



Parasha No'ach / Noah / Rest

B'reshith / Genesis 6:9-11:32

Beit Emet ~ Vancouver, WA

Ben Ehrhardt, Shamash

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Our parasha this week is the second in Torah. This is a great place in our studies this year to remind you of a handy tool that Neal put together and placed on our website. It's a simple table that shows the generations of man from Adam to Ya'aqob. You can find it under the "**Adam's Genealogy**" tab at: http://www.hearoisrael.org/New_Downloads.html . As we study the generations and genealogies of the Patriarchs in Torah, it will greatly aid our understanding to have these resources close at hand. And, we'll be referring to some of this information as we go through Torah together.

Now, while our *parasha* begins with **B'reshith 6:9**, I want us to begin a few verses earlier, for context. So, let's begin with **B'reshith / Genesis 6:5-8**; *And it came to be, when men began to increase 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 good. And they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. And HaShem said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever in his going astray. He is flesh, and his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, the men of name. And HaShem saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And HaShem was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. And HaShem said, "I am going to wipe off man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping creature and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." But No'ach found favor in the eyes of HaShem.*

There are some very interesting things going on here; even though, there is some debate about the meaning of the first four verses. So, let's take a closer look and see what we find. We see that as men multiplied upon the *ground* ("**adamah**" or earth), daughters were born to them. Now, remember what we saw last week, that this was a time when calling on, or invoking, the Name of God has begun. And now, His Name was being profaned. There was wickedness everywhere. Then, we read that B'nei Elohim, the sons of God saw these "*daughters of men*", that they were good, and took for themselves wives from them of all whom they chose. Now, are these sons of God upright men, rulers of their day perhaps? Or are they, as some people say, *fallen angels* ("**malakim**" - **messengers**)? I guess it depends on your definition of "**B'nei Elohim**" or the "**Sons of God**" and whether "**elohim**" is

capitalized or not. Now some rabbinical commentaries lean toward the idea that these were the leaders and rulers of that day; righteous, mighty men that God had placed in charge. And, they took wives from the pagan folks, those who were not righteous. However, most of the rabbis and their commentaries follow the **Book of Yasher (Jasher) Chapter 4, verses 16-18**, which reads; ***And all the sons of men departed from the ways of the Adonai in those days as they multiplied upon the face of the earth with sons and daughters, and they taught one another their evil practices and they continued sinning against HaShem. And every man made unto himself an elohim (idol), and they robbed and plundered every man his neighbor as well as his relative, and they corrupted the earth, and the earth was filled with violence. And their judges and rulers went to the daughters of men and took their wives by force from their husbands according to their choice, and the sons of men in those days took from the cattle of the earth, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and taught the mixture of animals of one species with the other, in order therewith to provoke HaShem; and God saw the whole earth and it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon earth, all men and all animals.***

Then, HaShem says that His Spirit (*His Ruach*) shall not “**strive**” with man forever. Let’s hold it here for a minute. This is most interesting. You see the Hebrew word here translated as “**strive**” is “**a’deen**” (*yud-dalet-vav-nun*), which means to “**abide in**”, “**stay**” or “**continue with**”. So, God’s Spirit will not “**abide in**” man forever. Why? We’re told because of “**his going astray**”. Some translations say “*for he is flesh*”. The Hebrew reads “**b’gam basar shagag**”, which translates literally as, “**because his flesh is corrupt**”. Or, you could say that “**he has gone astray in his flesh**”. However you say it, HaShem states that His Spirit will not always “**stay with**”, or “**abide in**” man. OK, let’s assume for a minute here that HaShem withdraws His Spirit from man. Man and woman are no longer protected from the “**spirit world**” or the “**fallen ones**”.

Next, HaShem says that man’s days shall be 120 years. “**He is flesh, and his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.**” That’s interesting; because even after the flood, men still lived to be 500 plus years old. It would be centuries and many generations before man’s lifespan would be cut to 120 years. What HaShem was saying is that He would destroy mankind with the flood in 120 years. Of further interest here is that 120 is the numeric value of “*l’mayim*” in **B’reshith / Genesis 1:6**, which means “**from water**”, also “**mo’ed**” or “**appointed time**” from **Shemot / Exodus 9:5**, “**am’muwd**” or “**pillar**” from **Shemot / Exodus 13:22**, “**Nisi**”, “**my Banner**” and “**v’padah**” or “**and redeemed you**”. No’ach and his family are a picture of that redemption.

Now, **Verse 4** says that **Nephilim** were on the earth in those days. Most believe that these “**Nephilim**” were “**giants**”, as well they may have been. But, as we look at this, let’s re-read **Verse 4**; ***The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, the men of name.*** Now, the punctuation of our translations determines how we understand a verse. In this case, instead of a comma after “**afterward**”; what if you had a period and then put a comma after “**bore children to them**”? It would then read, ***The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward. (period) When the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them, (comma) these were the mighty men who were of old, the men of name.*** We always need to try to read Scripture looking at these differences in order to place them in proper context. Now, “**Nephilim**” means “**to fall**” or “**to be cast down**”. So, it would appear that the **Nephilim** were those who were “**cast down**” or the “**fallen ones**”. In speaking of “**angels**” or “**malakim**”, Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon goes on to further define “**Nephilim**” as “**the rebels**” or “**apostate ones**”. Also, in **Verse 4** it says also that they were upon the earth then and afterwards, as in after the flood. “**Nephilim**”, whether giants or not, are indeed

mentioned again in **B'midbar / Numbers 13:33**, as the 12 spies observed them in The Land; ***“And we saw there the Nephilim (fallen ones), sons of Anaq (long neck), of the Nephilim (those cast down). And we were like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and so we were in their eyes.”*** The sons of Anaq, the Anaqim, were indeed giants.

Whatever your view of “*who mated with who*”; it is very interesting that their offspring were “***the mighty men who were of old, the men of name***” or “***renown***”, as some translations have it. But, you see in the Hebrew that they were called “***ha gibor'im asher m'a'olam e'nosha hashem***”, which translates as “***the mighty ones of antiquity, men of ‘the name’***”. This is something we address later.

Verses 5-8 go on to say: ***“And HaShem saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And HaShem was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. And HaShem said, “I am going to wipe off man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping creature and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” But No'ach found favour in the eyes of HaShem.”*** Let me just point out a couple of things before we move on. Torah says that man's every “***inclination and thought of his heart***” were evil continually. The words for ***inclination, thought*** and ***heart*** used here form the phrase “***yetzer machashabah lev***” or, you could translate this as “***graven image of his thoughts (or talents) of his inner man (mind or wisdom)***”. In other words, Man had made his own mind, his own wisdom, his god. Sounds very much like things are today.

I don't know about you, but I found it interesting that HaShem was grieved that He made man “***on the earth***”. He didn't say that He was grieved that He created man; just that He was grieved that He made him on the earth. Remember what we looked at last week, in ***Parasha B'reshith***, from **Genesis, Chapter 1**, that God created everything in six days and then He rested on Shabbat. Then in **Chapter 2**, He made the plants, the animals and the “***man***” ***on the earth*** (in fact, *out of the earth* also). Now, because of man's evil inclinations, HaShem was about to begin again upon the earth. In other words, there were no redeeming qualities in mankind at all, except for No'ach. He found favor in the eyes (“***ayin***”, also *the fountains*) of HaShem.

Now, as we begin the text of our parasha this week, let's start with **B'reshith / Genesis 6:9-10**; ***This is the genealogy of No'ach. No'ach was a righteous (tzadik) man, perfect (tamiym) in his generations (dor). No'ach walked with God. And No'ach brought forth three sons: Shem, Ham, and Yepheth.*** Through the Hebrew wording, the rabbis teach us that the Torah states that No'ach was not only “***righteous***”, his righteousness was “***tamiym***” or “***perfect***”. Or, because “***tamiym***” also means “***complete***”, that he was “***completely righteous***”. The sages point out that this means, not only was No'ach righteous in terms of his obedience to, and relationship with HaShem; but, righteous also in his treatment of and relationship with other people. Remember the “*Two Pillars*” of Torah; love HaShem and love your brother.

As you no doubt remember, “***No'ach***” means “***rest***”. But, as the rabbis point out, the connotation is that it also refers to “***satisfaction***”, as in *resting* or *relaxing* in *satisfaction*.

Next, as we move on to **B'reshith 6:11-22**, we read; ***And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth and saw that it was corrupt – for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth – and God said to No'ach, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them. And see, I am***

going to destroy them from the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with tar. And this is how you are to make it: The length of the ark is three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. Make a window for the ark, and complete it to a cubit from above. And set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. And see, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life from under the heavens – all that is on the earth is to die. And I shall establish My covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. And of all the living creatures of all flesh, two of each, you are to bring into the ark, to keep them alive with you – a male and a female. Of the birds after their kind, and of the cattle after their kind, and of all creeping creatures of the earth after their kind, two of each are to come to you, to keep them alive. As for you, take of all food that is eaten and gather it to yourself. And it shall be food for you and for them.” And No’ach did according to all that God commanded him, so he did.

Here No’ach is commanded to build an ark. Now normally, one might expect the Hebrew word for “ark” would be “aron”. But, the Hebrew word used here, translated as “ark”, is “teivah” which in addition to “ark” also means a “word”, as in “word given”. Wow! So, what do an “ark” and a “word” have in common? Rabbi Avraham Greenbaum put it this way, in his teaching on [Parsha No’ach](#): “A ‘word’ is a vessel that sails through the airwaves from my mouth to your ear, bearing a cargo of meaning, ‘the message’. Just as No’ach took his family into the “teivah” (ark) for survival, it is through HaShem’s ‘Teivah’ that we can survive the stormy waters of this world”.

The “Zohar” teaches that the “Teivah” of No’ach (*the ark*) alludes to the deeper levels of understanding the Torah. Now, I don’t want to just go headlong into the depths of “esoteric Hebrew thought” here; but, there is something to this. You see, HaShem also commanded No’ach in **verse 16** to make a “window” in this “ark” (this *teivah* or *word*). However, Torah doesn’t say make a “challown”, which is the Biblical Hebrew word for “window”. It says a “tsohar” you shall make for the “ark” (*teivah* or *word*). “Tsohar” (Zohar) literally means “light”, “brilliance” or “radiance”. Furthermore, in the Hebrew it says that it shall be a cubit “kalah ma’al”. In other words, it shall be a cubit “placed on top of” the ark. It was as a “skylight”. *This skylight brought light to the “teivah” (the ark), just as the Zohar brings light, or radiance, to teivah (the Word).*

We also read that, No’ach was to cover the ark, within and without, with tar, or pitch. Well actually, in the Hebrew it says that he is to “kaphar”, “finish”, or “cover” it. “Kaphar” means also “to make atonement” or “make reconciliation”. It’s the root for “Kippur” as in Yom Kippur. And, it really doesn’t say “within and without” in the Hebrew. What it does say is “beit chutzt” or “the house’s outside”. OK, so No’ach is to “make atonement” with “tar”? With “pitch”? Well, not exactly. The word for “pitch” here is “kopher” which also means “the price of a life” or “the ransom”. It’s a great Hebrew “word-play”. It’s saying; “gopher kaphar kopher” or “the covering is the atonement, the price of a life”.

And of course, we have to look at the numbers also. The length of the “ark” is 300 cubits. 300 is the numeric value of “kopher” or “the ransom” and also “kapar” which is “forgiveness”. It’s the root of the word “kapparah” or “offering of atonement”. Its width is 50 cubits. 50 is the numeric value of *l’ach* or “for you” and of course 50 represents the letter “nun” which represents the “Kingdom”. And, its height was 30 cubits. 30 is the numeric value of “v’chata”, “and he shall purify”, also “hah kah” or “was dead” and “v’ya chayah”, “and I make you alive”. All of this is saying that atonement, purification and forgiveness is for the kingdom, who was dead; but, He makes alive.

Now, let's move on with **B'reshith / Genesis 7:1-24**; *And Adonai said to No'ach, "Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation. Of all the clean beasts take with you seven pairs, a male and his female; and of the beasts that are unclean two, a male and his female; and of birds of the heavens seven pairs, male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth. For after seven more days I am sending rain on the earth, forty days and forty nights, and shall wipe from the face of the earth all that stand that I created." And No'ach did according to all that HaShem commanded him. Now No'ach was six hundred years old when the flood-waters were on the earth. And No'ach and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. Of the clean beasts and of the beasts that are unclean, and of birds, and of all that creep on the earth, two by two they went into the ark to No'ach, male and female, as God had commanded No'ach. And it came to be after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth. In the six hundredth year of No'ach's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of the heavens were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights. On that same day No'ach and Shem and Ham and Yepheth, the sons of No'ach, and No'ach's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, went into the ark, they and every living creature after its kind, and every beast after its kind, and every creeping creature that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort. And they went into the ark to No'ach, two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life. And those going in, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him, and Adonai shut him in. And the flood was on the earth forty days, and the waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. And the waters were mighty and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. And the waters were exceedingly mighty on the earth, and all the high mountains under all the heavens were covered. The waters became mighty, fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved on the earth – birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping creature that creeps on the earth, and all mankind. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. So He wiped off all that stand, which were on the face of the ground – both man and beast, creeping creature and bird of the heavens. And they were wiped off from the earth. And only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark. And the waters were mighty on the earth, one hundred and fifty days.*

While we're looking at numbers today, let's consider a few more. Though it's not called out right here, there were "**eight**" people who were saved from among men; No'ach, his wife, his three sons and their wives. We know that "**8**" is the number of "**new beginnings**" and the number of "**circumcision**" (*the mark of the Covenant for the Land*). However, it is also the numeric value of "**ahav**" or "**love**".

Eight is also the number of "**chet**" which is the letter of "**life**". The rain lasted **40** days and nights on the earth. **40** is the number of "**testing**" and "**trials**", as well as the letter "**mem**", which is "**water**" or the "**fountain of wisdom**". Please check out the links for these two letters.

"**8**" also equals "**v'ga'al**" which means "**and He redeems**".

No'ach was **600** years old when the flood came. **600** is the numeric value of "**shesh**" which is the number "**six**" or the number of "**man**". The waters rose to a height of **15** cubits above the mountains. **15** is the numeric value of "**chavah**" meaning "**to hide**" or "**to cover over**" and also "**big'vai**" meaning "**faithless**" or "**treacherous**". The waters rose to "**cover over**" treacherous and faithless man. One last thing here is the date that the waters "**broke loose**". It was in the *second* month, the *seventeenth*

day of the month. **Two** equals the letter “**beit**” or “**house**” and **17** equals “**zebach**” or “**sacrifice**” (slaughter offering). Hmm, “*house of sacrifice*”. This date corresponds to “**Lag Ba’omer**”, which is the **33rd** day of the counting of the Omer. So? Well, on the **33rd** day of the Omer Count, we focus on HaShem’s attribute of “**Hod**” within the week of “**Hod**”. “**Hod**” is the “**Splendor**”, “**Glory**” or the “**Esteem**” of HaShem. It is also within this week that we seek to overcome the **Kena’anites** (hopelessness and depression) in our own lives. It’s also the day that the “**manna**” began to form for B’nei Yisra’el in the wilderness, according to **Shemot / Exodus 16**. And maybe it’s a coincidence that **33** is the numeric value of “**I’vo**” meaning to “**enter in**”.

Then, we read on in **B’reshith / Genesis 8:1-22**; *And God remembered No’ach, and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. And the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were stopped, and the rain from the heavens was withheld. And the waters receded steadily from the earth, and at the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters diminished. And in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased steadily until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains became visible. And it came to be, at the end of forty days, that No’ach opened the window of the ark which he had made, and he sent out a raven, which kept going out and turning back until the waters had dried up from the earth. Then he sent out a dove from him, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. But the dove found no resting place for its feet and returned into the ark to him, for the waters were on the face of all the earth. So he put out his hand and took it, and pulled it into the ark to himself. And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. And the dove came to him in the evening, and see, a freshly plucked olive leaf was in its mouth. And No’ach knew that the waters had receded from the earth. And he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return to him again. And it came to be in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth. And No’ach removed the covering of the ark and looked, and saw the surface of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. And God spoke to No’ach, saying, “Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. Bring out with you every living creature of all flesh that is with you: of birds, of cattle and all creeping creatures that creep on the earth. And let them teem on the earth, and bear and increase on the earth.” So No’ach went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him, every beast, every creeping creature, and every bird, whatever creeps on the earth, according to their kinds, went out of the ark. And No’ach built an altar to HaShem, and took of every clean beast and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And HaShem smelled a soothing fragrance, and HaShem said in His heart, “Never again shall I curse the ground because of man, although the inclination of man’s heart is evil from his youth, and never again smite all living creatures, as I have done, as long as the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease.”*

We won’t spend too much time on these verses today. But, let me just say that in **Verse 1** where Scripture says; *And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided*; the word used for “**wind**” is indeed “**ruach**”. HaShem caused His Breath or Spirit to pass over the earth and the waters subsided. This is reminiscent of what we read just last week in **B’reshith / Genesis 1**, that, “**His Spirit was moving over the face of the waters**”.

Upon leaving the ark, No’ach builds an altar and takes from every clean animal and bird and offers

burnt offerings to HaShem. As we have learned before, the “**burnt offering**” is the word “**olah**” and it literally means “**an ascension**”. Again, the word for offering is “**korban**” which means “**a drawing near**”. Referencing last week’s parasha, where we read that God gave man command over all the animals, etc.; Rabbi Greenbaum writes, “*The essence of the concept of KORBAN, a ‘sacrifice’, is that the offered animal -- symbol of our earthly, animal side -- is ‘brought near’ (KAROV) and elevated by being brought into the service of G-d in the form of the sacrifice. The sacrifice of a representative of the species elevates the entire species and brings it divine blessing. Noah’s offering after the flood established an archetype for the whole of mankind, his descendants.*”

Let’s go on to **B’reshith / Genesis 9:1-17; And God blessed No’ach and his sons, and said to them, “Bear fruit and increase, and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you is on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the heavens, on all that creeps on the ground, and on all the fish of the sea – into your hand they have been given. Every moving creature that lives is food for you. I have given you all, as I gave the green plants. But do not eat flesh with its life, its blood. But only your blood for your lives I require, from the hand of every beast I require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man’s brother I require the life of man. Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood is shed, for in the image of God has He made man. As for you, bear fruit and increase, bring forth teeming in the earth and increase in it.” And God spoke to No’ach and to his sons with him, saying, “And I, see, I establish My covenant with you and with your seed after you, and with every living creature that is with you: of the birds, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. And I shall establish My covenant with you, and never again is all flesh cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again is there a flood to destroy the earth.” And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for all generations to come: I shall set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. And it shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud, and I shall remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh, and never again let the waters become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I shall see it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” And God said to No’ach, “This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.”**

Again here, we’ll be brief. HaShem blessed No’ach and his sons. And, Adonai restates that man, through No’ach and his sons, is given dominion over the earth and the animals. Plus, He did one thing for No’ach that He didn’t do for Adam. HaShem gave them meat for food. Now, I’m no Hebrew scholar; but, I’ve looked at the Hebrew, I’ve looked to the rabbis for their opinions and I’ve re-read these verses many times. Even the rabbis agree that in those days, at that time, **all meat** was edible. But, it’s all about choice. HaShem specifically declared to Moshe what to instruct us about what we are to eat and not eat. And, No’ach knew clean and unclean. As we read earlier, in preparation for the flood, HaShem had No’ach gather seven pairs of the clean animals and only a pair of unclean. No’ach expressed his understanding through his offerings. He knew HaShem doesn’t accept an unclean korban (*offering* or *drawing near*). I’m pretty sure that No’ach also ate only clean meat.

HaShem now makes a covenant with No’ach and the earth and set His “**bow**” in the sky as an “**oth**”, “**a sign**”. The word translated as “**bow**” or is “**qesheth**”, which translates as “**rainbow**” as well as a “**battle bow**”. There are a number of scriptures that relate this “**bow**” to Mashiach. This connection is also mentioned in the Machzor for the High Holy Days. In our text HaShem states that He will set this “**bow**” in the cloud as a sign of the covenant. The Hebrew word used in these verses for “**cloud**” is

“anah”. The word for rain type cloud is **“ab”** (*ayin-bet*). As I’ve taught before, the word **“anah”** appears in the Hebrew TaNaK 87 times; and, each time it appears, it is referring to the **“cloud”** that contains the *Glory of HaShem* and the *Hosts of Heaven*; i.e., the **“Pillar of Cloud”** or the **“Column of Cloud”**. Yes, rainbows do appear in the weather clouds. But, what HaShem is also saying here is that when **“His cloud”** covers the earth, in that time of the great darkness, His **“Bow”** will be the **“Sign”** of His Covenant in the **“Cloud”**. Also, the Zohar states in Vol. 1, p.72, **“The rainbow contains spiritual secrets..... When you see the rainbow shining with bright colors, wait for Mashiach’s coming.”**

In the closing verses of **Chapter 9** we see that just as HaShem brought along unclean animals in the ark; so also, He brought unclean man. Let’s move on to **B’reshith / Genesis 9:18-29; And the sons of No’ach who went out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Yepheth. And Ham was the father of Kena’an. These three were the sons of No’ach, and all the earth was overspread from them. And No’ach, a man of the soil, began and planted a vineyard. And he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Kena’an, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. So Shem and Yepheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father, but their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father’s nakedness. And No’ach awoke from his wine, and he knew what his younger son had done to him, and he said, “Cursed is Kena’an, let him become a servant of servants to his brothers.” And he said, “Blessed be Adonai, the God of Shem, and let Kena’an become his servant. Let God enlarge Yepheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem. And let Kena’an become his servant.” And No’ach lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. So all the days of No’ach were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died.**

Now, there are several Hebrew idioms that occur in these verses. First, we’re told that Ham, the father of Kena’an, **“uncovered his father’s nakedness”**. We’ve all read many interpretations of what that could mean. However, I believe that **“Scripture interprets Scripture”**. The meaning here is given in **VaYiqra / Leviticus 20:11; ‘And a man who lies with the wife of his father has uncovered the nakedness of his father, both of them shall certainly be put to death, their blood is upon them.’** So, while No’ach was drunk, Ham laid with No’ach’s wife, his own mother. The question remains; why are we told here that Ham was the father of Kena’an? And, why would No’ach, after he sobered up, curse Ham’s one son and not Ham, or the rest of his descendants? Perhaps Kena’an was the product of Ham having lain with No’ach’s wife. Moshe is the person who wrote down this account, as spoken by HaShem, centuries later, when Kena’an’s name was indeed known. In any event, No’ach cursed Kena’an to be a servant, especially a servant to Shem. Rabbi Hirsch, in his commentary on Parsha No’ach, reminds us that the descendants of No’ach’s three sons would all experience being slaves. But, even though kings and kingdoms would come from Ham, his descendants would experience far more instances of slavery; and, would even be acknowledged for this by history.

The rabbis remind us that No’ach was unable to rectify (*bring tikkun*) the entire world, and after the flood, as he himself fell, in becoming drunk from the wine, and allowing himself to become **“uncovered”**. As we reach the end of our *parasha*, we’ll see that through Avraham, HaShem will advance the rectification of the world.

Now, No’ach blessed HaShem as the God of Shem; indicating that Shem was, like him, a righteous man. Then, he blessed Yepheth (*Japheth*), that he should be enlarged, or made a people great in number. And, No’ach cursed Kena’an to become Shem’s servant. If we were to look at a map of the settlement of No’ach’s descendants, we would essentially see that Shem settled in the Middle East, from the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Suez (*the Reed Sea*). Yepheth grew very large and migrated to

Europe and all across China. Ham went all through the southern latitudes and the extreme northern latitudes. It's interesting that some of the descendants of Ham, the Kena'anites, remain in and round Eretz Yisra'el, to this day, as enemies of Shem (*B'nei Yisra'el*).

Another Hebrew idiom appears in this "*blessing*", as No'ach said that Yepheth would dwell in the tents of Shem. This does not mean that Yepheth would take Shem's houses or conquer him. It's an idiom that denotes learning from someone. We'll read in a few weeks that Ya'aqob was a dweller in tents. He studied and learned the Word of God. And, it was in the tents of Shem that he studied. So, as Yepheth grew and was enlarged, and the children of Shem were dispersed all over the world through exile (the ten northern tribes followed by Yehudah and Binyamin); the descendants of Yepheth, along with the dispersed seed of Ya'aqob, are "***dwelling in the tents of Shem***", studying and learning Torah by those preserved and called to teach it (*Yehudah and Benjamin*).

As the Torah moves on in its narrative, we need to take note that there were ten generations from Adam to No'ach. And, now we learn from **B'reshith 10 -11** that there were 10 generations from No'ach to Avraham, or Avram, as we are introduced to him. Ten is the number of "*Divine Cycles*". Ten is also the numeric value of "***aboe***" (*aleph-beit-vav-aleph* in Torah), which means "***I will come***". Just like the first 10 generations, that angered God to the point of destruction, the second 10 generations saw evil compounding until judgment was needed. But, since HaShem promised not to destroy the earth with a flood again, He would separate the peoples with separate languages. He would then bring another, Avraham, who would do what No'ach could not. And, that was to declare the Word and demonstrate the Love of HaShem to many.

We won't take the time to read all of the last two chapters this week. But, I want to read a few selected verses. First, speaking of the sons of Yepheth, Torah says in **B'reshith 10:5**; ***From these the coastland peoples of the nations were separated into their lands, everyone according to his language, according to their clans, into their nations.*** Then, we read in **verse 20**; ***These were the sons of Ham, according to their clans, according to their languages, in their lands, in their nations.*** Next, we read in **verse 31**; ***These were the sons of Shem, according to their clans, according to their languages, in their lands, according to their nations.*** Notice the references to "*their languages*".

Next, we read of the Tower of Babel in Nimrod's kingdom of Shinar, as **Chapter 11** opens in **verse 1** with; ***And the land (eretz) had one language and one speech.*** There's a real connection between the Torah's account of the flood and the confusion of the language of Nimrod's people. Remember the Hebrew word for No'ach's ark? "***Teivah***", which also means "***word***". When men rise up in the face of HaShem, His *teivah* (*word*) will protect those who love and serve Him, and it confuses the words of the wicked.

Next, we read of Babel in **B'reshith 11:4-9**; ***And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens, and make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered over all the face of the land." Then HaShem came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And Adonai said, "Look, they are one people and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do! And now, they are not going to be withheld from doing whatever they plan to do. Come, let Us go there and confuse their language, so that they do not understand one another's speech." And HaShem scattered them from there, over the face of the land, and they left off building the city. That is why its name was called Babel, because there Adonai confused the language of all that land, and from there Adonai scattered them over the face of all the land.***

In order to better understand Nimrod and this incident, we read in Rabbi Yehonason Gefen's article. "[Nimrod-Self Worship](#)", "One of the most nefarious characters who appears in the Torah and Rabbinic literature is Nimrod, the sworn enemy of Abraham and the man who led the ill-fated attempt to build the Tower of Babel. On a superficial level it would seem that Nimrod's evil was so great that there is nothing that a normal human being can learn from him. However, on deeper analysis we can develop a more sophisticated understanding of where this powerful man went astray, and thereby apply it to our own lives."

And further, *The Rabbis provide us with the clues to deepening our understanding: The Gemara in Chullin contrasts the righteous Jewish leaders with the most powerful non-Jewish rulers in the history of mankind. 'The Holy One, Blessed is He, said to Israel, "I desire you because even at the time that I give you greatness, you humble yourselves; I gave greatness to Abraham", and he said before me, "I am dust and ashes"; to Moses and Aaron, they said, "what are we?" to David, he said, "I am a worm and not a man" But the idol worshippers are not like this. I gave greatness to Nimrod, he said, "let us build a city..."* The Gemara refers to the Dor Haflaga (the generation of dispersal) when Nimrod ruled the world, and instead of thanking God for his power, he led the endeavor to build the Tower of Babel. The purpose of this building was to 'fight' with God for the control of the world.

The Gemara in Chagiga further stresses Nimrod's attitude towards God. It says that the name, Nimrod, derives from the word, **mered**, which means **rebellion**. This is to teach us that Nimrod sought to cause the world to rebel against God. The Gemara then connects Nimrod with another mighty leader, Nebuchadnezzar, describing the latter as Nimrod's descendant. The Maharsha explains that they were not necessarily related genetically but that both had the same attitude in that they tried to 'compete' with the Almighty. One final Midrash states simply that Nimrod set himself up as a deity and designated a place for his worship.

All these sources have a common theme. They teach that Nimrod was granted exceedingly great power from God, but instead of humbling himself he allowed himself to become arrogant and thereby reject the concept of One God that Abraham taught the world. The logical extension of arrogance is self-deification - that is considering oneself to be on the level of a 'god'. The term 'god' refers to a force that has great powers and is the source for one's happiness (and according to some belief systems it can be the source for one's misery as well)."

As our parasha closes this week, we see the arrival of Avraham. We'll learn of him next week. But, I want to close with the words of Rabbi Eli Touger from his teaching this week in [The Garden of Torah](#). He writes, "On the ark were lions, tigers, and other predators, and yet they dwelt in peace with the other animals, anticipating the fulfillment of the prophecy (from Isaiah 11:6) 'The wolf will dwell with lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat.' Thus our Torah portion foreshadows the ultimate **rest** and **satisfaction** (No'ach) that mankind will be granted in the era when 'there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will flow in abundance.' By vigorously following in the footsteps of Avraham, spreading kindness and love, we can help precipitate the coming of that age. And then, like No'ach and his family, we will merit the shining of the rainbow. As the Zohar states: 'The rainbow reflects spiritual secrets. When you see the rainbow shining with bright colors, wait for **Mashiach's coming**.'"

Baruch HaShem & Shabbat Shalom!