

98-07-12b

We resume our study this morning now in Genesis chapter 8. We've seen that the ark rested, it no'acht, it no'ed, in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. This, by the way, is exactly five months, five thirty-day months, 150 days, if you look back at verse 11 of chapter 7. The second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up. But the ark comes into a place of rest.

It ceases from its turbulent motion that was noted in verse 18 of chapter 7, on the seventeenth day of the seventh month. One hundred and fifty days, just as it says in verse 3. But there are clues here that give us more of a graphic picture of exactly what's happening with the ark. And this, believe it or not, is important.

It's important for us to understand the progress that is given to us in such detail. When I first studied this account in detail, it was a little frustrating to me because things that I was interested in got no attention, no mention, no details. I wondered how Noah built the ark.

Where did he get the boards? Did he have to go chop down the trees? Did they have lumber yards? He went down and said, yeah, I'd like a couple of truckloads of gopher wood. I'll have some two-by-sixes and some two-by-fours. Did he peg them together? Did Shem, Ham, and Japheth help him? How long did it take? Did he use a scaffold? Did people mock him? There's no information whatsoever about that whole process, which to me would be fascinating.

And on purpose, the Bible doesn't say anything except verse 22. That whole effort of building this huge vessel, how many buckets of pitch did it take? A lot of times they like to give you statistics. The Titanic, they go back to the Titanic, they tell you how much steel and how many rooms, and they go through all the fittings, and they drop the camera down in the ocean and ghostly images of the thing barnacle-encrusted down there.

They just revel over all the details. The Bible doesn't say a word about the ark except God's blueprint for the dimensions, and then three words. Thus, Noah did.

God said it. Noah did it. This is an immense effort, and it tells you God's view of our efforts.

It's his plan. It's his forward movement in human history that counts. God says something, we do it.

The emphasis is not on our effort and our labor. It's on our faith. There's much more mention and emphasis on Noah's faith and Noah's righteousness than there is on Noah's

carpentry skills.

Now, if we had one of these things happen today, somebody got a vision from God that the tribulation was about to take place, and instead of the rapture, we were going to have some kind of a blimp that was going to take us up to meet the Lord in the air, and some modern-day Noah got the blueprints, we would be all taken up with the effort, with the human engineering and the wonderful day-to-day activity that this is all involved in. We do this in ministries all the time, don't we? We count heads. We count coups.

We number our scouts. We paint silhouettes on our fuselage every time somebody gets saved. How many people came? How many made decisions? How many brought their Bibles? How many gave their offering? How many brought a friend? I've told you this before, but whenever I start thinking about the quantification that we like to do as Christians, I had such a sore temptation when I was in a large church with its own auditorium and the traditional tote board up on the wall behind and to one side, over by the organ where everybody can see it.

You've got your little board with your movable black-and-white numbers, attendance this Sunday, attendance last Sunday, and so forth. And when we get hung up on that kind of thing, that's what we post on the wall. Not even a verse, but attendance figures.

One year ago, this Sunday, last Sunday, how many came? I was so tempted. In retrospect, I probably should have just gone ahead and done it, but I wanted to just do like Moses. Grab that thing off the wall and just shatter it on the pulpit.

Say, this is not it. I would have probably been ridden out on a rail. But it's not the quantification that counts.

It's the faith behind it. If we obey, if we can have it said of us like it is of Noah, thus we did. God said it and thus we did.

That's what counts. It's obedience to God's Word. Noah built the ark according to God's design.

He didn't get fancy and say, you know, I'd really like to have a little balcony here that I can look out and watch the destruction. I'd really like to have a window. You know, Mrs. Noah's got these curtains and there's no place to hang them.

I think I'll just put a little window here. What can it hurt? He follows God's design exactly. He doesn't deviate.

He doesn't embellish. He doesn't modify. Any modification to this design is going to result in drowning because God has given him the perfect thing.

We don't modify the Christian life to suit our taste. We don't try to fancy it up. You know,

if I put a nice little entryway on the outside of the ark, if I build a nice gangplank and fancy it up, maybe some more people will want to come in.

If I make the ark more attractive, maybe if I change the design a little bit so that people will think, well, it's sort of a recreation place. It's kind of an amusement park. I can change it around and make it a happy place where people will want to come.

Maybe there'll be more than just my family. This is what people do with salvation and with Christianity today. We try to dress it up.

We try to change the design of God. We try to make it attractive. God is in the business of saving.

God designs it. God builds it. And we have to have faith that he knows what he's doing, which, when you think about it in that light, is pretty obvious.

God does know what he's doing. He's been doing it ever since before man arrived on the scene. We don't need to mess with the divine design.

It only corrupts. It only makes things worse. What God said, Noah did.

You can't think about that too much. When you think about Noah, you think about the ark. What we ought to think about when we think of Noah is obedience.

That's why he's righteous. That's why he's blameless. That's why he walks with God.

Because when God speaks, Noah listens, and he pays close attention. He didn't organize a roundup to get the animals, but he did go out and organize a harvest. And he gets the food, and he puts it in the ark because that's a specific command of God.

And that is what's going to sustain those who come to Noah when the time is right. One week, Noah has no idea. God didn't say in the first statement, oh, by the way, you've got 430 days here to build the ark.

God just says, build it. He doesn't tell Noah when the destruction is coming, how it's coming. He just says, get ready.

And Noah does it. Then, one week, by the way, when you think about a week, isn't it an interesting thing? I mentioned before the measure of time based on 60s and on 6s. This seems to have prevailed in the early days, and we still have remnants of it in society today.

Why do we have 60 minutes in an hour? Why do we have 60 seconds in a minute? Why do we have 360 degrees in a circle? It goes back to things that are based on 60. The prophetic year in Scripture is a 360-day year. Why? Because prior to the flood, before this calamity struck, the earth had a perfect rotation.

It had a perfect revolution, and it had a 360-day year. And God, in some contexts, still measures according to that perfect standard, even though after this cataclysm, and maybe God threw a comet at the earth, it collapsed the canopy or whatever. Whatever mechanism he used, he could have just spoken a divine word and made it happen, but the earth got knocked off its axis.

The canopy of protective water on the outside collapsed, and that accounts for the amount of water that is sufficient to cover the mountains. God rearranged the whole surface of the planet, and the planet isn't like it used to be. It's not protected from cosmic radiation and the destructive elements in sunlight that were shielded by the canopy.

We're not protected, as living things were before the flood, from things that cause mutations and cancers and so forth just from sunlight. The day has changed. The earth has slowed down.

It's been rocked by a cataclysm. Now it takes 365 days instead of 360 to get around the orbit of the sun. But everything was based on 60s.

So if this is the model, and it's persisted down to this day, why do we have a seven-day week? You think about, well, you know, it's a lunar thing. You've got 28 or 29 1/2 days in a lunar month. Well, that doesn't divide by seven.

How did we end up with a seven-day week? Universally, throughout the world, people observe a seven-day week. We figure a cycle is seven days. Based on what? It doesn't come from astronomy.

It doesn't come from observing the moon. A 360 or 365-day year, either one, does not divide by seven. A month doesn't divide by seven.

Why not have, if it was all based on 30-day months, why not have five six-day weeks? That's a nice multiple of six and so forth. But you have this extra day thrown in. And when you stop and think about it, obviously, knowing that the Bible is true, it goes back to the creation week.

But we tend to just breeze on by, and we don't realize that here, the week is being reinforced. Where, after creation, where do you have any reference to weeks? This is the first place. One week before the flood, God comes to Noah, exactly seven days prior.

So you get the idea that even in this early time, people are measuring their time in seven-day weeks. We're going to see Noah, when he sends the birds out of the ark, intervals of seven days. Why seven days? Why not six days? Why not five six-day weeks? Once again, it's a constant reminder that you've got the odd day in there.

You've got six days in which you labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a day

dedicated to God. And you think, well, now, wait a minute. This is going to throw everything off.

If I start measuring in sevens instead of sixes, it's not symmetrical anymore. But there's a lesson in that, and I would not die for this. I just think it's an interesting observation that when we make that seventh day, when we reserve it and set it aside in our measure of time, and we say that seventh day is dedicated to God, it doesn't throw everything off.

Seven is the number of perfection. Seven is the number of completion. We do just fine with seven-day weeks, even though it seems to throw the nice, neat symmetry of the number system out of whack.

It works out great. You never mess up your life by making time for God. You never hurt yourself by reserving the time that God requires.

And sometimes we unconsciously think that we will. My first experience with this, the first time I really had this put to the test in my own experience was when I was in school, when I was at the Naval Academy. And the time pressures are intense.

I wasn't a very good student. I didn't have much background, and my academics were just marginal, and I didn't know whether they were going to kick me out for my conduct offenses or if they were going to kick me out for my academics. It was kind of a race to see which won.

My preview, I was only ten demerits away from a conduct discharge for a lot of reasons. So during that first year especially, I thought, well, surely God can't expect me to take time for Bible study and things like that. What I already know is going to have to sustain me because all of these things are crying for my time.

Well, things were steadily deteriorating in my overall situation, and it began to look likely that I wasn't going to be there for the whole four-year allotted time. And it occurred to me that, well, obviously a shift in priorities is required here because I'm not getting my wonderful blessings that God promises to believers and so forth. My professional prosperity is not kicking in here.

And so I had to reexamine what I was doing, and this principle impressed itself on my mind. It doesn't matter how busy you are or how important you think the things are that you're doing. You never hurt yourself by making time for God.

And so I thought, well, I'll try that. I've got nothing to lose at this point. The way things are going, I'm going to be out anyway.

So I started getting back to regular time allocated for Bible study, and I was listening to tapes from the church, and sometimes I had to do it in odd circumstances. But it was amazing to me that it did what God's word always does in your soul. It stabilized me.

It strengthened me. It oriented me. It calmed me down.

It helped me see clearly. It did all of the wonderful things that God says His word will do. And my little downward arc began to curve the other way, and it was like one of these little hyperboles where you go down and then you kind of bottom out and then you start back up.

And I was spending less time on memorizing my plebe stuff and on shining and polishing and running about and all these other things because I was taking that time. But God honors His word, and God honors and preserves those who honor and preserve His word in their souls. It's probably not a great illustration, but it meant a lot to me at the time that you never hurt yourself by allocating the time that God deserves and that God requires.

It's necessary for us to have the food in the arc. You don't want to just be delivered. You want to be sustained in your deliverance.

Noah gathered his food. We need to gather our food. We need to observe our seventh day, our day of rest, our day of reflection, our day of concentration on the things of God.

It's not going to mess up the beautiful symmetry of everything else to do so. It's a necessary thing. That's why we have a seven-day week instead of a six-day week.

I was reflecting on this at some length, mostly for my own benefit, and it struck me, well, is this some sort of a special inspired proportion, one-seventh of your time should be spent on the things of God. So you figure, well, if you're awake, let's say a 14-hour day, that gives you 10 hours of sleep, which is too much, but suppose you have a 14-hour waking day. Well, one-seventh of that would be two hours.

So out of every 14 hours of consciousness, every 14-hour day, if you observed a one-seventh proportion for God, then somewhere in that day, in bits and pieces or whatever, two hours of it ought to be more or less dedicated to communion with God, meditation on the things of God, review and reflection on the things that we have in our soul, maybe taking in the Word of God by reading or studying or listening to the teaching of the Word of God or whatever it might be. It's just an interesting thing to ponder, that if we observed the same proportion in a day that we do in a week, there would be two hours, actually a little over two hours, every day that would be more or less dedicated to the things of God. We think, oh my goodness, if I took two hours out of my day, everything would unravel.

But if you think about it, and that would be a legalistic requirement to place on ourselves, but it is food for thought. How much time do we spend in a day out of our 14 or 16 or 18 or in some cases 20 hours of consciousness a day? How much of it do we set aside exclusively to the cultivation of our relationship with God? And you will notice I've

been careful not to say how much of it do we spend listening to the teaching of the Word of God because that's only a small part. The bulk of cultivation of our relationship with God is in what we do with what we have heard after we have heard it.

The man of God in Psalm 1-1 meditates on the law of God, Psalm 1-1 and 2, day and night. Day and night. Spend an hour in the day and an hour in the night, there's your two hours.

There's your seventh portion of every day. Anyway, I just tossed that out for your own... It impressed itself on my mind. So now we have that seven days of waiting from the time that Noah enters the ark.

The animals come to him, he's got the food in there, and he sits for seven days before the flood comes. God speaks to Noah. God says in 7-1, Come into the ark, you and all your household.

And he tells him to go in a week ahead of time. So Noah sits there, and there's this amazing silence for seven days. The animals file in, and then there's this period of waiting.

And then the flood comes. 150 days later, in 8-4, the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, in the mountains of Ararat. Not any particular mountain, it's apparently sort of bumping.

It might hang a corner for a time on one slope or another. But the mountains are still covered at this point. So we know that there's still at least this 15 cubits of water, and it's decreasing.

And as the ark settles, it's starting to bump into this land. But look at verse 5. The waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth month on the first day of the month, where were we earlier? We were in the seventh month on the seventeenth day, right? So this is roughly two and a half months later, first of the tenth month.

So from the time the ark first hits any land among the mountains of Ararat until the time that the tops of the mountains are seen is two and a half months. And some people have had trouble reconciling this. Well, how can the ark come to rest on the mountain and then you don't see any other mountains for two and a half months? Did the water stop receding or what? Well, think about this.

This is what I've been thinking anyway. Noah's all sealed up inside the ark. You can tell if you've ever been in a boat or a vessel of any kind, when it hits land, you can tell.

You say, oh, we've hit something solid here. We've been rocking about for all these days and weeks. Now we've hit something solid.

So Noah marks that on his calendar. There's the seventeenth day of the seventh month. And of course, later on, when they get out of the ark, they know where they are.

They're in the mountains of Ararat. And in the meantime, they just know that they've come to rest. They've come to some place where they're now sort of bumping into land regularly.

But it's another two and a half months before the tops of the mountains can be seen. Why is that? Think about this. These are the highest mountains in the region, 17,000 feet in this Urartu area that's mentioned over in Kings.

The Assyrians mounted a campaign. You can read about the same region later on. It's in Turkey or Armenia today.

These are high mountains. Think about the mountains. If you've ever been in the mountains, what's notable about the mountains? Well, when you're in the mountains, you're up high.

You can see more when you're up high than you can when you're down low. If they settle on the highest mountain in the Ararat range, they should be able to see everything. You know, the water should just go down a little bit.

Here's all the other mountaintops. But it takes two and a half months before the rest of the mountains can be seen. Why is that? Well, let's think some more about the mountains.

In the high mountains, what else do you know about them? How easy is it to see if you're on the very highest mountains? What happens up there? You're in the clouds. You've got low visibility because you're up in the clouds. And with all of this water activity on the earth and so forth, it's likely that you've got clouds.

You've got the mists and stuff, and you can't see very far. Your visibility is very limited. Also, he doesn't have like a little hatch.

It's not like a tank or an armored vehicle where you just flip the latch, pop the lid open, and stick your head out and look around. The ark is a huge vessel, and the only place they can get any visibility is at an angle through their little air vent that's around the edge of the covering of the ark, which necessarily forces them to look down. They can't look out at the horizon.

The visibility is limited. This is the reason you have the whole raven and dove thing happen later on. Why does Noah do all this? Because he can't see.

He can't see from inside the ark. It doesn't have picture windows. It doesn't even have portholes.

It doesn't have the hatch opened yet. All they can see is, I think, if they get up in the rafters and crane just right, they've got a little sliver of visibility out underneath the border of the covering of the ark, their ventilation hole. So as the ark settles, they still can't see anything but this little strip of water out here.

When is it that they can begin to see the other mountains? As the ark settles, it's going to settle down and down amongst these mountains, and pretty soon they're going to be able to see, because this stuff is rising up from the horizon, their perspective, and now they can see the tops of the mountains. So what it tells us is that the water is decreasing at pretty much a steady rate, and eventually, even out this little angled view they have through the air, what am I trying to say, the ventilation slot there, now they can see the other mountaintops, and the ark is settling down in this mountain range. And so the waters decrease until the 10th month, and you may or may not have also had this mist visibility problem as well, so that it isn't for a long time that they can even see the tops of the other mountains appear, but that's all they can see is the tops of these other mountains, and it tells us that the ark has more or less come to rest, and they're not getting a panorama anymore.

They can look out and see one little strip, but they can't see, well, is the ground dry yet? What about the valleys? Well, they can't see the valleys. All they can see are these adjacent mountaintops, and they couldn't see those for 2 1/2 months from the time they first started running aground. So in verse 6, it came to pass at the end of 40 days, this is after they could first see the mountaintops, but they can't see how far down the water has gone.

So in addition to the covering and in addition to the big door in the side of the ark, there's a hatch at the top. There's a hatch somewhere near the top of the ark, probably in the top of the ark, like a submarine, and so 40 days after this 10th month, first day of the month, so this is going to be the 11th month and the 10th day, right? It's going to be pretty close to Thanksgiving. At the end of 40 days.

Why 40 days? God didn't speak. Why does Noah wait 40 days? Well, Noah's thinking. Noah's got a lot of time to think in the ark, doesn't he? Not a lot of distractions in there.

He figures, well, it rained for 40 days and the land disappeared. Now that the land has reappeared, I'll wait 40 days. He's paying attention.

He's looking at the action of God. He's looking at the timing of God and he's making application of those things in his life. God has not spoken, but Noah figures this out.

I'll wait 40 days. Maybe he knows 40 is the number associated with testing. Jesus later will be in the wilderness 40 days.

Israel will be in the wilderness 40 years. 40 is the number of testing. So Noah waits 40

days.

Then he opens the hatch. It may say window in your Bible. It's not a window.

It doesn't have glass. It doesn't have curtains. It's a hatch.

He opens the hatch of the ark which he had made. Why does it say that? The ark which he had made reminds us once again that the reason he's still alive to do anything is that he was obedient to God. He made, he did, thus.

He did what God commanded. And the Bible just gives us a little extra tap on the head there. Remember? Noah did what he was supposed to.

That's why he's got a hatch to open. Then he sent out a raven which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. He also sent out from himself a dove.

Why? To see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. Why doesn't he just look out the hatch? Well, the answer is the ark is big, the hatch is up there, and he has no visibility. He's up in the mountains.

He can't see down to the ground. You think about this. If you got up on the roof of a big flat Walmart and had a hatch in the middle of the roof, if you stick your head up, can you see the parking lot and see who's parked there? You can't.

Because it's big and flat and your visibility is obstructed. So even though Noah can pop the hatch, he has no idea if the ground is dry or not. So he figures, well, I'll do a recon.

I'll send out my scouts here. I've got some ravens. I've got some doves.

And he knows the characteristics of these birds. As I pointed out last time, a raven is an unclean bird. It's a carrion eater.

It's a scavenger. It's an unclean bird. How many of them does Noah have in the ark? He's got two.

He's got a male and a female. Because unclean animals, you have one pair. Doves, on the other hand, are clean birds.

They are not carrion eaters. They will not land in areas where there is carnage, where there is uncleanness. They're clean in their habits as well as in their category.

As I mentioned last time, we looked a little bit at ravens and doves elsewhere in the Bible. The Holy Spirit is symbolized by a dove in a few places. You also have the raven feeding Elijah when he's by the brook Cherith.

And when you think about their distinction between clean and unclean, yet they're both used to gather information. They give him different kinds of information. The raven going

to and fro tells Noah something about conditions on the earth because of its nature.

It's a mountain-dwelling bird. So if the mountains are gradually uncovering, he's going to be able to tell by the actions and the behavior of this raven what the status of the mountains are. The dove is a valley-dwelling bird.

And not until the trees and shrubs and so forth that live down in the valleys are uncovered is the dove going to return with a freshly plucked olive leaf in its mouth. So this is going to tell Noah something different, something that only a dove can tell him. He can't learn the status of the valleys from the raven.

So he uses both birds, sends them both out on the same day. He sends out the one raven, and that same raven does the job for him from then on. He doesn't send it out again.

He just sends it out once. But notice what happens with the dove. In verse 8, he sent out for himself a dove to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground.

Noah can see the mountaintops, at least the ones in the immediate vicinity. So the raven is going to help him understand what he already sees. But he can't see the valleys.

He can't see the lower regions, which is where he eventually wants to get to. So to observe and to get information about what he cannot see, he sends out the dove. If you think about this, you can see what this is going to suggest to us.

But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot. And she returned into the ark to him, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. What does Noah do in verse 9 when the dove returns? He stretched forth his hand.

It's the exact same phrase you have in Genesis chapter 3 when Eve does what she does with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When Eve stretches forth her hand and takes the fruit, death descends. Here, Noah stretches forth his hand and he takes the dove and draws her into the ark to himself.

Don't you find it striking that the account varies so much between general statements the water was on the face of the whole ground, and now you can picture Noah hanging out of the hatch here and the dove flying up to him. And he reaches out and it lands on his finger and he grabs it and draws it into the ark. There's a reason for that.

There's a reason why God expands the focus out to see the big picture. And then he comes down to these small details. We didn't get this level of detail on the construction of the ark.

We didn't get this level of detail on the gathering of the food. But we have this incredible detail about the dove. What difference does it make if he did or didn't send out a dove?

He doesn't leave the ark until God tells him to.

Why even send out the doves if he knows to wait for God's command? What's the whole point of the raven and the dove? By the way, in Hebrew, this is the raven and the dove. And I have to apply some obscure rules of grammar to say, well, he's just saying a raven, a dove. In Hebrew, it says he sent out the raven.

He sent out the dove. He waited, in verse 10, another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf was in her mouth, and Noah knew.

The action of the dove gives Noah knowledge, gives him something to sustain his hope that he's going to be able to reenter the world. He's going to be able to reenter the places of prosperity and function. Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth, but he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore.

I would like to suggest something to you, and it's only a suggestion. I'm not saying that this is something that you would stake your life on, but why does the account give us this detail about the birds and these particular birds? This is what it suggests to me, and you can see what you think. Noah is in a position where he desires information.

He wants to know. God has not spoken or given him any indication about when the end of this time of testing will take place, this time of preservation. So Noah wants to be informed.

He wants to be ready. He wants to know where he is in the scheme of things. He sends out a raven, and he sends out a dove, an unclean bird and a clean bird, mountain-dwelling bird, valley-dwelling bird, carrion-eating bird, and a very gentle, clean bird.

If you use this as sort of a loose illustration of life, and especially spiritual life, there are many things that we do not know. There's a song, I've got it right here in the jukebox, called My God is Real, and it starts out saying, there are some things that I may never know. There are some places I can't go.

There's a lot that I don't understand about life and about my place in it. But there's one thing of which I'm sure. God is real.

I can feel him in my soul. In the same way, Noah doesn't know where he is in the chronology of things. He's trusting God.

He's waiting for God's command, but he's trying to get information. So he uses what you might call the human senses, the raven representing the unclean, the natural things, to find out as much as that will tell him. And that can tell him certain things, just about the mountaintops.

He can learn certain things that are visible to him. He can see the mountains out the ark. It tells us the mountaintops became visible.

Well, that's where the realm of the raven is. The raven can tell him a little more about the mountaintops that he can already see. But he can't see the valleys and the dove.

If you think about the things of the Spirit, the things that God the Holy Spirit does for us, you think about Hebrews chapter 11, faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Noah gets his information about what he can't see through the work of the dove. But he uses them both.

He doesn't just send out the dove, and he doesn't just send out the raven. But the dove gives him a lot more meaningful information than the raven does. The raven goes out once, and it goes to and fro from then on.

And that's okay, but it's limited. But he fills in the gaps in what he cannot see with the dove. And it's suggestive to us, especially in the light of what Scripture uses the dove for symbolically later on, that we live in the world, but we're not of the world.

We have to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. We need to use our practical human knowledge. There is a place for common sense.

There's a place for making use of the same knowledge that the rest of the world uses. But above and beyond that, we have God the Holy Spirit, and we have His ministry to us in giving us a picture of the unseen things, of giving us insight into God's timing, giving us insight into the forward progress of God's plan. And both of those things can work together to help us anticipate and be ready when the Word of God comes.

So it's a suggestion. I wouldn't die for that, but it's a suggestion. It's so interesting that the activity of these birds is so detailed here.

He waits seven days. It's a reminder to us that they're operating on a seven-day week. And He figures this is a good interval to use.

And then in verse 13, it came to pass in the 601st year, in the first month, in the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth, and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked. Notice this is the first time now that he can actually see. He can peek over the edge of the ark, if you will, and look down into the valley.

The ark is resting up in the mountains. Now he can see down past the edge because the covering is off. Why didn't he take the cover off earlier? He doesn't know if there's going to be another rainstorm.

You'd feel pretty premature if you ripped the covering off the ark and here came another big deluge and the thing filled up and sank. So it isn't until he is sure that the waters

have receded and that the judgment is truly over with that he removes the covering of the ark. He waits a good long while.

Noah is patient. Noah watches. Noah uses the information that he gets from the dove before he takes any sort of action.

And he still does not leave the ark. But he does remove the covering of the ark and looked. And indeed, it was just as he had surmised from the olive branch in the dove's mouth.

The earth is, in fact, dry. There are two different words for dry here. The first one, when it says the waters were dried up from the earth, this means that the standing water is no longer visible.

The first part of verse 13. Then Noah removes the covering of the ark and looked. And indeed, the surface of the ground was completely dry.

This is a different word for dry. You could have the standing water go away, but it would still be very muddy and boggy. This means it's dry.

It's hard ground that you can walk around on. I'm sorry, that word is in verse 14. In the second month, on the 27th day of the month, the earth was dried.

So you have the removal of the standing water in verse 13. And then it's actually dry, dry to the touch, dry to the footfall, in verse 14. And it is then and only then that God speaks to Noah, saying, notice that it is God and not Yahweh, in verse 15.

And there's a reason for that, which we will take up when we begin this new section next week. But we want to conclude this morning by remembering the example that is given to us in Noah's behavior here. Noah never says anything.

The activities of Noah are minimized. It is the action of God that is in view. And the encouragement for us is to view life and view history in that light.

This whole operation that we are conscious of and aware of in our lives is it belongs to God. It's His program. He created us.

He put us on the earth. He has given the commands. He has outlined the parameters.

He has made the rules. If we heed, if we observe and follow the divine design as Noah does, we find ourselves directly in line for God's grace. God is looking for those who are looking for Him.

God makes a covenant with Noah. God honors a covenant with Noah. God remembers Noah in chapter 8, verse 1. That phrase, by the way, is used about 73 times in the Old Testament.

God remembered. You think, well, if God's omniscient and has foreknowledge and so forth, how can you say God remembers anything? He would never forget. But in many of those cases, it is followed by the Hebrew letter Lamed, which is a preposition that means to.

God remembered to do something. God remembered to do something. And the emphasis in the phrase God remembered is on God.

It's on the actor, the subject of the verb God. God remembered. God shifted His focus, if you will.

God has never forgotten Noah, never forgotten the people in the ark or the animals in the ark. But in terms of His visible activity, in the first 150 days, He is in the midst of judging. And that's the focus and that's the emphasis.

Then you see in the receding of the water, in the beginning of the recreation of the earth, the causative factor that is presented to us in Scripture is Noah. Because of this righteous man, God now is going to go back into restoration. You get the idea that if it wasn't for that little speck of righteousness floating on the water, God might just leave it in the watery chaos.

But God remembers Noah and those who are with Him in the ark. And so then, He begins to recreate. And you have these strong echoes of the creation week where the Ruach of God is on the water.

The dry land appears out of the water. And you have the going forth from the ark and the command to bring out with you every living thing of all flesh. In verse 17, birds, cattle, creeping things, and so on.

Noah goes out. And the first thing Noah does is worship. Noah focuses on God because God has been the focus in this entire thing.

And it should be the focus in our lives. Hopefully we will remember the seventh day and the principle behind it. We'll remember that we are bought with a price.

Our lives, our actions are in full view of the Lord God. And by heeding and by obeying His voice, we can be not only blessed ourselves, but be a blessing and a means of salvation and deliverance to those around us. Let's close in prayer.

Father, we thank You for the privilege of studying Your Word. We thank You for the challenges and the tests that You bring our way to make these things real to us and the objects of our faith in a meaningful way. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will cause these things to live in our thinking as we go forth and face the details and the challenges of our lives.

We pray that in all things our Savior, our Deliverer, the Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified.
We pray these things in His name. Amen.