

## Engaging Gospel Doctrine (Episode 83.2)

### LESSON 6 (STUDY NOTES)

[“Noah ... Prepared an Ark to the Saving of His House”](#)

Hook	This is a hard lesson. And if people don't realize it is a hard lesson, that is even a bigger problem. talk about what a linchpin lesson this is, implications about nature of God, history, interpretation of scripture.. vital need for “challenge and be challenged by” approach
Goal	Class members should appreciate the message of covenant and renewal in these stories, while also feeling empowered to challenge them for their problematic elements.
Overview	(see below)
Conclusion	

(In the lesson point out the discrepancy in the reading assignments between the print and online manuals)

<http://news.msn.com/pop-culture/british-museum-prototype-for-noahs-ark-was-round>

#### I. Sunday School

- a. Framing thoughts/warnings (bring up how problematic literal belief in this story is. This section will present it as constructively as possible, but I still recommend towards the end asking if anyone has any questions or comments about the flood story, or if it would go over even ask if anyone has ever been bothered by it)
- b. God of the Flood (focus on Moses reading, sorrow, regret)
- c. Go over Bible reading (Use the Jewish Study Bible, lots of good points to bring up even in a Sunday School context)
- d. Environmentalism and the Flood
- e. <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/environmental-stewardship-conservation>
- f. Covenants and renewal (both scriptural and personal application)

#### II. Other Reading

Flood in biblical context (go over how the flood fits into the surrounding narrative, Alter quote)  
Some critics have plausibly imagined this whole large process of biblical literature as a divine experiment with the quirky and unpredictable stuff of human freedom, an experiment plagued by repeated failure and dedicated to renewed attempts: first Adam and Eve, then the generation of Noah, then the builders of the Tower of Babel, and finally Abraham and his seed. –Robert Alter, *The Four Books of Moses*

- a. (Use and recommend the Jewish Study Bible notes, bring up Tsohar) (go through reading from a more analytical perspective)
- b. Read the two flood narratives
- c. Flood in literary context (Other ANE myths)
  - i. Sumerian: about 1600 BC, in Sumerian Ziusudra
  - ii. Atrahasis: Babylonia, somewhere 2000-1500 bc abouts (Humans were so noisy Enlil wanted to flood them, but Enki warned Atrahasis, who built a boat.
  - iii. Epic of Gilgamesh: Uta-napishtim, Our version in Akkadian 2000 or so, copied from older traditions going back possibly to near 3000 (Read from Kugel)
    1. Similarities are striking
- d. Tower of Babel in biblical and historical context
  - i. Function of the Biblical story (Babu-ilu, “gate of God”)
  - ii. Note the competing tradition in Genesis 10 (review)
  - iii. “Confusing of languages”
    1. Proto-Semitic (dates to the 4000s BC)
    2. Original language? (50-70k years ago, East Africa? Possibly a click language?)

### III. Study Notes

- a. Flood in LDS culture, scripture and theology (bring up the manual suggestions, literal quotes in institute manuals, etc) (set the stage)

If your classroom is large enough, ask several class members to stand in a straight line, with their arms outstretched and their fingertips touching the fingertips of the person next to them. Explain that it would take approximately 85 class members standing this way to make a line the same length as the ark that Noah built.

Show the chart at the end of the lesson to help class members visualize the size of Noah's ark in comparison to ships that may be more familiar.

- b. Theological critique of the flood
- c. Is there any way this could be ok? Does Moses help?
- d. Again down the Rabbit hole (bring in science)
  - i. Flood (Ether parallels Noah story) Ether 13:2: 2 For behold, they rejected all the words of Ether; for he truly told them of all things, from the beginning of man; and that after the waters had receded from off the face of this land it became a choice land above all other lands, a chosen land of the Lord; wherefore the Lord would have that all men should serve him who dwell upon the face thereof; (That doesn't have to refer to the Biblical flood, does it?)
- e. Tower of Babel (Task: How can the Book of Mormon be historical even if the Tower of Babel and flood are not?)
  - 1. "Limited tower model" There was a tower building, scattering, potential confusing experience, but not exactly the way Ether or Genesis describe
  - 2. Book of Mormon translated/adapted to Joseph's worldview. Which goes along with 1 but can also go deeper... Whatever was on the gold plates, Joseph could have made a connection to the tower of babel story and thus the connections became tighter in our English version.
  - 3. The Book of Mormon is not literal and the Pearl Ether 1:33. Which Jared came forth with his brother and their families, with some others and their families, from the great tower, at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, and swore in his wrath that they should be scattered upon all the face of the earth; and according to the word of the Lord the people were scattered. (And this plot point continues the rest of the Chapter, with the Jaredites presumably continuing to speak Adamic... but not necessarily. This presents more of a problem than the Book of Moses, which is clearly dependent on the Biblical flood passages for example.

- a. The (frequent) absurdity of scripture
- b. What we gain from challenging and being challenged by these narratives

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/me/c/cuneiform\\_the\\_atrahas\\_is\\_epic.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/me/c/cuneiform_the_atrahas_is_epic.aspx)

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/me/t/the\\_flood\\_tablet.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/me/t/the_flood_tablet.aspx)

Gilgamesh: <http://sacred-texts.com/ane/eog/>

(Read from Kugel)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/15/science/15language.html>

## Flood Sources

### J

7:1-5, 7, 16b-20, 22-23; 8:2b-3a, 6, 8-12, 13b, 20-22

<sup>7</sup>Then the LORD said to Noah, ‘Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you alone are righteous before me in this generation. <sup>2</sup>Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and its mate; and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and its mate; <sup>3</sup>and seven pairs of the birds of the air also, male and female, to keep their kind alive on the face of all the earth. <sup>4</sup>For in seven days I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.’ <sup>5</sup>And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him. <sup>7</sup>And Noah with his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. <sup>16</sup>...and the LORD shut him in.

<sup>17</sup> The flood continued for forty days on the earth; and the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. <sup>18</sup>The waters swelled and increased greatly on the earth; and the ark floated on the face of the waters. <sup>19</sup>The waters swelled so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered; <sup>20</sup>the waters swelled above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. <sup>22</sup>everything on dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of

life died. <sup>23</sup>He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, human beings and animals and creeping things and birds of the air; they were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those that were with him in the ark. <sup>2</sup>...and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, <sup>3</sup>...and the waters gradually receded from the earth.

6 At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made <sup>8</sup>Then he sent out the dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground; <sup>9</sup>but the dove found no place to set its foot, and it returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took it and brought it into the ark with him. <sup>10</sup>He waited another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark; <sup>11</sup>and the dove came back to him in the evening, and there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. <sup>12</sup>Then he waited another seven days, and sent out the dove; and it did not return to him any more.

13 ...and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and saw that the face of the ground was drying.

20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. <sup>21</sup>And when the LORD smelt the pleasing odour, the LORD said in his heart, 'I will never again curse the ground because of humankind, for the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth; nor will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done.

<sup>22</sup> As long as the earth endures,  
seedtime and harvest, cold and heat,  
summer and winter, day and night,  
shall not cease.'

P

7:6, 8-16a, 21, 24; 8:1-2a, 3b-5, 7, 13a, 14-19

6 Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came on the earth. <sup>8</sup>Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, <sup>9</sup>two and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. <sup>10</sup>And after seven days the waters of the flood came on the earth.

11 In the six-hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened.<sup>12</sup>The rain fell on the earth for forty days and forty nights.<sup>13</sup>On the very same day Noah with his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons, entered the ark,<sup>14</sup>they and every wild animal of every kind, and all domestic animals of every kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every bird of every kind—every bird, every winged creature.<sup>15</sup>They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life.<sup>16</sup>And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him...<sup>21</sup>And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, domestic animals, wild animals, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all human beings;<sup>24</sup>And the waters swelled on the earth for one hundred and fifty days.

8But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and all the domestic animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided;<sup>2</sup>the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed... At the end of one hundred and fifty days the waters had abated;<sup>4</sup>and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.<sup>5</sup>The waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared.<sup>7</sup>and sent out the raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth.

13 In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth...<sup>14</sup>In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.<sup>15</sup>Then God said to Noah,<sup>16</sup>'Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you.<sup>17</sup>Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.'<sup>18</sup>So Noah went out with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives.<sup>19</sup>And every animal, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out of the ark by families.

Atrahasis

Epic of Gilgamesh

LDS scripture presents not a product to be worshipped, but a pattern to be followed