

פרשת

נח

Parashat Noach

*Bereshit / Genesis 6:9-11:32, Isaiah 66:1-24
Luke 1:5-80*

The Lord's Covenant for those who draw near

זו ואני הנני מביא, ואת-המבול מים על-הארץ לשחת כל-בשר אשר-בו רוח חיים מתחת השמים כל אשר-בארץ יגוע: יח וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי אִתָּךְ וּבָאתָ אֵל-הַתֵּבָה אִתָּךְ: *6:17 'Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish. 6:18 'But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives with you. (NASB)* Notice how the Lord is establishing His covenant with Noah and those who come with him (his wife and children). We read in the opening of the Torah portion that Noah was a righteous man (נח צדיק), so the concept here is those who come with him, who want to be saved from the impending wrath, walk and live in righteousness (faithfulness) and seek a covenant relationship with the Lord (faith). Those who enter the ark will be characterized by these things. This is illustrated in the contrast found in our reading this week, between the נשמת חיים from the creation account (*Bereshit / Genesis 2:7*) to what we read here in the verse רוח חיים (spirit of life) speaking to us of all peoples having been offered this option, to believe in the God of Israel

and walk in His ways, but only a few accepted this way of life. Note how these same concepts may be illustrated in the anti-Torah modern theologies that have been taught for thousands of years.

A widely accepted theology today is the modern rejection of much of the Tanach (Old Testament) as not being relevant for today, and certainly not for the Gentile Church. This claim is not just modern but has been taught from ancient times going back thousands of years to the infancy of the gentile church. This claim states that the Old Testament was under a different dispensation where the Lord God acted differently in the sense that He was only concerned with the people of Israel. This teaching concludes that Jesus brought in a new dispensation where the church replaces Israel and receives her biblical promises while doing away with the Torah imperatives for the lives of believers. What is interesting is the moment we set aside this theology, and study the history of Israel and the Scriptures from a Jewish context, it becomes clear that the Lord God is concerned with all people on this earth from the beginning. This is the point of the contrast between the נְשָׁמַת הַיּוֹם in the creation account (*Bereshit / Genesis 2:7*) and what we read here in *Bereshit / Genesis 6:17*, רוּחַ הַיּוֹם referring to the breath/wind/spirit of man in a general sense. The Apostle Paul understood this when he quoted from *Hosea 2:23* in *Romans 9:25-26* saying the following:

Hosea 2:23

2:23 'I will sow her for Myself in the land. I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion, And I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!' And they will say, 'You are my God!'' (NASB, וְהָיָה אִי בַיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶעֱנֶנָּה נְאֻם־יְהוָה אֶעֱנֶנָּה וְהָיָה לִי בְּאֶרֶץ וְרַחֲמֹתַי אֶת־לֹא רַחֲמָה וְאִמְרֹתַי לֹא־עָמְי וְזָרְעֹתַי לִי בְּאֶרֶץ וְרַחֲמֹתַי אֶת־לֹא רַחֲמָה וְאִמְרֹתַי לֹא־עָמְי (עַמִּי־אַתָּה וְהוּא יֹאמֵר אֱלֹהֵי: פ

The prophets spoke of a future expectation (*Isaiah 2*) of the Lord seeking both those from Israel and from the nations to follow in His ways. Both the Torah and the prophets (*Isaiah 2*) speak of this context of all the nations serving the Lord God of Israel.

This week we will be looking at the Scriptures from *Bereshit / Genesis 6:5-7:3*.

Bereshit / Genesis 6:5-7:3

6:5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6:6 The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 6:7 The Lord said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.' 6:8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. 6:9 These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God. 6:10 Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 6:11 Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. 6:12 God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. 6:13 Then God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth. 6:14 'Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch. 6:15 'This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. 6:16 'You shall make a window for the ark, and finish it to a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks. 6:17 'Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish. 6:18 'But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives with you. 6:19 '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. 6:20 'Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive. 6:21 'As for you, take for yourself some of all food which is edible, and gather it to yourself; and it shall be for food for you and for them.' 6:22 Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did. 7:1 Then the Lord said to Noah, 'Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time. 7:2 'You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his female; 7:3 also of the birds of the sky, by sevens, male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth. (NASB)

ספר בראשית פרק ו

ה וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה כִּי רַבָּה רָעַת הָאָדָם בְּאָרֶץ וְכָל-יִצְרָר מִחֲשֹׁבֶת לְבוֹ רַק רַע כָּל-הַיּוֹם: ו וַיִּנְחָם יְהוָה כִּי-עָשָׂה אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּאָרֶץ וַיִּתְעַצֵּב אֵל-לְבוֹ: ז וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֲמַחֶה אֶת-הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר-בְּרָאתִי מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה מֵאָדָם עַד-בְּהֵמָה עַד-רֶמֶשׂ וְעַד-עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם כִּי נִחַמְתִּי כִּי עָשִׂיתֶם: ח וְנַח מִצָּא חֵן בְּעֵי-נֵי יְהוָה: ט ט ט [פרשת נח] ט אֱלֹהִים תּוֹלְדֹת נַח נַח אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדַרְתּוֹ... אֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים הִתְהַלֵּךְ-נַח: י וַיּוֹלֵד נַח וְשִׁלְשָׁה בָנִים אֶת-שֵׁם אֶת-חָם וְאֶת-יָפֶת: יא וַתִּשְׁחַת הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וַתִּמְלֵא הָאָרֶץ חָמָס: יב וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וְהִנֵּה נִשְׁחָתָה כִּי-הִשְׁחִית כָּל-בָּשָׂר אֶת-דַּרְכּוֹ עַל-הָאָרֶץ: יג וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים לְנַח קַץ כָּל-בָּשָׂר בָּא לִפְנֵי כִּי-מָלְאָה הָאָרֶץ חָמָס מִפְּנִיָּהֶם וְהִנְנִי מִשְׁחִיתֶם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ: יד עָשָׂה לָךְ תִּבְתַּע צִי-גִפְרִי קִנְיִם תַּעֲשֶׂה אֶת-הַתְּבָה וְכִפְרָתָ אֹתָהּ מִבַּיִת וּמִחוּץ בַּכֶּפֶר: טו וְזֶה אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָהּ שְׁלֹשׁ מְאוֹת אַמָּה אַרְבֵּי הַתְּבָה תִּמְשְׁשִׁים אַמָּה רְחֹבָהּ וּשְׁלֹשִׁים אַמָּה קוֹמָתָה: טז צִהַר | תַּעֲשֶׂה לַתְּבָה וְאֶל-אַמָּה תִּכְלָנָה מִלְּמַעְלָה וּפְתַח הַתְּבָה בְּצַדָּהּ תִּשִׂים תַּחְתִּיִּם וְשְׁלֹשִׁים תַּעֲשֶׂה: יז

וְאֲנִי הִנְנִי מֵבִיא אֶת-הַמַּבּוּל מִיָּם עַל-הָאָרֶץ לְשַׁחַת כָּל-בָּשָׂר
 אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ רוּחַ חַיִּים מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם כֹּל אֲשֶׁר-בָּאָרֶץ יִגּוּעַ: יַחַד
 וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי אִתְּךָ וּבֵאתָ אֵל-הַתְּבָה אִתָּהּ וּבְנִיךָ וְאִשְׁ-
 תְּךָ וּנְשֵׁי-בְנֵיךָ אִתְּךָ: יֵט וּמִכָּל-הַחַי מִכָּל-בָּשָׂר שְׁנַיִם מִכָּל
 תְּבִיא אֵל-הַתְּבָה לְהַחֲיִית אִתְּךָ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה יְהִי: כ מִהָעוֹף
 לְמִינֵהוּ וּמִן-הַבְּהֵמָה לְמִינָהּ מִכָּל רֶמֶשׂ הָאֲדָמָה לְמִינֵהוּ שְׁנַיִם
 מִכָּל יָבֹאוּ אֵלֶיךָ לְהַחֲיִית: כֹּא וְאִתָּה קַח-לְךָ מִכָּל-מֵאֲכָל
 אֲשֶׁר יֵאָכֵל וְאָסַפְתָּ אֵלֶיךָ וְהָיָה לְךָ וּלְהֵם לְאֹכְלָה: כב וַיַּעַשׂ
 נֹחַ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֹתוֹ אֱלֹהִים בֶּן עֶשְׂרֵה:

ספר בראשית פרק ז

[שני] א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לְנֹחַ בֵּא-אִתָּהּ וְכָל-בֵּיתְךָ אֵל-הַתְּבָה
 כִּי-אֲתִיךָ רָאִיתִי צְדִיק לְפָנַי בְּדוֹר הַזֶּה: ב מִכָּל | הַבְּהֵמָה
 הַטְּהוֹרָה תִּקַּח-לְךָ שְׁבָעָה שְׁבָעָה אִישׁ וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּמִן-הַבְּהֵמָה
 אֲשֶׁר לֹא טְהוֹרָה הוּא שְׁנַיִם אִישׁ וְאִשְׁתּוֹ: ג גַּם מִעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם
 שְׁבָעָה שְׁבָעָה זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה לְחַיִּית זָרַע עַל-פְּנֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ:

Note, we are starting at the end of Parashat Bereshit to get the context for this week's Scripture verses from Parashat Noach. The Torah states in *Bereshit / Genesis 6:5*, *וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה כִּי רַבָּה רָעַת הָאָדָם בָּאָרֶץ, 6:5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (NASB)* The first conclusion we can make based upon this scripture is that the Lord has yet to choose a special people to draw unto Himself. But this leads us to the question of *“If the Lord has a covenant people, why does he care about the rest of the world?”* Based upon *Bereshit / Genesis 6:5*, clearly, the Lord is concerned with sin in both His people and what is occurring in the rest of the world.

As we study the history of Israel, we see the promises of God being given to the people of Israel, to deliver them from the land of bondage and bringing them into the Land of promise, freedom, and salvation. As the people were brought into the Land, their lives became intertwined with the neighboring peoples, the nations surrounding them. As

the narrative continues in the biblical context, the promises of God become intertwined with the nations, by the words of the prophets, such that in the eschatological conclusions of God's ultimate deliverance, the nations find their place as also being included into those promises of God by their faith and desire to draw near to the Lord God of Israel. (see *Isaiah 2* as an example) This become known as the universalizing of the promises, which has motivated the expectation of judgment on the nations that rage against Israel (*Tehillim / Psalms 2*), which had further led to the Lord bringing judgment upon the nations just as He had brought judgment upon Israel because of her sins. What we find here in *Bereshit / Genesis 6:5*, is a pre-text that sets the stage for a future expectation that the Lord God is very concerned with both Israel and the entire world. The Lord God is not only concerned with His chosen people, but all of His creation. The Apostle Peter wrote in his epistle saying, *2 Peter 3:9* "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." The Lord God longs for all of His creation to turn to Him and to His ways of mercy, righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth. This is purposed to not only advance His kingdom on this earth but also as preparatory for our spending all of eternity with Him. If these things are true, can you see why the Torah has not passed away as a way of life for all peoples? Everyone has the freedom of choice to seek the Lord, to draw near, or to reject Him and His ways. What we find here at the end of Parashat Bereshit and in the opening verses from Parashat Noach, the Lord God of Israel's invitation to the Gentiles and this being His plan from *נברא העולם היית* (before the world existed). This is the example of the greatness and glory of God.

This demonstrates for us the awesome power of God that is rooted in His love for all peoples. An example of the greatness of God from the beginning may be illustrated from Midrash Tehillim 104, Part 4 which opens with the Dibur Hamathil (*דיבור המתהיל*) saying, "In further exposition of Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, You are very great (*Tehillim / Psalms 104:1*)" The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, "Rabbi Berechiah said in the name of Rabbi Eleazar and also in the name of Rabbi Joshua, You were great in the world before the world was created." The Midrash is speaking of the power and greatness of God before the creation. Note something the Apostle

Paul wrote in *Ephesians 1:4* just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 1:5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will. (NASB) The Lord is great because he already knew what He had planned for mankind.

The rabbis say before the creation the Lord was גדול (great) and following having performed the creation the Lord was גדלת מאד (very great). This description of God's greatness continues, with the going out of Israel from Egypt, saying the Lord was גדול (great) prior to Israel going out, and following having performed their deliverance, the Lord was נתגדלת מאד (very great). The same is said of the prophets giving praise, the Lord was great before, and after the prophets gave praise, the Lord was very great (גדלת מאד). This concept of the "*foundation of the world*" is frequently mentioned in the Scriptures, and we are given this concept in the phrase נברא העולם היית (before the world existed). This is the point in time at which human history begins (*Matthew 13:35, 25:34, Luke 11:50, Hebrews 4:3, 9:26, Revelation 13:8, 17:8*) but yet the Lord knew those who were His, by the reference to those whose names were found written in the book of life נברא העולם היית (before the world existed). These Scriptures speak of the preexistence of God which incorporated His Chesed (חסד, mercy and grace) and that the Lord God of Israel was pleased to create the world and in His love and foreknowledge, he purposed His promise of eternal life to those who would seek and love Him. The plans of the infinite love of God were formulated נברא העולם היית (before the world existed). The counsels of the grace of God were in existence before the creation, therefore, the Lord was גדול (great) and following having performed the creation the Lord was גדלת מאד (very great) by the bringing of His plans to action. These things are further illustrated by the rabbis discussion on the creation of life. "*Rabbi Simeon son of Jehozadak interrogated Rabbi Samuel son of Nahmani saying, How did the Holy One blessed be He, create the light?*" (*Midrash Tehillim 104, Part 4*) The response was that the Lord created the light by wrapping himself in a white garment. Note, in the biblical context, the light and white are paralleled

to righteousness and holiness. So, the conclusion may be that in the beginning, נברא העולם היית (before the world existed), the Lord said, *Bereshit / Genesis 1:3* ... *‘Let there be light’; and there was light. (NASB)* In the process of the creation of life, He put on righteousness, and the light shown forth to illuminate the uncreated world. The reason these things are at the beginning of the creation account, is due to the sun, moon, and stars being created at a much later time. The Lord God Almighty and His glory was the only source of light prior to the creation of these other things. The greatness of God is found in His desire to draw all men to Himself, and to righteousness and holiness, in whom these were demonstrated by the Messiah Yeshua.

The Lord’s concern for all people, is also illustrated in *Bereshit / Genesis 6:13* *Then God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth. 6:14 ‘Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch. (NASB,* יג וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים לְנֹחַ קַח כָּל-בְּשָׂר בְּאֵל לִפְנֵי כִי-מִלְאָה הָאָרֶץ חָמָס מִפְּנֵיהֶם וְהִנְנִי מִשְׁחִיתָם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ: יד עֲשֵׂה לָּךְ תֵּבַת עֲצֵי-גֹפֶר קִנִּים תַּעֲשֶׂה אֶת-הַתֵּבָה וְכִפַּרְתָּ אֹתָהּ מִבֵּית וּמִחוּץ (בַּכֹּפֶר):

The significance of these statements is in the use of the word כפר as it is related to atonement, how the Lord tells Noah to apply atonement (כפר) inside the house and outside the house (מִבֵּית וּמִחוּץ). The substance that sealed Noah’s ark was called כפר (pitch, atonement) that appears to draw a parallel with God’s saving power through atonement for sin. The context of this word as it is applied to this task of sealing the boat, parallels how atonement is made for the forgiveness of sin; forgiveness for the sins done in our bodies, from the inside (our hearts) to the outside (the uncleanness of the flesh). This inside and outside of the house may also have a parallel to Israel and the nations, and could be a source text for a future expectation of a Gentile inclusion into the people of God. (6:5, 6:15). Remember what we studied in Parashat Bereshit, man’s creation as both the Neshamat Chayim and the Nefesh may also lead to this future expectation that God’s Torah is valid for all peoples. Could a parallel to found in how the Lord tells Noah to apply atonement (כפר) inside the house and outside the house

(מִבֵּית וּמִחוּץ) according to *Bereshit / Genesis 6:14* ‘*Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch.* (NASB, יָד עָשָׂה לָךְ תֵּבַת עֵצֵי-גֹפֶר, (קִנְיִם תַּעֲשֶׂה אֶת-הַתֵּבָה וְכִפַּרְתָּ אֹתָהּ מִבֵּית וּמִחוּץ בַּכֹּפֶר:

Note also how the Torah describes the Ark of the Covenant, the place of God’s dwelling as being overlaid with gold on the inside and out. The rabbis take this verse and parallel the Ark to the person who is a Torah Scholar, just as we read in Daat Zkenim commentary on *Shemot / Exodus 25:11*.

Daat Zkenim on Shemot / Exodus 25:11 Part 2

מבית ומחוץ תצפנו. אמר רבא כל ת”ח שאין תוכו כברו אינו תלמיד חכם. ועוד צוה הקב”ה לכל ישראל להתעסק בו כדי שיהו כלן מקבלין שכר התורה המונחת בו שם: מבית ומחוץ תצפנו, “*you are to overlay it both from the inside and from the outside. The famous Talmudic scholar Rava, derives from this phrasing that a Torah scholar, in order to deserve that title, must demonstrate that he is on the inside just as pure and faithful as what he projects to be on the outside to people he comes into contact with. Furthermore, the use of the impersonal plural “they” in our verse is an instruction to each Israelite to preoccupy himself with the study of Torah so that he can qualify for the reward in store for people doing so.*

Speaking of the overlaying of gold on the Ark of the Covenant, and the parallel to the one who studies the Torah, as demonstrating in his life on the inside and the outside of his faith in the Lord God of Israel. This is very similar to Paul’s usage stating that our bodies are God’s Temple or house (בַּיִת), a dwelling place for His Spirit (*1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19*) therefore live your lives for the Lord, both on the inside and outside (i.e. humbling our lives according to the Torah commands. This is what it means to submit our lives to God’s Word!). It is interesting how the commentary speaks of demonstrating what is on the inside by what one does on the outside. On the other hand, modern theologies of today teach that the only thing that matters is what is on the inside.

This ideology that is being taught in churches is something that is NOT found in the Scriptures (*i.e. it is a doctrine*) and is leading many people astray (see *Matthew 7*). Both Yeshua and the Talmudic rabbis however believe the way we demonstrate our faith within is by the way we live, behave, and interact with the people we come in contact with. The way we live is as important as faith itself because this is the concept of faithfulness! (*This concept is also taught in the greatest Torah command of loving God and loving your neighbor.*) This is the point and the purpose of the rabbinic teaching to preoccupy ourselves with the study of the Torah, because the Torah teaches us how to Love God and how to Love our neighbor. The basic presupposition here is that studying the Bible is connected to the practical application of God's Word which effects our relationship with the Lord God of Israel, His Messiah Yeshua, and those whom we come in contact with.

Take note of Rashi's commentary on *Bereshit / Genesis 6:5*.

Rashi on Bereshit / Genesis 6:14

כפר WITH בכפר — *This is an Aramaic term for the Hebrew זפת "pitch", and in the Talmud (Shabbat 67a) we find the noun כופרא "pitch". In the case of the ark (cradle) in which Moses was placed, since the waters were not rapid it sufficed that it should be daubed with slime inside and with pitch outside; and a further reason for this was that this righteous person (Moses) should not smell the bad odor of the pitch. Here, however, because of the rough waters he had to cover it with pitch inside as well as outside.*

Rashi parallels the pitch (כופרא), the sealing of the Ark as a reference to the righteous person, and that due to the rough waters, he had to cover the inside and outside with pitch maybe referring to the righteous which is within and the wicked who are without. The wicked are destined for destruction and the Lord has prepared a means for salvation for the righteous. As a result, the Lord has prepared a place for both the righteous and the wicked. The rabbis believed the same, as may be illustrated according to Midrash Tehillim 104 Part 23. The Midrash opens saying, "*Another exposition, Yonder sea, great and wide*

is Gehenna, of which is said, Therefore hell has made greater her desire (Isaiah 5:14). “Therein are creeping things innumerable, wicked men, sectarians, and infidels.”

It is interesting how the rabbis speak of Hell (Gehenna) making its place wide for the purpose of the inclusion of those who dwell there. The idea of Hell becoming wider may be found in *Isaiah 5:14*. (יֵד לְכֹן הֶרְחִיבָה שְׂאוֹל נִפְשָׁה וּפְעָרָה פִּיהָ לְבִלִי-חֶק וַיִּרַד הַדָּרָה וְהַמּוֹנָה וְשְׂאוֹנָה וְעֵלִז :כָּה) Note the variation on this verse among the English Bible translations between the New International Version, New Living Translation, English Standard Version, New American Standard Bible, and King James Bible. The Hebrew word שְׂאוֹל is used meaning “grave.” However, there is a wide variation on translation, “death,” “grave,” and “hell,” and even transliteration of the word as “Sheol.” The context of this verse is as follows:

Isaiah 5:13-25

5:13 Therefore My people go into exile for their lack of knowledge; And their honorable men are famished, And their multitude is parched with thirst. 5:14 Therefore Sheol has enlarged its throat and opened its mouth without measure; And Jerusalem’s splendor, her multitude, her din of revelry and the jubilant within her, descend into it. 5:15 So the common man will be humbled and the man of importance abased, The eyes of the proud also will be abased. 5:16 But the Lord of hosts will be exalted in judgment, And the holy God will show Himself holy in righteousness. 5:17 Then the lambs will graze as in their pasture, And strangers will eat in the waste places of the wealthy. 5:18 Woe to those who drag iniquity with the cords of falsehood, And sin as if with cart ropes; 5:19 Who say, ‘Let Him make speed, let Him hasten His work, that we may see it; And let the purpose of the Holy One of Israel draw near And come to pass, that we may know it! 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! 5:21 Woe to those who are wise in

their own eyes And clever in their own sight! 5:22 Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine And valiant men in mixing strong drink, 5:23 Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right! 5:24 Therefore, as a tongue of fire consumes stubble And dry grass collapses into the flame, So their root will become like rot and their blossom blow away as dust; For they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts And despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. 5:25 On this account the anger of the Lord has burned against His people, And He has stretched out His hand against them and struck them down. And the mountains quaked, and their corpses lay like refuse in the middle of the streets. For all this His anger is not spent, But His hand is still stretched out. (NASB)

Note how this place (גֵּהֵנָה, Gehenna, or Hell) is described as containing “*creeping things innumerable, wicked men, sectarians, and infidels.*” A place for the wicked, and being irrespective of one who was small or great in this world, all who are wicked will go there. It is important to consider the description of Sheol(the grave) because Isaiah is referencing something different than a simple place as the grave where both the righteous and the unrighteous go after death. *Isaiah 14:9* emphasizes his words saying, “*Sheol from beneath is excited over you to meet you when you come; It arouses for you the spirits of the dead, all the leaders of the earth; It raises all the kings of the nations from their thrones.*” The grave (Sheol) that is being described here is referring to hell, which is excited over the wicked and has a hunger, as *Isaiah 5:14* states “*Death has expanded its jaws*” (NIV) which seems to parallel the snake (python) which has the ability to dislocate its jaws in order to get its mouth around its prey and swallow it whole. Understanding this context is important because there are some who say Hell does not exist. However, the Scriptures do indicate this place of torment does in fact exist. Note the slow process of digestion once the snake has its prey in its belly, which is paralleled to Gehenna (Hell) here in the Midrash. This is what unrighteousness is like, it takes a person unaware slowly to his or her final destination of destruction.

The Midrash continues with the righteous looking forward to the resurrection. This connects us back to those who study God's Word, and take the Word of the Lord seriously enough to put it into practice. The Mishnah Pirkei Avot 2:3 states *"Rabbi Chananiah ben Teradion said: If two sit together and no words of Torah are interchanged between them, theirs is the session of the scornful, as it is written (Psalm 1:1): 'Nor sit in the seat of scoffers.' But when two sit together and words of Torah pass between them, the Divine Presence rests between them, as it is written (Malachi 3:16) 'Then those who revered the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord took note and listened, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who revered the Lord and thought on his name.' Scripture speaks here of two. Whence do we learn that if even one sits and occupies himself in the Torah, the Holy One blessed be he, appoints him a reward? Because it is written (Lamentations 3:28): 'to sit alone in silence when the Lord has imposed it.'"* This is significant in the sense that the Lord is present in the lives of those who take His Words seriously, and put them into practice. Those who put God's word into practice truly believe in His Word. These are those who look forward to the resurrection. This is what Yeshua mean when he said *"if you abide in me."* What do you think is going to happen to those who follow the grace movement who do not believe in the significance of living for the Lord in righteousness, justice, and truth?

Midrash Tehillim 104, Part 23 concludes saying, *"Rabbi Isaac son of Maryon said, Were it not written, Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters (Isaiah 43:16), any man that went upon the sea would die."* The way of the sea and turbulent waters is said to be a path to destruction. The Lord however is able to make a way for His people to pass through. This world is filled with wickedness described as the way to the Grave (Sheol), Hell, Death, that swallows us up. The Lord God Almighty, the God of Israel has provided us with a way to walk, a path to live in, which was the purpose for His giving us the Word, the Torah, the Prophets, the Writings, and the Apostolic Scriptures, and provided us with an example in His Son Yeshua the Messiah. The Lord is trustworthy and true, and He is able to guide us, and to help us each day, saving us from death, destruction, and wickedness. The Jewish commentaries state the following:

Sforno on Bereshit / Genesis 6:5 Part 3

מאה ועשרים שנה, *during which time Noah would have time to construct the ark, and by doing so rebuking and warning people of what is in store for them. (compare Sanhedrin 108)*

Kedushat Levi on Exodus Ki Tisa 4

The word כופר in our verse, translated as “ransom,” also appears in different meanings, one that is familiar being in Genesis 6:14 where Noah receives G’d’s instructions in how to ensure that the ark he is building will be waterproof. The Torah writes: וכפרת אותו מבית ומחוץ בכופר; “smear it from the inside and the outside with כופר, i.e. the awareness that you need atonement.” An appropriate translation, based on our understanding of the word פקד as something lacking, would be that “when is man truly attached, ‘glued to’ G’d, when he is truly aware of his shortcomings.”

Kedushat Levi says “Noah receives G’d’s instructions in how to ensure that the ark he is building will be waterproof.” This is exactly what the Lord has done for us in the giving of His word, to help waterproof our lives against sin. Based upon Parashat Noach and all of these things, the conclusion is the Torah has not passed away! The context for this week’s Scripture verses from Parashat Noach in *Bereshit / Genesis 6:5* states, וַיִּרְא יְהוָה כִּי רַבָּה רָעַת הָאָדָם בְּאָרֶץ וְכָל-יֵצֶר מַחְשְׁבֹתָהּ הָיָה רָע כָּל-הַיּוֹם: *6:5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (NASB)* At this point, the Lord has yet to choose a special people to draw unto Himself and in doing so clearly He is concerned with sin in both His people and what is occurring in the rest of the world. Therefore, all men, women, and children are held accountable before the Lord God of Israel. It is well advised therefore to study what the Lord has for those who would seek Him and His ways. Why do we believe in Yeshua the Messiah? What place does the Torah have in our lives today? And, what does all of this have to do with sin and atonement? We will explore these things as we continue in this Torah series.