

PARASHAH: Noach (Noah)
ADDRESS: B'resheet (Genesis) 6:9-11:32
READING DATE: Shabbat
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(Note: all quotations are taken from the Complete Jewish Bible, translation by David H. Stern, Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., unless otherwise noted)

Let's begin with the opening blessing for the Torah:

***“Baruch atah YHVH, Eloheynu, Melech ha-‘Olam,
asher bachar banu m’kol ha-amim,
v’natan lanu eht Torah-to.
Baruch atah YHVH, noteyn ha-Torah.
Ameyn.”***

(Blessed are you, O' LORD, our God, King of the Universe,
you have selected us from among all the peoples,
and have given us your Torah.
Blessed are you, LORD, giver of the Torah.
Ameyn.)

This week's parashah (portion) is named after the main character of the piece: **Noach (Noah)**. It is a fitting parashah for us to look at, as, the condition that mankind found himself in during those days just prior to the world deluge, is very similar to that of mankind in our current time period. Knowing that history can be our best teacher sometimes, do you suppose that we should have learned our lesson the first time? Yes, I do believe that we should have. However, since we did not, the Torah has decidedly promised that in the days of the (second) coming of the Messiah (days, in which this Torah Teacher believes we are living), mankind would once again find himself in a state of such depravity that HaShem would have no choice but to render judgment again.

“For the Son of Man's coming will be just as it was in the days of Noach. Back then, before the Flood, people went on eating and drinking, taking wives and becoming wives, right up until the day that Noach entered the ark; and they didn't know what was happening until the Flood came and swept them all away. It will be just like that when the Son of Man comes” (Matthew 24:37-39).

As stated in our current parashah (8:21), and in it's corresponding **Haftarah (Isaiah 54:9)**, HaShem has promised never to destroy the world again by water. Yet, because of the continued evil condition of the hearts of men, he must render judgment once again, only this time the destruction will be by fire (2 Peter Chapter 3, specifically vs. 3-7). To be sure, the passage in 2 Peter also mentions the conditions in which we will be living which will usher in the return of

Messiah, and the Judgment of HaShem. So now that we have been sufficiently warned in advance, what shall we do to prepare ourselves?

The lessons to be learned from **Parashat Noach** are timeless. Moreover, the solution to the dilemma that is facing mankind is still the same—the mercy and providence of HaShem. In our last parashah, B’resheet, we learned how the Adversary tricked our first parents into **“running to the tree”** that God commanded them to stay away from. By their disobedience, death and sin have been introduced into the world, and as a result of that disobedience, all men are slaves to sin. But in this current portion, we find a glimmer of hope, one righteous man, of whom it is spoken,

אֱלֹהֵי תוֹלְדוֹת נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה
בְּדֹרוֹתָיו אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים הִתְהַלֵּךְ־נֹחַ

“Eyleh tol’dot Noach. Noach ish tzadik tamim hayah b’dorotayv eht-HaEhlohim heet’halekh-Noach”

(Here is the history of Noach. In his generation, Noach was a man righteous and wholehearted; Noach walked with God) (6:9)

The interesting fact about the Hebrew word translated as **“walked,”** is that it belongs to the causative, reflexive “hithpa’el” family of verbs. The root word **“halakh,”** is the same one that we get the word “halakhah,” meaning “the way in which to walk,” from. Essentially what the verse is saying to us is that Noach, because of his being found righteous, was found to be **“walking”** with God. What did Noach do which merited him such righteousness? Our answer is hinted at in the closing verse of last week’s portion:

וְנֹחַ מָצָא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה

“V’Noach matzah cheyn b’eyney ADONAI.”

(But Noach found grace in the sight of ADONAI) (6:8)

How did he find grace? Well, it is has been rightly stated that “grace is God’s unmerited favor, granted to us, in spite our sinful nature.” Simply put, grace cannot be earned! To bolster our application here, referring once again to the Haftarah, it says,

“Ho, every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Harken

diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in fatness” (Isaiah 55:1-2, RSV).

These verses speak about the unmerited providence of an all-loving God, one who delights in lavishing goodness upon his children. So HaShem chose to endow Noach with grace, but verse nine says that he was “righteous” as well. Now the New Covenant Scriptures add the final aspects of these very important qualities of his. In the “faith” chapter of Hebrews eleven, we read,

“By trusting, Noach, after receiving divine warning about things as yet unseen, was filled with holy fear and built an ark to save his household. Through his trusting, he put the world under condemnation and received the righteousness that comes from trusting” (11:7).

So we see that, in spite of the unbelievably, magnificent instructions given him by the LORD, Noach walked the invisible road of faith, just like everyone else, who names the name of ADONAI, is expected to walk! He wasn't some super-human faith hero, endowed with abnormal amounts of trust! He was, in fact, singled out to receive a prophetic word about the impending judgment that was to befall all of mankind. Yet, once he received the instructions to begin building the ark, the word was out! He obediently acted in faith, with regards to HaShem's instruction (Genesis 7:22) and the impending calamity, which was, as of yet, unseen (Hebrews 11:1a, 7b)! The remaining mass of humanity wasn't asked to build the ark, they were only instructed (via Noach's preaching, 2 Peter 2:5) to get into the ark. HaShem promised that any who would “**run to the tree**” of safety, that is, to the ark that Noach was building, would find life. Moreover, the very same floodwaters that destroyed that wicked and perverse generation, were the very same waters that floated the ark to safety! But the same Adversary, who was at work in the Garden, was the same one at work in the world of Noach's day also. In the Garden, he tricked mankind into “**running to the tree**” when God said “stay away”; in Noach's situation, the Adversary tricked mankind into “**running from the tree**” that God said to “run to!”

And so it continues to our day. The imaginations of the hearts of man are continually evil, and so, as the Torah has promised, God's Judgment must come. In fact, according to the Torah, when the provision of a righteous and holy God has already been manifested among mankind, then the world is, in a sense, judged already. Why? Because, **rejection of the provision of God, in the midst our own sinful state of existence, is nothing short of rejection of God himself—and rejection of God equals judgment!** This is why the Torah says, of the generation living in Noach's day, “**he put the world under condemnation**” (Hebrews 11:7b). This is also why it is said of Yeshua's first coming,

“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (John 3:17-21, KJV).

We learn from these verses that, not only are unbelieving, sinful men condemned by the provision of Yeshua’s bloody atonement, but, that HaShem’s ultimate solution to the dilemma facing mankind today, is accomplished **solely** by faithfully trusting and accepting his Only and Unique Son! Therefore, what is expected of us? The Torah is consistently clear on this point:

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6, KJV).

What must we do? In our wicked and perverse generation, a loving God has provided, once again, an “ark of safety,” whereby we can **“run into it”** and find peace and safety from the impending storm. What is that ark? This time, the ark has not been made with human hands, instead it has been made from the tree— from the branch—of the man whose name is “Branch”!

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked” (Isaiah 11:1-4, KJV).

This righteous “branch” is non other than Yeshua ben-Yosef, ben-David, the Mashiach of Isra’el and of the entire world! Today, the Adversary is telling men, **“Run away from the tree!”** But God is bidding us, **“Run to the tree!”** The remaining verses of our parashah go on to detail the history following the world deluge. The unfortunate incident with Noach and his drunkenness is indeed a sobering story (no pun intended). But this moment of weakness doesn’t discredit him from being counted in the pages of God’s righteous heroes of Hebrews Chapter eleven. The Torah doesn’t expect perfection from its followers, it

anticipates failure, and consequently, makes the provision for correction. Even when mankind, once again, corporately decided to build a name for himself instead of for God (Genesis 11:1-4), our loving Father set out to repair the damage. First, by thwarting the evil intentions of men, and then by overseeing (keeping an accurate record of) the birth of another righteous man—Avram. To be sure, HaShem had wonderful plans in store for this simple man from Ur, but those details shall have to wait until next week's parashah.

For now, let me reiterate the main point of my commentary this week:

If we would, but put our trusting faithfulness in HaShem, through his Son Yeshua, then his **“ark of safety”** will lift us, and we will ride upon the very same “waters of destruction” which are coming to destroy the wickedness of sinful humanity!

The closing blessing is as follows:

***“Baruch atah YHVH, Eloheynu, Melech ha-‘Olam,
asher natan lanu Toraht-emet,
v’chay-yeh o’lam nata-b’tochenu.
Baruch atah YHVH, noteyn ha-Torah.
Ameyn.”***

(Blessed are you O' LORD, our God, King of the Universe,
you have given us your Torah of truth,
and have planted everlasting life within our midst.
Blessed are you, LORD, giver of the Torah.
Ameyn.)

“Shabbat Shalom!”

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