
Lesson 16 — The ARK



“Make yourself an ark of gopher 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 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits.”

[Genesis 6:14-15]

Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD and became God’s chosen vessel of salvation for the survival of the human race. The promised seed of the woman was carried onto the ark and secured through Noah and his offspring. The cursed seed of Satan was destroyed through the flood along with the rest of the ungodly. God’s purpose for mankind and His plan of redemption could not be stopped.

The LORD had bigger plans — a promised hope and a future — but first He had to get Noah and his family through the most catastrophic event in human history. Just as Noah was God’s chosen vessel, Noah needed a vessel of his own to weather the storm and survive the global flood.

Of course, God had disclosed His plan to Noah in advance. There was only one way to survive the coming flood. Noah was instructed to build a boat. But not just any boat — an ark — a massive, intricate wooden vessel that would safely shelter the remaining remnant of life on the planet. As we will see, the ark was a combination of divine instruction and human invention. On one hand, the ark was a sea-worthy ship that was precisely and perfectly engineered to survive the catastrophic conditions of the flood. On the other hand, the ark was a God-sized assignment that certainly required God-sized assistance.

As Bible believers, we must view the ark both from a practical and supernatural perspective. The historical credibility of Noah’s ark has been attacked, disparaged, and mocked by a majority of modern scholars, skeptics, and evolutionary “scientists,” causing many to doubt the reliability of God’s word and even deny the faith. Noah’s ark has been successfully classified by the mainstream academic community as a religious myth at best and an absurd fairytale at worst. Sadly this line of thinking has gained a foothold in the church, where the average church member rejects the historical validity of Noah’s ark and the global flood.

But our faith must not be shaken!

Bible-believing Christians need to know that there is an established wealth of knowledge and information that provides legitimate answers to our most challenging questions. Questions like, *“how did all those animals fit on the ark?”* ... or *“how did Noah and his family feed and take care of all the animals?”* ... or *“how did a wooden ship survive such violent conditions?”* ... or *“How could the flood waters cover the whole earth?”*

You may be surprised to discover that there are sound scientific explanations that demonstrate how Noah’s ark was not only possible but also provable. We now have practical, real-life models of Noah’s ark that put everything into perspective from a purely scientific framework. In other words, Noah’s ark is no fairytale. The ark is real history!

While it is important that we can provide a scientific explanation for Noah’s ark, it is just as important that we acknowledge the authority and sufficiency of God’s word. We don’t need science to validate the Bible. The Bible is the reliable Word of the living God and all other things are measured by it, not vice versa. Science doesn’t make the Bible true. It is true.

It would be irresponsible and unbiblical to try and strip away the supernatural elements of Noah’s ark. The Bible is a supernatural book that reveals supernatural events in history, and the ark is no exception. Obviously the LORD’s intervention must be taken into account, as He played a significant role in helping Noah accomplish this extraordinary assignment. So we must acknowledge that just because the ark could have worked practically, it does not mean that we must remove God from the equation.

❖ Read Genesis 6:11-22. Write down as many details about the ark as you can. Why should we read this account as literal history and not symbolically?

Putting Things into Perspective

We have been conditioned by a pop-culture image and interpretation of Noah’s ark without even realizing it. Entire generations have grown up with toy models, Sunday school illustrations, and nursery motifs that effectively have eliminated the sheer mass of this amazing vessel. These images grossly misrepresent the literal dimensions of Noah’s ark and reinforce the fairytale perception that feeds modern skepticism.

Thankfully, we now have ministries like [Answers in Genesis](#), that have painstakingly undertaken the task of reconstructing a life-size ark to help put everything in its proper perspective. We aren’t dealing with a toy boat. The ark was over 500 Feet long, 85 feet wide and over 50 feet tall with three intricately designed decks to house thousands of animals.



Popular nursery motif



Life-size ark to scale at the Ark Encounter

The more we study the engineering behind ark, the more we discover how Noah and his family pulled it off with God's help. Nearly every culture and civilization has an ancient flood legend that follows the same basic story, but of all the legends around the world, only the Bible provides the true, historical account. So if the Bible is true and can be trusted, then we should expect the details to add up. The ark was perfectly designed by God with precise dimensions to accomplish its purpose. It would have been properly weighted and balanced to weather the flood. It would have been designed with perfect efficiency and capacity to house and care for the animals. Let's take a closer look at some of the details.

Make Room for Every Kind

One of the most common objections to the reliability of the ark encounter is that there simply was not enough room for the tens of thousands of animal species we have on earth today. A closer look, however, proves that Noah was never commanded to take two of every species on the ark, but rather two of every "kind." Modern zoologists agree that there is great species variety among the larger "family" or "genus" groups in the animal kingdom.

This is extremely significant because it means, for example, that Noah was not required to take every species of dog onto the ark, but only two of the canine kind. All the genetic species variation within the dog kind would have been encoded in two generic dogs, which then allows for the variety of dog breeds we have today. In other words, Noah did not need every species of animal, but only basic kinds. This significantly reduces the number of animals and fits them all well within the ark.

"So far, the current estimate of living and extinct vertebrate families is about 950. While we will continue to evaluate these families to see if they should be split up or combined with other families for our final estimate of the "kinds," 950 families is a good approximation. Given that most animals were brought onto the Ark by twos, while "clean" birds and mammals were brought by sevens, this means that Noah cared for approximately two thousand land-dwelling vertebrate animals." [Answers in Genesis]

Furthermore, it is estimated that Noah's ark had the capacity potentially to house as many as 16,000 animals, assuming they required the same floor space as animals in typical farm enclosures and laboratories. This is far more than necessary. Not only were the vast majority of the creatures (birds, reptiles, and mammals) small, but also they could have been housed in groups, which would have further reduced the required space.

But what about the larger animals, such as giraffes, elephants, and even dinosaurs? How could they fit? The answer is quite simple, actually. It is almost certain that the animals on the ark were young. Even the largest dinosaurs were relatively small when only a few years old. It makes more sense to think that God would have sent to Noah juveniles or smaller varieties within the same kind. Consider the following advantages of bringing juveniles versions of each creature:

1. They take up less space.
2. They eat less.
3. They create less waste.
4. They are often easier to manage.
5. They are generally more resilient.
6. They would have more time to reproduce after the flood.

These are but a few practical explanations that support the historical credibility of the ark and provide answers to some of the most common objections. In short, the ark was a God-sized project, but also it was real-life partnership with Noah that required practical planning and thoughtful design. With a little perspective, the Genesis account of Noah's ark is real and reliable.

- ❖ Read Genesis 6:17-19, 7:1-7 and John 14:6. What was the only way of salvation in Noah's day? How is the ark a picture of the gospel message of salvation?

- ❖ Read Matthew 7:13-14. How does the warning of Jesus correspond both to the days of Noah and our present generation?

- ❖ Read Genesis 7:15-16. What important detail do we discover from this passage? What is so significant about how this image is portrayed and how does it relate to our own eternal security?