

# ReGroups 8/20/23

## Origin Stories: Into The Unknown - Genesis 8

### *A Less Than Casual Voyage*

Can you even imagine what all was going through the minds of Noah and his family as the story of the Flood played out? We've heard and rehearsed the story so much that it almost doesn't register with us as much as it should. Noah would've spent decades building the ark and certainly poured his heart and soul into trying to warn as many people as he could. As the years counted down, he probably was so focused and consumed by his great tasks, that he couldn't even stop for a break. Alas, that fateful day came when God rushed him and the others onto the boat, and little did they know what all was about to transpire. After being closed in the ark, with only a single window at the top, Noah and his family were left to wonder what all was going down outside. Read **Genesis 7:11-24** and share your thoughts about this process. **How do you think they must have felt in the lead up and as everything began to move forward?**

The Scripture describes a very violent, devastating scene with the earth being torn apart at the seams by rushing, roaring water. As we discussed last week, there's no doubt that this would've permanently changed the earth's landscape. How much of what was going on was Noah aware of? We really don't know, but surely they felt the mighty waves shifting the boat back and forth. While many have speculated and attempted to theorize what this experience was like, there are some things we'll just never know. However, putting into perspective the size and scope of the ark will allow us to have a better understanding of how what life on the boat might have been like. Below are some facts and reference points that the research team at the Ark Encounter in Kentucky have put together:

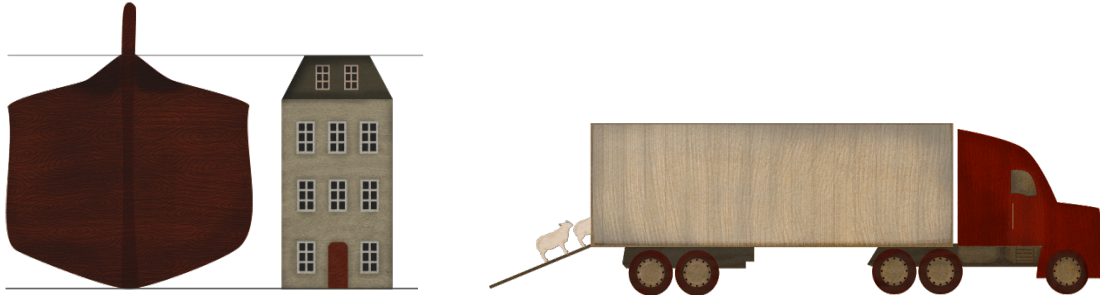
### *How Long Was the Ark?*

At approximately 510 feet long, it would take nearly one and a half football fields to equal the ark's length. That's big enough that NASA could lay three space shuttles—nose to tail—on the ark's roof!



### ***How Tall Was the Ark?***

The roof of Noah's ark was more than 50 feet from the ground—higher than a modern four-story house. That's plenty of space for three extra-tall inner decks as the Bible describes.



### ***Truckloads of Cargo Space***

The ark had the same storage capacity as about 450 standard semi-trailers. A standard livestock trailer holds about 250 sheep, so the ark had the capacity to hold at least 112,500 sheep.

### ***Biggest Wooden Ship Ever?***

Few wooden ships have ever come close to the size of Noah's ark. One possible challenger is the Chinese treasure ships of Zheng He in the 1400s. An older contender is the ancient Greek vessel Tessa. The ark is near the maximum size known to be possible for a wooden vessel.



### ***Massive Wooden Beams***

In constructing the life-size Noah's Ark, hundreds of huge beams and logs were used. Some of the center supporting logs are more than 3 feet in diameter and nearly 50 feet long!

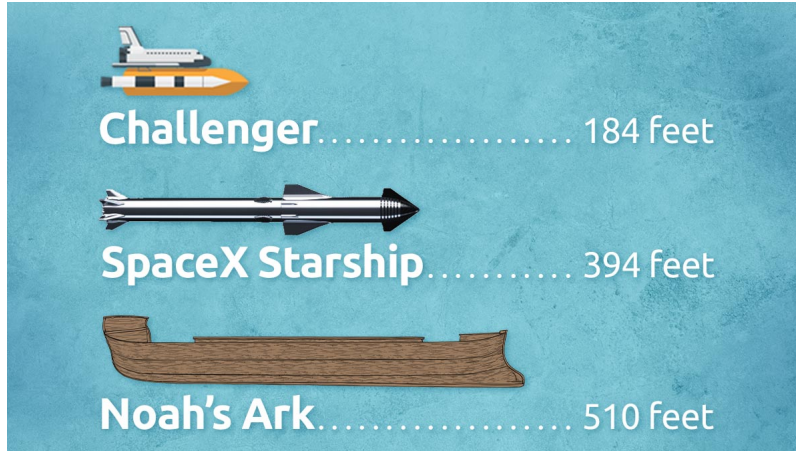


### **3.1 Million Board Feet**

Over 3.1 million board feet of timber were used in the construction of the Ark. A board foot is 12 inches by 12 inches by 1 inch. In board feet (laid end to end) there is enough timber in the Ark construction that when pieced together could span over 600 miles.



Consider the following massive space ships for a true comparison and help at understanding the actual size of the ark:



### **Not Forsaken**

We may never know what life on the ark was like, but needless to say it was a one-of-a-kind, overwhelming experience. The world that was was completely destroyed and all living creatures left on the land were wiped out. Even knowing that they had been spared, I'm sure that Noah wondered what God's future plans were for his family and for people in general. While chapter 7 ends with a pretty bleak description of things, chapter 8 opens with a timeless message of hope - one that we read over and over again in the Bible. Read **Genesis 8:1-5** and talk about the comfort that comes from knowing we have a God who remembers His people.

Throughout the Bible we read this similar phrase, “*But God remembered...*”. He remembered Lot before judging Sodom. He remembered Joseph after he had been thrown into prison. He remembered the Hebrews in Egyptian bondage. He remembered the exiled Jews in Babylon. Above all, He remembered the world lost in sin, and sent His Incarnate Son at an appointed, long-awaited time. It goes without saying, God will always keep His covenant and will not forget His people or His promise, see **Psalm 106:44-45**.

Luke tells us that before Jesus was born, there were some people who had not given up hope that God would remember Israel and send Messiah. **Luke 2:36-38** gives us an example of someone who clung to the promise of God remembering, and remained faithful in this hope. How confident are you that God will remember you, no matter what you may be facing or what unanswered prayers you may have. **If God remembered Noah when the world was said to be its absolute worst, shouldn't we trust that He will do the same for us?**

### ***The Tale of Two Birds***

Read **Genesis 8:6-12** and talk about the birds that were sent to examine the earth. **What stands out to you about the raven? About the dove?** It's said that these two birds represent the two possible natures of people: the old, sinful nature and the new, spiritual nature. The raven goes to and fro, frantically searching the world for rest. Meanwhile, the dove recognizes when the world cannot satisfy it, returning to Noah until something suitable was available for it to feed on.

The raven is like our sinful nature, in that it's always searching for answers and hope, but won't admit that this world *isn't* enough. The dove is like our spiritual nature in that it detects the difference between what's counterfeit and what's genuine. **Romans 8:5-12** describes the two extremes of human nature. **How does the Spiritual Nature lead us to a better place in life? What are some of the differences between the desires of our flesh versus those of the Spirit?** (See **Galatians 5:16-26**)

### ***A New Earth?***

After the dove finally finds vegetation and doesn't return to Noah, God instructs them to return to the dry land. Read **Genesis 8:20-22** and see the initial exchange between God and Noah in the new world. However, all was not truly “new”. Sin was still present, yet God promised that He wouldn't judge the whole earth again anytime soon.

God repeats the Creation Mandate to Noah in **Genesis 9:7** and also makes a covenant with him, regarding His faithfulness in **Genesis 9:8-17**. The rainbow would forever be a picture of God's mercy and provision of grace. Just like Noah found favor in God's eyes, all who look to Him could likewise.

The significance of this covenant and God's commitment to humanity in spite of our sin is only underscore by Noah's behavior in **Genesis 9:20**. This leads to a fallout in all of Noah's family, with one of his son's taking the opportunity to publicly shame Noah. This of course, leads to the judgment of one of Noah's grandson's Canaan. The people of Canaan would ultimately be judged upon Joshua's conquest, and there is no correlation between this judgment and a present day people. Nonetheless, there is a connection *between us all and Noah*. We all have this same sin in our hearts and only find hope in the Lord's mercy.

***Before you dismiss, take some time to review what you've learned tonight and discuss how these promises and revelations still speak truth to us today.***