption
5) Unlike English "blameless" which focuses on absence of fault, *tamim* emphasizes:
   a) ***Wholeness***—being complete in one's relationship with God
   b) ***Integrity***—having all parts working together harmoniously
   c) ***Sincerity***—wholeheartedness rather than duplicity
   d) ***Maturity***—being fully developed morally and spiritually
6) The word suggests someone whose character is unified and complete, **without hidden agendas or moral contradictions**—more about positive wholeness than merely avoiding blame.

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3 www.notion.com

2. ***11. The earth*** *The use of such all-inclusive terms as "the earth," "man's wickedness," and "all flesh" in the indictment of humanity serves to justify God's actions.* ***The totality of the evil in which the world has engulfed itself makes the totality of the catastrophe inevitable.***

a. Sanhedrin 108a

GEMARA. Our Rabbis taught: The generation of the flood have no portion in the world to come, as it is written, And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground (Gen 7:23) ... this is R. Akiba's view ... R. Menahem son of R. Jose said: Even when the Holy One, blessed be He, restores the souls to the dead bodies, their soul shall grieve them in the Gehenna, as it is written, Ye shall conceive chaff ye shall bring forth stubble: your soul, as fire, shall devour you (Isa 33:11).

Our Rabbis taught: **The generation of the flood waxed haughty only because of the good which the Holy One, blessed be He, lavished upon them**. Behold, what is written of them? Their houses are safe from fear, 'neither is the rod of God upon them (Job 21:9), it is also written, Their bull gendered, and failed not,' their cow calved, and casted not her calf (Job 21:10); further, They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance (Job 21:11); further, They take the timbrel and the harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ (Job 21:12); and it is also written, They spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures (Job 36:11) ... And 'tis that which caused them to say to God, **Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?** (Job 21:14) They said thus: **Do we need Him for aught but the drop of rain? We have rivers and wells to supply our wants**. Thereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, said: By that very good which I lavished upon them they provoke Me, and by that I will punish them, as it is written, And behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth (Gen 6:17) ...

R. Johanan said: Come and see how great is the power of robbery. for lo, though the generation of the flood transgressed all laws, their decree of punishment was sealed **only because they stretched out their hands to rob (i.e., to steal)**, as it is written, for the earth is filled with violence through them (Gen 6:11, 13) ...

All that was in the dry land died; but not the fish in the sea.

b. Proverbs 1:28-31

[28]"Then (the wicked) will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me, [29]since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD. [30]Since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, [31]they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes.

c. Ecclesiastes 12:14 (CJB)

[14]For God will bring to judgment everything we do, including every secret, whether good or bad. [Here is the final conclusion, now that you have heard everything: fear God, and keep his *mitzvot*; this is what being human is all about.]

d. Romans 14:12

[12]So then each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

e. Galatians 6:7 (CJB)

[7]Don't delude yourselves: no one makes a fool of God! A person reaps what he sows.

f. Shabbat 55a

R. Ammi said: There is no death without sin,[(27)] and there is no suffering without iniquity. There is no death without sin, for it is written, The soul that sins, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son, the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him, etc.,[(28)] There is no suffering without iniquity, for it is written, Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.[(29)]

(27) One's sins cause his death.
(28) Ezek. XVIII, 20.
(29) Ps. LXXXIX, 33.

3. ***corrupt ... lawlessness*** *The universal corruption is further defined as* ***chamas****. This term parallels "no justice" in Job 19:7 and is elsewhere the synonym of "falsehood," "deceit," or "bloodshed."*

a. 2Thessalonians 2:7-9

[7]For the secret power of **lawlessness** is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. [8]And then **the lawless one** will be revealed, whom the Lord Yeshua will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. [9]The coming of **the lawless one** will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie ...

b. Hebrews 10:11-18

[11]Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins (i.e., provide access to the Olam HaBah). [12]But when this priest (i.e., Yeshua) had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, [13]and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool (Psa 110:1). [14]For by

one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. [15]The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: [16]"This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds" (Jer 31:33). [17]Then he adds: "Their sins **and lawless acts** I will remember no more." [18]And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary (i.e., the sacrifice of Messiah does not have to be repeated).

c. 2Peter 2:4-9

[4]For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment; [5]if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood **on its ungodly people**, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; [6]if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen **to the ungodly**; [7]and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by **the depraved conduct of the lawless** [8](for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul **by the lawless deeds** he saw and heard)—[9]if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold **the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment**.

4. *No date is given for the initial communication with Noah. From 7:11 and 4, however, it is clear that Noah received the order to board the ark* ***on the tenth day of the second month, that is, forty days after the New Year****. Because forty is a symbolic number in the Bible, and especially so in this story, it is reasonable to conclude that God was thought to have first communicated to Noah his decision about the impending fate of the world on New Year's day.*

a. The number 40 is actually highly symbolic in the Torah ...[4]

b. The Talmud explains that it takes an embryo 40 days to form in its mother's womb (Ber 21b).

c. The Talmud tells us that “one does not come to fully comprehend the knowledge of his teacher until 40 years [of study].” (Avodah Zera 5b). Since a day “up on high” is certainly equal to a year down below, Moses learned Torah from G-d atop the mountain for 40 days so that he could fully comprehend the Torah.

d. In the episode of Noah and the Flood, we learn that it rained for 40 days and 40 nights.

e. A *mikvah* needs to have 40 *se'ah* (a measurement) of water in order to be able to purify someone. In fact, this is one of the explanations as to why, during the Flood, **it rained for 40 days, corresponding to the 40 *se'ah* of a *mikvah***.

1) 1Peter 3:21-22

[21](The waters of the flood) symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah ...

f. The Torah describes the maximum number of lashes one could receive as 40 (albeit in practice, one could get a max. of 39) (Deu 25:3).

g. The mystics explain that **any preparation for a transformative change is associated with the number 40**. Thus, whether it is the flood water of Noah, which cleansed and purified the world, going to the *mikvah,* which purifies the person, lashes, which atone for one's sins, or receiving the Torah, **each is essentially a catalyst for transformation** (*Likutei Sichot*, vol. 39, pp. 185-190) and is therefore associated with the number 40 (*Torat Menachem*, vol. 12, p. 157).

h. Genesis 8:5-6

[5]The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible.
[6]After **forty days** Noah opened a window he had made in the ark.

i. Numbers 14:30-34

[30]Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb ... and Joshua ... [31]As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected ... [33]Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the wilderness. [34]**For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land**—you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.'

j. Matthew 4:1-3

[1]Then Yeshua was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. [2]After fasting **forty days** and forty nights, he was hungry. [3]The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread" ...

k. Acts 7:23-30

[23]"When Moses was **forty** years old, he decided to visit his own people, the Israelites ... [30]"After **forty** years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush ...

4 Why Did Moses Go Up on Mt. Sinai for Forty Days? - The significance of the number forty - JewishOlney.com