

Lesson 27

Noah's Ark

God told Noah to build a ship that would not sink.

Overview

Lesson Focus

The ark was as big as the Bible says it was. God's instructions for the ark were exactly what Noah needed to survive the flood. God told Noah to build a ship that would not sink, and he did. The little, silly, cute arks we sometimes see would never have lasted in the biblical flood. They would have sunk!

Key Passages

Genesis 6:14–15, 6:19–20

Memory Verse

John 10:9 I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

The account of Noah and the Ark is often taken as a mere fairy tale. The Bible, however, is the true History Book of the Universe, and we can have confidence in what it says about the Ark. Scripture reveals the basic dimensions of Noah's Ark—the length, width, and height. According to God's Word, it was massive—300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high (approximately 510 feet long, 85 feet wide, and 51 feet high based on a cubit of 20.4 inches). This is not like the whimsical drawings that depict the Ark as an overgrown houseboat with giraffes and other animals sticking out the top.

In addition to its size, God gave other specific information about the Ark in Genesis 6:14–16. Details in His instructions to Noah include the type of wood (gopher wood), a pitch coating inside and outside the Ark, a window finished a cubit from above, three decks, and a door set in the side of the Ark. The specificity in Scripture gives us confidence that this was a ship ordained by God to withstand the watery judgment soon to cover the entire earth.

However, a detailed design of the ship's hull is not given. Biblical creationists have historically depicted the Ark as a simple rectangular box. You will notice that the Ark shown in Answers Bible Curriculum goes beyond that rectangular configuration. This particular model was considered after much study and the determination that the Ark had to have been equipped to handle rough seas. This design was made by a mechanical engineer who studied the Flood and the Ark for nearly 13 years.

The rough seas confronting the Ark during the Flood are alluded to in Scripture.

Genesis 6:15—The Ark had the proportions of a seagoing vessel built for waves.

Genesis 7:18—The Ark moved about on the surface of the waters.

Genesis 7:19—A mountain-covering, global Flood would not be dead calm.

Genesis 8:1—God made a wind to pass over the earth.

Psalm 104:8—The earth's landmasses were shifting during the Flood. As they moved, it would cause tremendous turbulence in the waters.

By considering the full counsel of God's Word as well as historical information, we can be certain that the Ark was large enough to withstand a global Flood and had room for all of the animals God intended to be saved.

Historical/Apologetics Background

For centuries, scoffers have mocked the account of Noah and the Flood by arguing that it would have been impossible for the Ark to hold two of every species of animal. This supposition leads to the conclusion that the Flood account was not inspired by God, casting doubt on all of God's Word.

There are some serious misconceptions here that need to be corrected. First of all, God did not send representatives of all the "species" of animals to Noah—but the "kinds" of animals (Genesis 8:19). For example, Noah would not have had two African elephants, two Asian elephants, two mastodons, two mammoths, and two stegodons (these last three are now extinct). He would have needed only two representatives of the elephant kind. Then after the Flood when the animals spread out over all the earth, different species resulted from the tremendous amount of information God had designed into the genes of each of these animals as they adapted to their environment. Noah didn't need the number of animals many people think he did. There was plenty of room!

People think that most land animals are very large like elephants and giraffes. But only about 11% of land animals are larger than a sheep. So, the average size of the animals on the Ark would have been smaller than the size of a sheep.

Something else we often hear is that there is no way all the dinosaurs could have fit on the Ark. Although there are about 700 names of dinosaurs, all of them fall into approximately 50 different kinds of dinosaurs. And not all dinosaurs were huge like the brachiosaurus—many were much smaller. Even these larger animals were probably young when they boarded the Ark, taking up less room and still having their reproductive lives ahead of them.

The study of created kinds, called baraminology, is dependent on biblical truth. One of the tenets of this science is that the various kinds created by God do not interbreed with other kinds. Genesis clearly states that animals reproduce after their kind. And this is what real science shows—dogs produce dogs, cats produce cats, horses produce horses, etc. Secular scientists, however, continue to defend their belief that all life has common ancestry even though observable science has never recorded any "kind" changing into another "kind."

Another criticism of the Ark is that no wooden ship of this size would have held together. One of the greatest challenges in the construction of large wooden ships is finding a way to lay planks around the outside that will ensure little or no leaking. However, marine archaeologists have recently discovered a method of planking used on ancient Greek ships that had been lost for centuries. This may have been the method handed down for years—even from Noah’s day!

It is important to remember—and repeat to your students—that we have the History Book of the Universe—the Bible. We have an eyewitness to the account of Noah’s Flood and the judgment it brought. That eyewitness is God, our Creator; the source is the Bible, His infallible Word.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.

Limited License to Reproduce

A limited, non-exclusive, non-transferable, nonsublicensable license is hereby granted to a single local church or organization to print copies of the PDF materials in the Teacher Digital Resources if 1) you are the original purchaser; 2) you are using the copies for noncommercial purposes (such as for teaching in class) exclusively within your single local church or organization (multi-campus churches, and national/regional denominations are not covered under this license); and 3) you follow the instructions provided in the curriculum pertaining to the printable materials.

This license is for the specific purchaser of the product and does not include affiliated groups or organizations, or other churches or groups in the same denomination as the purchaser, not identified as the actual purchaser. There is no limit to the number of printed copies for use within the single local church or organization which is the actual purchaser. None of the material in this curriculum may be reproduced for any commercial promotion, advertising, or sale of a product or service, or to share with any other persons, churches, groups, or organizations.

The media (audio/video) portions are copyrighted and duplication is prohibited. This license is for materials in the Teacher Digital Resources only and does NOT include reproduction rights for pre-printed teacher books, student guides, student take home sheets, or posters, except on an emergency basis when purchased quantities are not sufficient for a given week.

Bible Version

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.