

Waters of Sorrow - The Great Flood

By Horane Smith

Another night came upon the land of Shederpach, dissolving the faint light that had been flickering from some buildings, into thick darkness. Except for the stars in the heavens, no other light graced the rugged terrain below.

The city had been through another grueling night after its inhabitants wallowed in all the abominable practices conceivable to the mind. Sexual perversion, idolatry, robbery, murder, drunkenness, you name it, and they all had taken place moments ago. When they had their fill with all the excesses, sleep took over their despicable souls.

But out of the heavens, like the sound of many thunders and flowing rivers, the voice of the God of Adam was kindled with anger because of the wickedness on the land. The wickedness of the people continued unabated, and instead of doing better, they did worse.

God was not happy with the sins being committed on the earth. In fact, He was sorry that He created human beings; it grieved Him very much.

“I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; everyone, the beast and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air, for I’m truly sorry that I have made them,” he said.

God looked for a righteous person to carry out His plan despite the evil that had taken over the land. Of the thousands that populated the earth, God could only find one – a humble man named Noah. He was a just man who walked with God and sought to do the things that were righteous in his sight. Noah had three sons – Shem, Ham and Japheth.

On that dark night, Noah was lying in his bed wondering what would become of this corrupted and evil

land. The widespread wickedness, which had become the normal way of life of people all round, troubled Noah. They had no time for the true God; they put everything else before him, and all the practices that peaked their interests were to have fun doing the most abominable things left to the imagination. Their evil ways waxed so could it appeared as if they were trying to outdo one another.

Noah must have fallen asleep with worrisome thoughts because the next thing he knew a voice woke him. At first, Noah thought he was dreaming, but he pinched his hand only to realize it was real as ever. The thundering sound of the voice resonated from far above, seemingly from the innermost part of the heavens.

Noah never had any experience like this before. His wife was sound asleep beside him and he did not want to wake her. Was this the voice of the God of his forefathers speaking to him like how he had spoken to them? Noah was sore afraid when the voice became very real; he started to tremble.

“The end of all flesh is come before me, Noah,” the voice said clearly. It reverberated loudly into his ear and Noah wondered if others were hearing it, too. However, Noah noticed God addressed him personally, and must be talking to him alone. He eased out of his lying position and sat up in his bed, his wife’s snore sawed through the otherwise quiet room.

“...for the earth is filled with violence through them,” the voice continued, “and behold I’ll destroy them with the earth.”

Noah was silent as he listened carefully; at the same time, he was getting over the initial shock.

“Noah, I want you to make an ark of gopher wood and it should have many rooms in it. You will have to use pitch on the outside as well as on the inside. This ark should be

three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits and the height thirty cubits.”

Noah started to wonder how he would ever build this boat or ark as the voice assured him. Where would he get all this wood and other materials?

“You shall make a window on the ark, a door at the side as well. The ark will have three stories.”

Noah was no longer afraid, rather he was more concerned with the task ahead of him. It was a command from God and he had no doubt he would have to follow this edict. The picture he was forming in his mind of this huge vessel told him it would be a mammoth task.

“Behold,” the resonating voice echoed across the heavens declared, “I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh and everything that is in the earth shall die.”

“Water! Ah, that’s it,” Noah said to himself, “this wicked and perverse generation will be wiped out by a flood. Isn’t it time?”

“But with you will I establish my covenant; you shall come into the ark along with your sons, your wife and your sons’ wives. And every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort, a male and a female, you shall bring in the ark to keep them alive with you. Of fowls after their kind, cattle, and creeping things of their kind, two of every sort shall come with you to keep them alive.”

“Yes Lord,” Noah whispered, “this earth will indeed be destroyed. Thank you dear God for remembering me because these vile people have mocked you so much and have no regard for your statutes and your commandments.”

“Noah, my servant, take all the food you can gather and take it with you for your family and for the animals and birds.”

The voice started to fade away and Noah knew it was time to go. At last, God was going to do something about

this sinful generation, he thought, forgetting for a moment the task ahead of him. When the thought returned, Noah was no longer concerned about the task ahead of him, because from the depths of his heart he knew God was with him and that was all he needed. In fact, knowing what was ahead for his fellowmen, Noah preferred much to be on God's side than on the side of this perverse generation.

The sun shone in all its glory, the next morning, its rays finding Noah still in bed. Normally, he would have been up already; somehow, there was good reason for sleeping late.

The sound of that booming voice hit Noah like a brick wall the moment he became conscious. His wife came into the room after she heard him stirring in bed. Noah yawned loudly.

"I was wondering if you were going to wake any at all," she said.

"Last night..." Noah said, looking a little dazed. He was getting much older now, thought one of his sons Shem, noticed yesterday. His entire hair was all white and those piercing eyes of his were no longer that evident. The wrinkles around his eyes were more than he had seen the last time he noticed, and they seemed to lack sleep.

Nevertheless, there was something about their father that would be admired forever. He was a strong believer in the God of his fathers and no one could lure him into living a life contrary to the divine laws.

"What about last night?"

"First I thought it was a dream but it was not, it was very real; the voice of God was no dream at all."

"The voice of God!" she gasped.

"Yes, it was God. Please get everybody together because what I'm about to say is very, very, important."

By the time Noah had something to eat, everyone was gathered to hear from him.

“The God of our fathers appeared to me last night,” Noah said, starting to speak slowly. He was not sure how they would react to what he was about to tell them. They could very well be wondering where God was in light of all the abominable things that were happening around them.

No one answered Noah. They all exchanged glances although at one point Shem seemed like he was about to say something. The room was quiet. A little wind blowing outside rustled some dry leaves that were at the entrance to the house. Noah stared at the leaves for a moment then at his family gathered before him.

“Our God isn’t sleeping. He sees and knows what is happening on the earth he created. He’s the Almighty One, the Holy One and knows everything,” Noah said calmly.

Realizing that no one wished to say anything Noah spoke with more ease. “He told me to build a boat, an ark, as he called it.”

“An ark!” Shem said, breaking the silence at the other end of the room,

“Yes my son, an ark. God will destroy this earth with a flood and only those who are in the ark will be saved.”

Noah could see a look of concern crawling all over their faces. Then he saw fear.

“We don’t have to worry. All of you here will be in the ark along with two of every kind of animals, birds, and creeping things. The rest of the earth will die for God is angry, very angry, with the wickedness on the land.”

“When will this be?” Ham asked.

“I don’t know. Beginning today, we will have to start building this ark, a giant boat that will take many years to build,” Noah said.

“How are we going to build such a huge vessel?”

“We can only accomplish such a task with the help of God,” Noah said reassuringly. “There’s no way we could do it by ourselves. Please remember God has chosen us for

this task and he wouldn't have done that if he knew we weren't going to do it."

"What will we tell the others?" his wife asked.

"We will warn them of the impending destruction. That is all we can do; God will take care of the rest. The way things are going I doubt anyone will hearken unto the warning. My children, I don't know how worse it can get on this earth."

"How will we get all those animals into the ark?" Japheth asked.

"My son, as I said before, all this is in the hands of the Living God. He will direct us and believe me, everything will go as he says they will go. He is God and not flesh and blood like us. Now let's get to work."

During the first week, Noah and his family started preparatory work for the construction of the ark as God had commanded. After the first few months, they laid the groundwork for the work to begin.

Some curious eyes saw what had been happening and one morning a group of them gathered at the site where Noah and his sons were building the ark.

"Noah! You must be a madman," a hairy-faced man shouted from the crowd. "Your God doesn't know you're a madman? Ha! Ha! Ha! What do you think you're doing Noah?" he laughed uncontrollably. There was a chorus of laughter from the burgeoning crowd.

Ham was disappointed that Noah paid them no attention. "Are you going to let them get away with that?" he asked his father.

"Let's do what we have to do, son. There's a lot to be done," Noah replied, continuing to chop a piece of gopher wood.

"Noah!" called another from the crowd. "Say Noah, how could you be such a fool to be duped into building a huge and wasteful boat? I expect better from you Noah."

Come and have a drink with me...here Noah, take a drink and forget this whole nonsense. Unless you want us to go fishing on that boat... but there is no sea nearby, Noah. Ha! Ha! Ha!”

“Come on Noah, let’s go and have some fun. Leave this to the gods. You cannot build such a huge boat? Furthermore, all your work will come to nothing, Noah,” said a short man with unkempt hair.

“Change your ways and listen to the living God,” Noah said suddenly, interrupting his work to turn his attention to them. He had been trying hard to ignore their taunts. “Your gods cannot speak or hear your prayers. Change from your wicked ways and listen to the only true God of Heaven and Earth. He’ll soon destroy all of you if you don’t stop your wicked ways.”

“How’s he going to do that Noah?” a young man yelled.

“He will destroy all of you in a great flood,” Noah replied.

“Ha! Ha! Ha! Hear this,” the same man who started asking the questions said, as he turned to face those that were behind him, “the God of Noah will destroy us in a flood. Can you believe how ridiculous this Noah is? He cannot stop all the violence on the earth but he’s going to kill all of us by a flood. Ha! Ha! Ha! Noah, you’re a dreamer, a big dreamer. You’re missing out on the fun ol’ man.”

Noah remembered what he thought was a dream the first time he heard God talking to him. Now, the reaction from these people made Noah more resolute in doing what God had commanded. He was convinced more than ever that he was doing the right thing. He could still hear God’s voice despite the fact that it had been many months now since that incident.

The months went by and the years, too. There were times Noah and his family felt like giving up but they toiled

on building the ark, and at the same, time warning the people of the impending doom. It had become almost a daily occurrence for people to gather at the entrance to the site to mock, jeer and laugh at Noah about his beliefs. Noah did what he had to do; work, work and work, and preach, preach and preach about the calamity that would befall the earth.

Noah and his family witnessed the hand of God in the construction of the ark. Many of the requirements that seemed insurmountable at times became a routine. Indeed, Noah saw and acknowledged that God had everything planned, and that plan progressed just as how God intended it to be.

Now Noah had but a few days before the ark was complete, a task he had started nearly one-hundred-and-twenty years ago. During that time, he had been warning about God's anger and the destruction of the Earth by a flood. After nearly one-hundred-and-twenty years, Noah did not have a single convert—only his family stayed truthful to God.

On the other hand, they never gave up on their mocking, teasing and ridiculing of Noah.

When Noah was nearing his six hundred years of existence, the ark was complete. He was lying in bed one night when that voice spoke to him again. This time Noah had no second thoughts about the identity of the voice. It was as if he was expecting to hear from his Master on about His next move.

“Come Noah, you and your household; go into the ark because you're the only righteous one in this generation. Of every clean beast, you shall take seven each, male and female; and of those that are not clean, you shall take two, the male and his female.

Of the fowls of the air, you shall take seven each, too, male and female; to keep the seed alive upon the face of the

earth. In seven days, and I'll cause it to rain upon the earth for forty days and forty nights; every living substance that I have made will I destroy from all the face of the earth."

Noah listened to God carefully and did as He had commanded.

When the people saw the animals going into the ark they did not question where they were all coming from. Noah and his family saw the miracle in that each animal, birds and creeping things found their way into the ark as if by their own accord. However, he knew the mighty power of God was at work in such an incredible fashion. But the people still laughed at him and continued with their unrighteous way of life.

Noah closed the door when all the living creatures were safely in the ark as God had commanded. Outside, people had started to gather around the ark. They glued their eyes to the huge front door as they heard the loud clanking sound signaling it had shut. They had no idea of what was to come, mainly because they did not believe Noah in the first place.

Inside the ark, Noah and his family waited anxiously for the fulfillment of the long-awaited flood. The sky overhead had started to turn from fleecy white to dark grey. Noah noticed it was getting darker rather quickly and he doubted it was mere coincidence. An unusually cool gust of wind that normally accompanied heavy rain was blowing from the east.

"It's going to rain," Japheth said, looking up into the sky.

"This must be it," Shem added.

"We're about to see the hand of God as He pours out His wrath and anger on a sinful and perverse generation," Noah said, with his hands akimbo.

Outside the ark, the boisterous crowd was more concerned with having a bellyful of laughter at Noah and what they believe was his silly ideas. They did not even

notice what was going on above until a big raindrop fell from the heavens with a loud spat, splashing up dust in front of them. Another one followed quickly, and another, and yet another. Then there were too many to count.

Eyes turned to the sky, and what they saw stunned them into silence. The hilarious utterances, the jeering, disdainful and outrageous outbursts ceased immediately. There was involuntary silence.

The huge raindrops started to pound on the loose soil around them, the smell of dry dirt choking their breathing. Thunder rolled in the heavens as if it was getting out of control. A streak of lightning seemed to have split the sky in two and this drove a never before seen fear and fright on the faces of those who had been laughing Noah to scorn all these years.

Screams of anguish filled the atmosphere breaking the short silence that crept upon them with the onset of the first raindrop. They hurled the first and loudest scream at Noah.

“Noooooooooaaah, open the door...open, the door...pleeeeeease,” shouted one frightened middle-aged man.

Noah and his family heard the scream. “Too late, it’s a pity,” Noah said sadly. “If only they had hearken to the words of the Almighty. This is it my children; the wrath of God has begun.”

They all looked on in silence; the screams got louder outside.

By now, the rain was coming down harder looking like thick sheets of hardened water slipping from the sky. It began around the ark and started to spread to the whole area, then into adjoining villages and towns and eventually the rain started around the entire Earth. As God had commanded, so it was done. It rained for forty days and forty nights.

The Earth opened up its bowels and all the underground sources pushed water up to the surface. Coupled with that pouring out from the sky, the waters of the great flood covered the entire earth. Indeed, the windows of heaven opened with vengeance. The pouring waters destroyed every living creature except for those in the ark.

During that period, Noah and his family worked hard to take care of themselves and the living creatures in the ark. The mighty hand of God was there to help in every way they could conceive, because without Him, such a enormous task could not have been accomplished.

The ark rested in the seventeenth day of the seventh month on the mountains of Ararat. At the end of the forty days, Noah sent a raven and a dove to determine whether the waters had dried up. But more time was needed; seven days later, another dove was sent and this time the dove returned with an olive leaf – a sign that the waters had abated.

The Earth was dry again on the twenty-and-seventh day of the second month. God spoke to Moses: “Go forth of the ark, you and your family and with all the living creatures that were with you, that they may breed abundantly, and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth.”

Noah built an altar unto God, and took of every clean beast, fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

And God smelled a sweet savour and said “I won’t again curse the ground anymore for man’s sake; for the imagination of a man’s heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I again smite anymore, everything living, as I have done.

God blessed Noah and his family and told them to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.