

Noach — Noah
3 Cheshvan 5782 — October 9, 2021
Torah: Gen 6:9-11:32
Haftorah: Isa 54:1-55:5 (A), Isa 54:1-10 (S)
Apostolic: Mat 24:36-44

Genesis 6:9 These are the offspring of Noah — Noah was a righteous man, perfect in his generations; Noah walked with God.

¹⁰ Noah had begotten three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹Why did Noah, so praised by the Torah and the inaugurator of a new world, not become an Abraham? Why was he not able to be the great prophet for monotheism at the time when humanity was reborn? This question is posed by our Sages. What we have already observed supplies part of the answer to it. But our Sages add that **Noah was unable to fight vigorously enough against the immorality of his age.** He was unable to convince his fellowmen as Abraham could. He did not intercede on their behalf before God, as Abraham did for the people of Sodom. He accepted rescue from death for just himself and his family. in contrast to Moses, who immediately cried out, when God threatened Israel with destruction and offered to make him alone into a great nation: "Oh, forgive their sin! And if not, blot me out of Your book which You have written" (Exodus 32:32). Moses did not want to outlive his people under any circumstances; he preferred to share their fate (Midrash and Zohar). In short, then, **Noah was the man who closed himself up inside in his "Ark," remaining righteous for himself and his family, leaving the others to their fate.**

To be sure, reply those of our Sages who judge Noah favorably, all throughout the 120 years of building the Ark **Noah did not relent from reproving, warning, and explaining what was at stake to his contemporaries** (Rashi, verse 14) in order to bring about their repentance. **He was unafraid of their sarcasm, their ridicule, their threats and insults.** Nevertheless, he kept a certain distance from them, feeling that it would be better not to risk coming under their influence over his own loyalty to God. He went so far as to abstain from having a family until 500 years of age, whereas all his ancestors and contemporaries had families much earlier. **He was afraid to raise a family in so corrupt a society. He feared that he would not be able to give them a wholesome upbringing.** Not until twenty years after the destruction was proclaimed, only after 500 years of walking with God," alone and solitary, did Noah have the courage to become a father, after God had given him to understand that the perpetuation of the human race would devolve upon him (Rashi ibid.).

Thus, whatever criticism Noah was subjected to, **the Torah honors him with the title נָחִיָּם² and approves of his conduct.** It was Noah who, **in the face of the worst catastrophe** which man has known, was found worthy to save the human race. Noah has been criticized for not imploring God to save his generation as Abraham did for Sodom's inhabitants, but Noah finds justification in that in his time **ten righteous people could not be found. Noah and his family, who survived in the Ark, numbered only eight.** Just like Abraham, Noah knew that in such a case at least ten righteous people had to be found (cf. Ohr HaChaim, who gives still other reasons to justify Noah).

¹ Commentary by Rabbi Elie Munk, The Call of the Torah: An Anthology of Interpretation and Commentary on the Five Books of Moses, Bereishis. Noach. p93. © 1994 Mesorah Publications, Ltd.

² נָחִיָּם tsaddiq, righteous

What does it mean to be righteous?

Tsaddiq (righteous): ³Basically connotes conformity to an ethical or moral standard... The original significance of the root... “to be straight”... “The LORD is righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works (Ps 145:17).”

The earliest usages... occur in relation to the functions of judges. All of their deliverances or decisions are to be according to the truth and without partiality (Lev 19:15). It is applied similarly to weights and measures (Lev 19:36).

Commercial fraud and deception are not allowed... the basic sense of “not deviating from the standard...”

The man who is righteous tries to preserve the peace and prosperity of the community by fulfilling the commands of God in regard to others. In the supreme sense the righteous man is one who serves God (Mal 3:18). Specifically, he, like Job, delivers the poor and orphan, helps the blind along the way, supports the weak and is a father (provider) to the poor (Job 29:12–15). This was the righteous “clothing” of Job’s life. To return the poor man’s pledged coat before sundown so that it may serve as his night clothes is righteousness (Deut 24:13), the purpose in this case being the man’s comfort. But the “righteousness” consisted in obedience to God’s law and conformity to God’s nature, having mercy for the needy and helpless. Among other righteousnesses of Job were his care for the traveler (Job 31:31–32), eschewing wealth for its own sake (31:24–25), thus not victimizing himself or others in its pursuit. Nor did he squeeze out of his servants the last ounce of effort (31:13) having their limits of strength and comfort in mind. Job’s long oath of innocence was a declaration of righteousness as the three friends recognized (32:1).

The ṣaddiq gives freely (Ps 37:21), without regard for gain. The presence of this kind of people is the exaltation of the nation (Prov 14:34), and the memory of the righteous man is a blessing. When men follow God, righteousness is said to dwell in the city (Isa 1:21). But when sin rules, it becomes a harlot. To rule on behalf of the wicked for a price is perversion of righteousness, for it takes away the righteousness (decency, Godlikeness) of the righteous (Isa 5:23). David was (more) righteous than Saul because he refused to slay Saul when unprotected (1 Sam 24:7), although God seemingly had given Saul into his hands. The source of all this righteous conduct is the bestowal of God’s judgments (or laws) and righteousness on his people (Ps 72:1–2).

Amos cried for justice in the gates (5:15, 24) that is, that right institutions be rightly administered. All who function in public areas are to be righteous in all they do—not for all they do. Beautiful singing will not persuade God to accept corrupt religious practice (Amos 5:23–24). Jeremiah declares that justice and righteousness together means to deliver the weak, to do no violence to them, nor to shed innocent blood. This righteousness will preserve the city (Jer 22:14).

Whether by nations or individuals, righteous conduct can only be secured by plowing up fallow ground, sowing in righteousness, and reaping in mercy, i.e. making a new base for righteousness (Hos 10:12). All must become new persons whose actions are governed by the law of God. Righteous conduct issues from a new heart (Ezk 36:25–27). Habakkuk puts it another way: the just shall live by his faith (Hab 2:4). Isaiah (32:15–17) couples righteousness with the work of the Spirit, all resulting in peace and therefore eternal, assured quietness. It is possible that this thought lies behind the figure in Ps 85:10 [H 11], “Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” Because there has been reconciliation between man and God, peace comes to bless his way. Isaiah apparently refers to the state of these people: “thy people shall all be righteous.” True ethics derive from imparted righteousness.

³ Stigers, Harold G. “1879 צדק.” Ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke. Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament 1999 : 752–754.

¹¹ Now the earth had become corrupt before God; and the earth had become filled with robbery. ¹² And God saw the earth and behold it was corrupted, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth. ¹³ God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with robbery through them; and behold, I am about to destroy them from the earth. ¹⁴ Make for yourself an Ark of gopher wood; make the Ark with compartments, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵ This is how you should make...

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At several points the Torah notes that moral corruption reigned. One might think that even if the youth were debauched, and marriages immoral, still, commerce and civic life in general would remain unaffected. However, **when the corruption on earth is flaunted before God, no human institution can save the society from its ruin.** Indeed, a society will never fall because of גַּזְלָה (gazel) open robbery, for it knows how to protect itself against such crimes, by prisons and penalties. But it is חֲמָסָה (hamas) which leads society to its destruction. This word means a crime committed through cunning or malice, a crime which human justice has not the means to pursue, a crime which only the voice of conscience could prevent. **When this voice is smothered in a society wallowing in immorality, then nothing can avert the catastrophe.**

¹³ God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh

"Wherever you find debauchery and idolatry, a general destruction takes place which does not differentiate between the guilty and the innocent" (Rashi). Nonetheless, Noah was spared. A צַדִּיק גָּמָר (tsaddiq gamar), a "perfectly righteous" person, remains invulnerable even at a time when "the angel of death receives the power to strike and no longer differentiates between the righteous and the sinful." But even he must not defy the angel of death. He should not expose himself to the danger but had best take refuge in his home, just as the Jews did in Egypt on the night when the firstborn of the Egyptians perished (Exodus 12:22). That is why God shut Noah in the Ark.

¹⁴ Make for yourself an Ark of gopher wood; make the Ark with compartments, and cover it inside and out with pitch.

Only twice does the word תֵּבָה (teba) appear in the Torah: here and in Exodus 2:3, to designate the wicker basket which protected Moses and kept him from drowning in the Nile. In both cases, the תֵּבָה plays the same role; **it saves a redeemer from death: the redeemer of humanity and the redeemer of the chosen people.** In both cases it serves as **a prefiguration of "the Ark of the Covenant"**, which contained the treasure of humanity. In one case it was Moses, the future prophet of the covenant with Jewry, who was protected; in the other Noah, to whom God promised the covenant with mankind just as he entered the Ark, as it is written: But I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall enter the Ark (verse 18). Thus, the sacred Ark has remained for Jewry the symbol of their salvation and the salvation of all mankind.

John ¹⁴ "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in (into) God; believe also in (into) me. ² **In my Father's house are many rooms.** If it were not so, would I have told you that **I go to prepare a place for you?** ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that **where I am you may be also.** ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going." ⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" ⁶ Yeshua said to him, **"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**

⁴*pitch* (כָּפַר *kapar*): Pitch, bitumen, asphalt was used in early antiquity as an adhesive to hold inlays into statues. It was a logical material for caulking the ark as specified both in the Bible and the Babylonian flood story.

(כִּפּוּר *kippur*): Atonement. kapporet. Mercy seat. These two nouns are derived from the verb as used in the intensive stem: The first is used today in the name of the Jewish holiday Yom Kippur “Day of Atonement” which is the tenth day of the seventh month, Tishri.

(כַּפֹּרֶת *kapporet*): Mercy seat. This noun is used twenty-seven times and always refers to **the golden cover of the Ark of the Covenant** in the Most Holy Place of the Tent of Meeting and later there Temple. It was from above the mercy seat that God promised to meet with men (Num 7:89). The word, however, is not related to mercy and of course was not a seat. The word is derived from the root “to atone.”

(כֹּפֶר *koper*): Ransom. Every Israelite was to give to the service of the sanctuary the “ransom” money of half a shekel (Ex 30:12). Egypt, in God’s sight, was given as a “ransom” for the restoration of Israel (Isa 43:3). **This word “ransom” is parallel to the word “redeem”** (pādā, which see) in Ps 49:7. There is a warning that a man guilty of murder must be killed—no “ransom” can be given in exchange for his life (Num 35:31). The word is also used in a bad sense as a “bribe” which wrongly purchases favor (I Sam 12:3).

From the meaning of *kōper* “ransom,” the meaning of *kāpar* can be better understood. **It means “to atone by offering a substitute.”** The great majority of the usages concern the priestly ritual of sprinkling of the sacrificial blood thus “making an atonement” for the worshipper. There are forty-nine instances of this usage in Leviticus alone and no other meaning is there witnessed. The verb is always used in connection with the removal of sin or defilement, except for Gen 32:20; Prov 16:14; and Isa 28:18 where the related meaning of “appease by a gift” may be observed.

Ransom / Redeemed

*Matthew 20:20 Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. ²¹ And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.” ²² Yeshua answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.” ²³ He said to them, “You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.” ²⁴ And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. ²⁵ But Yeshua called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ²⁶ It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, ²⁸ even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and **to give his life as a ransom for many.**” (see, Mark 10:45)*

*1 Timothy 2:1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ² for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. ³ This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Messiah Yeshua, ⁶ **who gave himself as a ransom for all,** which is the testimony given at the proper time.*

1 Peter 1:13 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Yeshua Messiah. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not

⁴ Harris, R. Laird. “1024 כָּפַר.” Ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke. Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament 1999 : 453.

*be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,¹⁶ since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”¹⁷ And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,¹⁸ **knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways** inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Messiah, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.²⁰ He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you²¹ who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*

*Titus 2:11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Yeshua Messiah,¹⁴ **who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.***