

Genesis 6:5-22

The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, 'I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created—people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.' But Noah found favour in the sight of the Lord.

Noah Pleases God

These are the descendants of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God. And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw that the earth was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon the earth. And God said to Noah, 'I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; now I am going to destroy them along with the earth. Make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above; and put the door of the ark in its side; make it with lower, second, and third decks. For my part, I am going to bring a flood of waters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And of every living thing, of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind, two of every kind shall come in to you, to keep them alive. Also take with you every kind of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them.' Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

"He did all that God commanded him."

This wasn't an Ikea pre-packed home assembly project for Lockdown. This task was an enormous undertaking. The other day I decided to buy a new saw and blades for my electric saw – a quick trip to a DIY store, a number of minutes pondering the merits of which type of saw to purchase and the merits of the multi-pack blades and I came away ready to do something with wood. It will not be an ark.

Where was Noah to start? Just imagine if you had three sons and daughters-in-law how would you organise the troops to carry out the job. (Anita would have 999 on speed dial.)

What an amazing story, which is reflected in many other cultures storybooks. And at the end of the building and the collecting we get a summary "He did all that God commanded him."

A couple of evenings ago I watched a programme about London Zoo during lockdown. 20,000 animals needed feeding with about 8000 different menus. It is bad enough at times deciding what we should eat but catering for that many would be a horrendous task.

When we were in full lockdown from the middle of March, no going out except for essential food shopping, medical needs and exercise once a day the story of Noah had an amazing relevance in terms of a long period of time with the one household living under the one roof. Some said Noah had an advantage – pet therapy.

Whatever we make of this story it demonstrates grace as a gift of God to those who seek to follow his ways.

God is depicted as being totally fed up with that which was going on on earth. Violence and corruption all over the place – God was ready to wipe it all out and start again and who could blame God? This was not what he had spent time creating for.

Yet there was one family that were different, who found favour with the Lord; and so there is the image of a new creation; once more with chaotic water, a family and a group of animals blessed by God.

Re-creation is a God gift, recreation is a God gift; life without rest is destructive; and on the 7th day God rested.