

Parashat Noach

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Link to *Parasha*: <https://www.sefaria.org/Genesis.5-22?lang=bi>

Summary

This week's Torah portion is *Parashat Noach*. God tells *Noach* to build an ark to save every species of animal on earth as well as *Noach's* own family from a worldwide flood. It rains for forty days and forty nights. *Noach* sends a raven and then a dove to find signs that the land has reappeared.

Once the ark rests on dry land, God sends a rainbow as a sign of a covenant, promising not to destroy the world again by flood. God reveals seven basic rules for all people to follow. Noah plants a vineyard when he comes off the ark.

Towards the end of the *parasha* we read that many years later a group of people who spoke "one language" worked together to build a city and a very tall tower--the Tower of Bavel. God foils their attempt by causing everyone to speak different languages, which makes it difficult for them to communicate with one another and to work together.

Questions:

1) The first *pasuk* I read this morning said that Noach was a right-acting person and pure at his time:

נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו

In the third verse I read, we learned that the people who lived at that time had filled the earth with violence. Why do you think the Torah calls Noach a right-acting and pure person during a time when people were not treating each other well? <<pick 3>>

Rashi taught that this meant Noach was good, but only compared with all the other people acting badly at the time. This might mean that the people who lived at the time saw Noach as a good person, but that--because we are living at a different time, when there is more good in the world--we might not see him as fully good. I do think it takes more strength to do the right thing around people doing the wrong thing than to do the right thing when everyone else is also doing good. I bet that Noach looked good to God because he was doing the best he could at a time when everyone else was doing bad things.

2) How could you “be a Noach” in the face of violence or meanness? <<pick 3>>

One way to “be a Noach” is to not participate in bullying when you see it. An even higher level is standing up to bullying, even if it’s your friend or someone you know. You can tell them to stop and ask them how they would feel if they were being treated that way.

3) The first verse I read also mentioned that Noach walked with God:

אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים הִתְהַלֵּךְ־נֹחַ:

What do you think it might mean that Noach walked *with* God?

<<pick 3>>

I think that means that Noach did what God said. We learn later that Avraham walks “before God” which means going above and beyond what is expected. One example of a way that Avraham goes above and beyond is by holding God to a higher standard. When God shared God’s plan to destroy the cities of Sodom and Amorrhah with Avraham, Avraham spoke up and tried to stop God from destroying innocent lives. Noach only did the things God said instead of going above and beyond like Avraham.