

Parsha Q&A



Parshas Noach

For the week ending 4 Cheshvan 575
27 & 28 October 199

Parsha Questions

1. What are the "offspring" of a righteous person?
2. Which particular sin "sealed" the fate of the Flood Generation?
3. Being that Hashem is all-powerful, why did He choose to save Noach by means of an ark, as opposed to some other method?
4. The Ark had three stories. What function did each story serve?
5. What indication do we have that Noach was familiar with the Torah?
6. Why did Hashem postpone bringing the Flood for seven days?
7. What demonstrated Noach's lack of faith?
8. Why did the first water of the Flood come down as light rain?
9. What did people say that threatened Noach, and what did Hashem do to protect him?
10. What grouping of animals escaped the punishment of the Flood?
11. How deeply was the Ark submerged in the water?
12. How long did the punishment of the Flood last?
13. A solar year is how many days longer than a lunar year?
14. When did humans receive permission to eat meat?
15. What prohibition was given along with the permission to eat meat?
16. Why does the command to "be fruitful and multiply" follow directly after the prohibition of murder?
17. Name two generations in which the rainbow never appeared.
18. Why does the Torah call Nimrod a mighty hunter?
19. The sin of the generation of the dispersion was greater than the sin of the generation of the Flood. Why was the punishment of the former less severe?
20. Why was Sarah also called "Yiscah"?

Rashi never just comments; something in the text always impels him to do so. Rashi's comments are answers to unspoken questions and difficulties arising from a thoughtful reading of the Torah. Therefore, anyone who wants a true understanding of Rashi's classic Torah commentary must always ask

"What's Bothering Rashi?"

***"And he sent the dove to see if the water had abated from the face of the earth."
(Bereishis 8:8)***

Rashi comments: "**And he sent**": This does not mean sending on an errand, but rather sending away, setting it free to go wherever it wanted, and thus Noach could see whether the waters had abated, because if it could find a resting place it would not return to him."

What's bothering Rashi? (Hint: In the previous verse (Bereishis 8:7), the Torah uses the exact same phrase "*And he sent out the raven, and it went out, flying back and forth...*" — yet in that verse Rashi makes no comment.)

Answer: The verse says "Noach sent the dove to see..." But who was supposed "to see" — the dove or Noach? It sounds as if the dove was sent on a mission to see if the waters had abated. This makes no sense, for how could a bird understand the purpose of its mission! On the other hand, how would sending out the bird allow Noach to see anything? Thus, Rashi explains that the word "sent" doesn't mean "sent on an errand" but rather "set free," and Noach would "see" — understand — by the dove's actions if the waters had abated.

Adapted from Dr. Avigdor Bonchek's new book "What's Bothering Rashi?" Feldheim Publishers

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I Did Not Know That!

According to the Midrash Tehillim (*Mizmor Alef*), one third of the people at the Tower of Babel were punished by being turned into monkeys. So, in a sense, Darwin was "right" about one thing: Humans and monkeys share common ancestry!

Recommended Reading List

Ramban

6:19	Miracle of the Ark
7:1	Preserving the World
8:11	The Olive Leaf
9:12	The Rainbow
9:18	Ham and Canaan
10:9	Nimrod
10:15	The Land of Canaan
11:32	The Death of Terach

Sforno

8:21	The New World
8:22	The Pre-Flood World
9:6	The Crime of Murder
9:9	The Conditions of the Covenant
9:13	Meaning of the Rainbow

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Answers to this Week's Questions

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

1. 6:9 - Good deeds.
2. 6:13 - Robbery.
3. 6:14 - So that people would see Noach building the ark and ask him what he was doing. When Noach would answer, "Hashem is bringing a flood," it might encourage some people to repent.
4. 6:16 - The top story housed the people, the middle story — the animals, and the bottom story — the refuse.
5. 7:2 - Hashem told him to take into the ark seven of each kosher-type animal, and two of each non-kosher type. "Kosher" and "non-kosher" are Torah concepts.
6. 7:4 - To allow seven days to mourn the death of Mesushelach.
7. 7:7 - He did not believe the Flood would come. Therefore, he did not enter the Ark until the rain forced him to do so.
8. 7:12 - To give the generation a chance to repent.
9. 7:13,15 - People said, "If we see him going into the ark, we'll smash it!" Hashem surrounded it with bears and lions to kill any attackers.
10. 7:22 - The fish.
11. 8:4 - Eleven *amos*.
12. 8:14 - A full solar year.
13. 8:14 - Eleven days.
14. 9:3 - After the Flood.
15. 9:4 - The prohibition of eating a limb cut from a living animal.
16. 9:7 - To equate one who abstains from having children to one who commits murder.
17. 9:12 - The generation of King Chizkiyahu and the generation of Shimon bar Yochai.
18. 10:9 - He used words to ensnare the minds of people, convincing them to rebel against Hashem.
19. 11:9 - They lived together peacefully.
20. 11:29 - The word "*Yisrah*" is related to the Hebrew word "to see." Sarah was called *Yisrah* because she could "see" the future via prophecy. Also, because of her beauty, everyone would gaze at her.