YOVEL PUBLICATIONS

NOACH

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Rest, Covenant and the New Creation

THE WEEKLY TORAH & PROPHETS

Torah: Genesis 6:9–11:32
Haftarah: Isaiah 54:1–55:5
WEBSITE EDITION — FOR COMMUNITY REVIEW

SCRIPTURE SOURCE

Scripture quotations are based on the World Messianic Bible British Edition (WMBB), a public-domain translation. Where the WMBB renders the Hebrew Divine Name as LORD or GOD, Yovel Publications uses YHVH in accordance with its house style. Such adaptations are editorial choices of Yovel Publications and are not part of the original WMBB text.

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WHY READ THE WEEKLY TORAH PORTION?

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For thousands of years, the people of God have gathered around the Scriptures to hear the words of Moses and the Prophets. The first followers of Yeshua did not regard these Scriptures as something belonging to a discarded religion or a bygone age. They were the Scriptures from which the Good News of Messiah was proclaimed.

The book of Acts gives us a wonderful glimpse of this practice. When Paul and his companions entered the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia on the Sabbath, we are told:

> *"After the reading of the Torah and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, 'Brothers, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, speak.'"* — *Acts 13:15*

Paul then stood and proclaimed Yeshua from the story of Israel. The setting is important. The Torah and the Prophets were being read on the Sabbath, and it was from within that Scriptural framework that the apostles proclaimed Messiah.

Later in the same chapter, Gentiles also wanted to hear more:

> *"The next Sabbath, almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God."* — *Acts 13:44*

The earliest proclamation of Yeshua was therefore not detached from the Torah and the Prophets. It grew naturally out of them.

MOSES WROTE ABOUT ME

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Perhaps no reason for studying Torah could be stronger than the words of Yeshua Himself. Speaking to those who searched the Scriptures yet failed to recognise Him, Yeshua said:

> ***"For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me. But if you don't believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"*** *— John 5:46–47*

MOSES WROTE ABOUT YESHUA.

That means Torah is not merely a collection of ancient laws and historical events. Within its pages are patterns, promises, shadows and prophetic pictures that point us toward Messiah.

The Passover lamb speaks of Him. The manna from heaven speaks of Him. The Rock in the wilderness speaks of Him. The tabernacle and priesthood speak of Him. The appointed Feasts speak of Him. The sacrifices, deliverances, covenants and great events of Torah continually prepare the reader to recognise the One who was to come.

Yeshua did not say that believing in Him should cause us to disregard Moses. He made the connection in the opposite direction: "If you believed Moses, you would believe me." And then He gave the sobering counterpart: "If you don't believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

This changes the way we approach the Torah. We are not returning to Moses instead of following Yeshua. We are reading Moses because we follow Yeshua, and because Yeshua Himself told us that Moses wrote about Him.

After His resurrection, Yeshua demonstrated precisely this way of reading Scripture. On the road to Emmaus:

> ***"Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he explained to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."*** *— Luke 24:27*

Beginning with Moses, Yeshua showed His disciples the things written concerning Himself. That is the spirit in which these Weekly Torah Portion booklets are offered.

Each week we will walk through another portion of Torah, allowing Scripture to tell its own story while following the threads that run through the Prophets, the Writings and the Apostolic Scriptures. Along the way we will look for the patterns of redemption, covenant, Kingdom and restoration —and above all, we will look for Yeshua.

"HE WROTE ABOUT ME."

So open the Torah. Give ear. And let us discover what Moses has to tell us about Messiah.

A PRAYER BEFORE WE BEGIN

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The Psalmist prays directly to YHVH:

> ***"Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of your Torah."***
>
> ***— Psalm 119:18***

And so, before opening this week's portion, let us make that prayer our own:

> *YHVH, open our eyes as we open Your Word. Give us ears to hear and hearts ready to receive. Show us the wondrous things in Your Torah, and above all, help us to recognise Yeshua, the One of whom Moses wrote. Lead us by Your Spirit into truth, understanding and faithful obedience. Amen.*

CONTENTS

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THE TORAH

1. Noach — Grace, Righteousness and Faith
2. The Ark — A House of Atonement
3. Shut In — Judgement and Salvation
4. Remembered — The New Creation Begins
5. Rest on Ararat — The Curse Reversed
6. The Dove, the Olive Leaf and Hope
7. The Altar and the Pleasant Aroma
8. The Bow and the Everlasting Covenant
9. Noach's House and the Nations
10. Babel — The Counterfeit Kingdom
11. Shem and the Line of Promise

THE PROPHETS

1. Sing, O Barren
2. The Jerusalem Above and the Children of Promise
3. The Covenant of Peace and Everlasting Mercy
4. Come to the Waters — Grace Without Price
5. The Everlasting Covenant and the Nations

STUDY

A Scripture Pathway Through Noach

THE TORAH

NOACH

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Rest, Covenant and the New Creation

Genesis 6:9–11:32

Grace, judgement, deliverance, rest, covenant and a new beginning.

Noach — Grace, Righteousness and Faith

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The story of Noach begins where Bereshit left us: a world in which violence has filled the earth, yet grace has not disappeared. Noach has found grace in the eyes of YHVH. He is called righteous, he walks with God, and his faith becomes visible in obedience. The portion then carries us through judgement, deliverance, rest, covenant and a new beginning, before ending with another human attempt to build a world without submission to YHVH at Babel.

The movement of the portion is therefore not simply flood and survival. It is grace in the midst of corruption, a household brought through judgement, a renewed creation, covenant mercy, and then the contrast between the house YHVH provides and the city man builds for himself. The same questions that were opened in Bereshit remain before us: whose word will man hear, whose name will he trust, and whose kingdom will he seek?

The opening description of Noach gathers three words that belong together: grace, righteousness and faith. Genesis has already told us that Noach found grace in the eyes of YHVH. The next chapter calls him a just man who was blameless in his generations and who walked with God. Hebrews then remembers him as a man who acted by faith when he was warned of things not yet seen. The order matters. Noach does not manufacture righteousness by his own works. He receives grace, believes the word spoken to him, and his obedience becomes the visible fruit of that faith.

This continues the pattern already seen with Abel. Abel brought his offering by faith; Noach prepares the Ark by faith. The testimony of Scripture is not that fallen man can produce a righteousness acceptable to YHVH by effort, but that faith receives what YHVH provides and then walks accordingly. Grace is not opposed to obedience. Grace makes faithful obedience possible.

Paul states the same order in Ephesians 2:8–10: salvation is by grace through faith, the gift of God rather than the reward of works. Yet those who receive that gift are created in Messiah Yeshua for good works, which God prepared for them to walk in. Noach shows what this means long before Paul writes it. He finds grace, trusts the warning of YHVH, and obeys. Hebrews 11:7 calls his response an act of faith and speaks of the righteousness that comes by faith. His obedience is the fruit of his faith, not the price of his deliverance.

The Hebrew language of walking deepens the point. Noach "walked with God", as Enoch had walked with God before him. To walk is not merely to agree with a set of propositions. It is to order one's way according to the One being followed. Later Scripture will speak of walking in the ways of YHVH, walking in the Spirit, and walking in the good works prepared for His people. To follow Yeshua is to walk with Him: to hear, keep and do what He commands.

The darkness around Noach makes his walk even more striking. The earth is described as corrupt and filled with violence. The problem is not that creation itself has failed, but that mankind has corrupted its way. Human beings have taken the knowledge of good and evil into their own hands and now decide for themselves what is right. The result is not freedom but violence, oppression and death.

> *"As the days of Noah were, so will the coming of the Son of Man be."* — *Matthew 24:37*

Yeshua uses the days of Noach as a pattern for the time of His coming. The point is not merely that life continues with eating, drinking and marriage. It is that judgement arrives while the world proceeds as though YHVH has not spoken. Noach therefore becomes both a witness to grace and a warning against unbelief. He hears the word, believes it, and orders his life around what YHVH has said.

The Ark — A House of Atonement

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Into a world filled with violence, YHVH gives Noach detailed instructions for an Ark. The means of deliverance is not invented by Noach. He does not design his own way through judgement. He receives a pattern and builds according to the word given to him.

The language surrounding the Ark is rich with the vocabulary of covering and atonement. Noach is told to coat the Ark inside and outside with pitch. In Genesis 6:14, Kaphar describes the act of covering or coating, and Kopher names the pitch itself. Elsewhere, this family of Hebrew words is used in the language of covering, ransom and atonement. The ordinary material that seals the Ark therefore carries a larger biblical resonance: YHVH provides a place of covering in which a household is preserved through judgement.

The rooms within the Ark strengthen the picture. The Hebrew word can carry the sense of nests or chambers: places prepared for life to be sheltered. Yeshua later speaks of many rooms in His Father's house. Here salvation is no abstract idea: YHVH appoints a real refuge and prepares a place for those He calls. Those who enter are preserved within His provision.

The Ark has a door in its side (Genesis 6:16). YHVH appoints the way into safety, and Noach enters the refuge He has provided. Yeshua later declares, "I am the door", and teaches that whoever enters through Him will be saved (John 10:7–9). We are not asked to invent a way through judgement. We are called to enter by the One whom YHVH has given. The image grows richer when we remember that the woman was formed from Adam's side, and that the side of Yeshua, the Last Adam, was pierced (Genesis 2:21–22; John 19:34; 1 Corinthians 15:45). In both the doorway of the Ark and the pierced side of Messiah, Scripture draws our attention to life received through YHVH's provision.

Before the Flood begins, YHVH speaks of covenant for the first time in Scripture: "But I will establish my covenant with you." Covenant is more than a temporary arrangement. It is a bond established by the faithfulness of the stronger covenant partner. Noach's security therefore rests not in the strength of the timber but in the word of YHVH who has appointed the Ark, called him into it, and promised to preserve the life placed within it.

Noach's response is beautifully simple: he does according to all that God commanded him. Faith becomes action. James will later insist that faith without works is dead, not because works purchase salvation, but because living faith acts upon the word it has received. Noach has already found grace; he now builds because he believes. Hebrews 11:7 calls this faith in action, and James 2:17–18 declares that living faith is made visible by its works. This is the obedience of faith, not an attempt to earn the salvation that YHVH Himself provides (Romans 1:5).

Shut In — Judgement and Salvation

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When the appointed time arrives, YHVH tells Noach to come into the Ark with his household. The text again calls him righteous. Clean and unclean animals are distinguished before Sinai, showing that these categories belong to the biblical world long before the covenant at the mountain. Noach is given seven days' notice, and then the fountains of the deep are broken up and the windows of heaven are opened.

Forty days and forty nights become a familiar biblical period of testing, transition and judgement. Moshe will spend forty days with YHVH on Sinai. Eliyahu will journey forty days. Nineveh will hear a forty-day warning. Yeshua will fast forty days in the wilderness and later appear to His disciples over a period of forty days after His resurrection. For Noach, the forty days of rain mark the beginning of the Flood's judgement. Many months would pass before the waters receded and his household emerged into a renewed world. The forty days therefore begin a much longer passage through judgement towards a new beginning.

One of the most striking statements in the narrative is that YHVH shuts Noach in. The door is not left to human strength or vigilance. The same verb is used earlier when YHVH closes the flesh of Adam's side. Here YHVH Himself seals the household within the refuge He has provided. The image is one of security, but it is also solemn: a door that has been shut by YHVH is not a door that man can casually reopen.

Yeshua Himself returns to the days of Noach when warning His disciples about His coming (Matthew 24:37–39; Luke 17:26–30). Life went on as usual while Noach prepared according to the word of YHVH. Then the appointed day came, the door was shut, and judgement overtook the world outside. His warning calls us to more

than curiosity about future events: it calls us to hear His word, be ready and take refuge in Him. The day of His appearing will not wait for a world that refuses to listen.

The Flood is judgement, but judgement and salvation must not be separated. The earth has reached a condition in which violence has become full. Yeshua later says that unless the final days were shortened, no flesh would survive.

The judgement of the Flood therefore preserves the future of creation as surely as it destroys the corruption that has filled it. Eight souls pass through the waters into a new beginning.

Peter explicitly uses Noach when he speaks of baptism, and Paul describes Israel passing through the sea as a kind of baptism. In both cases water marks the end of one order and the beginning of another. The waters judge, but those whom YHVH preserves are brought through them.

Peter makes the connection explicit: eight people were brought safely through the Flood waters, and baptism corresponds to this deliverance through the resurrection of Yeshua Messiah (1 Peter 3:20–21). Paul explains the same new beginning from another direction. In baptism believers are joined to Messiah in His death and raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3–4); Israel's passage through the sea also becomes a baptismal picture (1 Corinthians 10:1–2). Water marks both the ending of an old condition and the beginning of a life received from YHVH. At Yeshua's own immersion the Spirit descends like a dove (Matthew 3:16–17). The dove of Noach's account and the dove at the Jordan bring together the beautiful themes of water, the Spirit and renewed life.

Remembered — The New Creation Begins

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Genesis 8 begins with one of Scripture's great covenant words: "God remembered Noah." To say that YHVH remembers does not mean that He had forgotten. Biblical remembrance is active. When YHVH remembers His covenant, He acts according to it. He remembers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when Israel groans in Egypt. The thief beside Yeshua asks to be remembered when Messiah comes into His Kingdom. To be remembered by YHVH is to be held within the faithfulness of His promise.

The Ark has been carried above the waters, and Noach cannot hasten the moment of deliverance. Then the narrative turns upon the faithfulness of YHVH: He remembers, and He acts. When Israel later groans in Egypt, YHVH likewise hears and remembers His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Exodus 2:24). His remembrance means that those sheltered by His promise have not passed beyond His care. The work of restoration begins with Him.

The narrative then deliberately echoes the first creation. A wind — Ruach — passes over the earth as the waters begin to subside, recalling the Spirit of God moving over the waters in Genesis 1. Waters are restrained, dry land gradually appears, and later an olive leaf announces the return of fruitful life. Day and night, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat are reaffirmed. Creation is not abandoned; it is ordered again.

The resemblance to Genesis 1 is striking. Where the waters had overwhelmed the world, YHVH now causes a Ruach, a wind, to pass over the earth (Genesis 8:1); the same Hebrew word can also mean spirit. The deep recedes and dry ground slowly comes into view, recalling the ordering of waters and land in the beginning (Genesis 1:2, 9–10). The olive leaf will announce the return of growth, and the seasons will again sustain the life of the earth. What seemed swallowed

by judgement is made habitable once more. Noach waits while YHVH brings His purpose to completion.

This is one of the central movements of Noach. Redemption is not escape from creation but its renewal. YHVH preserves life, restrains the waters, brings forth dry ground, and commissions the survivors to be fruitful and multiply. The God who created is also the God who restores.

When Noach steps out of the Ark, the command to be fruitful and multiply is renewed (Genesis 9:1). Yet the Flood has not removed the old corruption from the human heart: the chapters that follow make that painfully clear. This is a genuine renewal of the earth, but it also points beyond itself. In Messiah there is new creation already at work (2 Corinthians 5:17), while creation still longs to be delivered from bondage to corruption (Romans 8:19–23). The One who remembered Noach will not abandon His creation. He is bringing it towards a greater restoration under Yeshua.

Rest on Ararat — The Curse Reversed

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The Ark comes to rest on the mountains of Ararat. The Hebrew verb used for its resting is Nuach, closely related to the name Noach. Rest is therefore written into the heart of the narrative. The vessel that has carried the household through judgement does not wander for ever. It comes to rest at the appointed time and place.

There is a possible wordplay linking Ararat with the earlier language of curse and with the reversal of the curse announced at Noach's birth. Whatever weight we place on that wordplay, the theological movement is clear: the curse has not been allowed to have the final word. The ground that bore death is again uncovered; life is preserved; and a new beginning emerges from the waters.

Genesis gives the date of the Ark's rest precisely: the seventeenth day of the seventh month (Genesis 8:4). The original research suggests a remarkable Passover correspondence. If these months are counted from an autumnal beginning of the year, the seventh corresponds to Nisan, placing the Ark's rest on 17 Nisan, three calendar dates after Passover on 14 Nisan (Exodus 12:2; Leviticus 23:5). Genesis itself does not identify this month as Nisan; the connection depends upon that reckoning. On this reading the Ark's rest after judgement becomes a vivid resurrection picture, pointing to the life and rest secured through the Passover Lamb, Yeshua (1 Peter 3:20–21).

Hebrews develops the language of rest into a call to faith. The people of God are invited to enter the rest of YHVH rather than continue in self-reliance. The Shabbat itself remembers the finished work of creation and points towards the Kingdom rest still to come. Noach, whose name carries the sound of rest, therefore stands at an important junction: judgement has passed, the Ark has rested, and the world is given another beginning.

The Dove, the Olive Leaf and Hope

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Noach opens the window and sends out first a raven and then a dove. The dove becomes the more significant sign. At first it finds no resting place for the sole of its foot and returns to the Ark. Noach reaches out his hand and draws it back to himself. Later the dove returns with a freshly plucked olive leaf, and finally it does not return at all.

The imagery reaches forward through Scripture. The dove becomes associated with the Spirit, descending at Yeshua's immersion. The search for a resting place harmonises with the promise that the Spirit of YHVH rests upon Messiah. The olive tree later becomes one of Paul's great images for the covenant people of God. Spirit, rest, olive and renewed earth as signs of a new beginning.

The olive leaf signals returning life. Israel is pictured as an olive tree (Jeremiah 11:16), and Paul describes natural branches and branches from the nations grafted in through faith (Romans 11:16–24). The root sustains them all. Paul's teaching calls for humility and holds out hope for Israel's restoration: covenant life rests on the mercy of YHVH.

The waiting itself is also worth noticing. Scripture uses different Hebrew verbs as Noach waits in seven-day intervals. One carries the sense of travail, twisting or labour; another carries the sense of hopeful waiting or trusting. The new world does not appear instantly. Noach must wait, test, watch and trust. Hope is not passivity. It is patient confidence that YHVH will complete what He has begun.

The olive leaf is therefore small but powerful. It does not mean the whole work is complete, but it announces that the waters have receded and that life is returning. Scripture often gives such signs before the fullness arrives: firstfruits before harvest, a branch before the forest, a promise before fulfilment. Faith receives the sign and continues to wait.

The Altar and the Pleasant Aroma

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When Noach finally leaves the Ark, his first recorded act is not to build a city, secure an empire or make a name for himself. He builds an altar to YHVH. This is the first explicit altar in Scripture, and the next man recorded building altars will be Abram. The new world begins with worship.

Noach takes from the clean animals and birds and offers burnt offerings. The Hebrew word Olah, translated "burnt offering", is related to the verb meaning "to ascend". The offering rises in smoke as it is given wholly to YHVH. Noach comes to the altar in worship and dedication, drawing near to the One who has preserved him. It is not a transaction by which Noach purchases favour; grace was present before the altar. The offering is the response of a man who has been preserved and now draws near to the One who saved him.

YHVH smells a pleasant aroma. This "pleasant aroma" connects naturally with the language Paul later uses of Yeshua, who gave Himself as an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling fragrance (Ephesians 5:2). The connection is important because it keeps sacrifice within the larger story of Messiah. The Lamb was not an emergency plan invented after human sin. The redemptive purpose of YHVH stands before the foundation of the world.

The Hebrew expression for the pleasing aroma also resonates with the language of rest. This is the true answer to human striving: drawing near through what YHVH accepts, rather than trying to build righteousness from the ground up. The altar of Noach therefore prepares us for the contrast that will come at Babel. Noach receives grace and draws near by faith; Babel seeks to establish its own name and righteousness by human effort. Paul likewise contrasts self-established righteousness with the righteousness received through faith (Romans 10:3; Philippians 3:9).

The Bow and the Everlasting Covenant

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After the Flood, the blessing spoken to Adam is renewed over Noach and his sons: be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth. Humanity is again commissioned under the Creator. The sanctity of human life is reaffirmed because man is made in the image of God, and the life carried in the blood is treated as belonging to YHVH.

YHVH then establishes His covenant with Noach, his descendants and every living creature. The promise is cosmic in scope: never again will all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood. The sign of this covenant is the bow set in the cloud.

The Hebrew word ordinarily translated "bow" is also the word for the weapon. The image is therefore more than decorative. The warrior's bow is set in the cloud as a sign of covenant restraint. When YHVH looks upon it, He remembers the everlasting covenant between Himself and every living creature upon the earth.

The sign stands in the heavens, but the covenant concerns the earth. This keeps the story grounded in the goodness of creation. YHVH has not abandoned the world. Seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will continue while the earth remains. Human evil has not disappeared, but the faithfulness of YHVH orders the future.

This covenant also gives context to Yeshua's words about the days of Noach. The final judgement is not proof that YHVH has forgotten mercy. The God who judges is the God who remembers covenant. The same Scripture that warns of coming judgement also announces a Saviour, a refuge and a Kingdom that cannot be shaken.

Noach's House and the Nations

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The narrative does not pretend that the Flood has recreated humanity inwardly. Noach plants a vineyard, drinks wine and becomes uncovered in his tent. The event that follows is difficult and sobering. The new world still contains the old human problem. The imagination of man's heart has not been transformed simply by surviving judgement.

The blessing and curse pronounced over the family become part of the unfolding story of the nations. Shem is especially associated with the name of YHVH: "Blessed be YHVH, the God of Shem." Japheth is enlarged and is spoken of as dwelling in the tents of Shem. Canaan is brought low. These family lines will matter as Genesis moves towards Abram and the promise that all families of the earth will be blessed through him.

Chapter 10 then spreads the families of Noach across the earth. The table of nations is not merely a genealogy. It prepares the reader for Babel and for the later calling of one man from among the nations. The biblical story narrows in order eventually to widen again: from the nations to Abram, from Abram to Israel, and through the promised Seed to blessing for the nations.

Genesis 10's Table of Nations has traditionally been counted as seventy. At Tabernacles seventy bulls were offered across seven days (Numbers 29:12–34), offerings Jewish tradition associates with the nations. YHVH's purpose reaches beyond Israel: He promises Abram that all families of the earth will be blessed through him (Genesis 12:3).

Yeshua later sends out seventy disciples to proclaim the Kingdom (Luke 10:1; some manuscripts read seventy-two). From Noach's nations, through Abraham's promise and the Messiah's mission, Scripture reveals YHVH's purpose to gather the nations into His blessing.

Babel — The Counterfeit Kingdom

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The closing movement of the portion presents a deliberate contrast with the Ark. YHVH had told humanity to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth. At Babel, men gather in one place and determine not to be scattered. They decide to build a city and a tower and to make a name for themselves. The issue is not architecture. It is rebellion expressed through a human system of unity, security and ascent apart from YHVH.

Nimrod stands behind the rise of Babel as the first great kingdom-builder in the narrative. He can be read as a prototype of the counterfeit ruler: a man-made king standing over a kingdom that opposes the Kingdom of YHVH. Revelation will later use Babylon as the great symbol of a religious, economic and political order that resists the Lamb. The seed of that pattern is already present here.

The material of Babel matters. "Come, let's make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." Scripture will later call the people of YHVH living stones, built into a spiritual house, with Yeshua as the chief cornerstone. Babel instead manufactures uniform bricks and binds them together with mortar. The contrast is suggestive: the house of YHVH is built from living people shaped by Him; the tower of man is built from standardised human manufacture.

The project is also a continuation of the old temptation to ascend and be like God. The builders seek a tower whose top reaches into the heavens. Later Jacob will see a ladder established by YHVH, joining earth and heaven, with messengers ascending and descending. Yeshua identifies Himself as the true meeting place of heaven and earth. Babel therefore becomes a counterfeit gate: a human attempt to reach what can only be given from above.

The desire to "make a name for ourselves" exposes the heart of the project. Proverbs says that the name of YHVH is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe. Babel reverses that order. Man makes his own name and his own tower. The Gospel calls men to the opposite path: to call upon the name of YHVH, receive the name He gives, and enter the city whose builder and maker is God.

YHVH comes down and confuses the language. The builders fear being scattered; YHVH scatters them. Human unity is not automatically righteous. A world united in rebellion is still rebellion. The true unity of the Kingdom comes under the reign of Yeshua, not through a tower that replaces Him.

Babel therefore closes the portion with a stark choice. The Ark is built according to the word of YHVH and carries a household through judgement. Babel is built according to the word of man and is brought to confusion. One rests upon grace and covenant; the other rests upon bricks, reputation and human power. Noach teaches us where true safety is found.

Shem and the Line of Promise

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The portion ends quietly with the descendants of Shem and then the house of Terah. After the drama of the Flood and Babel, Genesis returns to names, generations and births. Yet this genealogy is carrying the promise forward. It brings us to Abram.

Shem lives long enough for the generations to overlap deep into the patriarchal period, reminding us how near the memory of the Flood would have been to the world of Abram. More importantly, the line itself shows that YHVH has not lost His purpose among the nations. Out of a scattered world He will call one man, and through that man He will promise blessing to all the families of the earth.

The final note is striking: Sarai is barren. Humanly speaking, the line appears to close at the very point where the great promise is about to begin. That prepares us perfectly for the Haftarah, which opens with the command to the barren woman to sing. Noach ends with barrenness; the Prophets answer with promise.

THE PROPHETS

HAFTARAH

Isaiah 54:1–55:5

Covenant, water, new creation, mercy, gathering and the nations.

Sing, O Barren

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The Haftarah takes the themes of Noach — covenant, water, new creation, mercy, gathering and the nations — and carries them forward. Isaiah speaks to Zion as a barren woman who will become fruitful, to a people who have experienced desolation but will be gathered with everlasting mercy, and finally to all who thirst: come to the waters and receive what cannot be bought.

The first word is astonishing: sing. The woman addressed is barren and has not laboured, yet she is commanded to rejoice because her children will become more numerous than those of the married woman. Paul later quotes this verse when he speaks of the Jerusalem above and the children of promise (Galatians 4:26–27). The promise therefore reaches beyond natural fertility. It concerns a people brought forth by the power and promise of YHVH.

The connection with Noach is strengthened by the unusual language of travail. In the Torah portion, one of the Hebrew verbs used as Noach waits in the aftermath of the Flood can carry the sense of travail. Isaiah now speaks directly into the imagery of birth, barrenness and new life. Creation itself groans, Paul says, awaiting the revealing of the sons of God. Redemption is described as birth because YHVH brings life where human strength cannot produce it.

The chapter also looks back towards Sarai, whose barrenness closes the Torah portion. The story is moving towards Abraham and Sarah, where promise will again overcome barrenness. What YHVH begins by promise cannot be secured by fleshly effort. The child of promise, the renewed people and the new creation all testify that life comes from Him.

The Jerusalem Above and the Children of Promise

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Isaiah tells the barren woman to enlarge the place of her tent, stretch out the curtains and strengthen the cords. The image is expansion: the family of promise will not remain small. Her descendants will inherit nations and cause desolate cities to be inhabited.

Paul hears this passage in Galatians and identifies the Jerusalem above as the mother of the children of promise. Hebrews likewise speaks of coming to Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. The biblical hope therefore cannot be reduced to human political construction. The city finally sought by Abraham is the city whose builder and maker is God.

This brings us back to Babel. Babel builds upward from earth in order to reach heaven; Zion comes from the promise of YHVH. Babel makes a name for itself; the people of Zion receive their identity from YHVH. Babel gathers men into rebellion; the heavenly Jerusalem gathers the children of promise around the Firstborn.

The contrast is not between earth and heaven as though creation were evil. The prophetic hope is the dwelling of YHVH with His people, the heavenly and earthly brought into their appointed harmony under Messiah. The mistake of Babel is not that men desire heaven, but that they try to seize by human construction what can only be received through covenant and promise.

The Covenant of Peace and Everlasting Mercy

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Isaiah 54 explicitly reaches back to Noach: "For this is like the waters of Noah to me." YHVH recalls the oath that the waters would no longer cover the earth in judgement and uses that covenant as the pattern for His promise of mercy. Mountains may depart and hills be removed, but His kindness will not depart and His covenant of peace will not be removed.

This is one of the strongest links between Torah and Haftarah. The bow in the cloud declares that judgement will not erase covenant mercy. Isaiah takes that assurance and applies it to Zion. She has known affliction, storm and desolation, but YHVH does not define her future by her desolation. He gathers with great mercies and speaks of everlasting kindness.

The promise is not sentimental. It rests on the faithfulness of YHVH, the stronger covenant partner. His people may be shaken; His covenant is not. The same God who remembered Noach remembers Zion. The same God who brought the Ark to rest promises a covenant of peace.

The chapter moves towards a city established in righteousness. Fear and oppression are driven away. The servants of YHVH receive an inheritance, and their righteousness is from Him. That final phrase is crucial. Isaiah ends where Noach began: righteousness is received from YHVH, not manufactured by human effort. Babel builds with bricks; Zion is established by the righteousness YHVH provides.

Come to the Waters — Grace Without Price

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Isaiah 55 opens with an invitation to everyone who thirsts: come to the waters. The thirsty are told to come even if they have no money, to buy and eat without money and without price. The language deliberately overturns the normal economy. What YHVH gives cannot be earned by the currency of human achievement.

This is the Gospel pattern already present in Noach. Noach found grace. He was not preserved because he invented an Ark superior to everyone else's. He received the word, entered the provision of YHVH and was carried through. Isaiah now calls the thirsty to the same posture: come, hear, receive, live.

The invitation also connects with Peter's teaching that we were not redeemed with silver or gold but with the precious blood of Messiah. Salvation is gift. The price is not paid by the recipient. Yeshua can say "Come" because the cost of redemption is His own life.

Water, wine and milk gather together in the invitation. Water answers thirst. Milk speaks of nourishment and growth. Wine speaks of joy and covenant. Yeshua draws all of these images into Himself: He gives living water, He is the Word by which His people grow, and at the table He speaks of the fruit of the vine in connection with the covenant in His blood and the coming Kingdom.

At Tabernacles, Yeshua calls the thirsty to come to Him and drink (John 7:37–38). John identifies the living water with the promised Spirit (John 7:39). Isaiah's free invitation finds its answer in Messiah.

The proper response is therefore not striving but hearing. Isaiah repeats the call to listen: hear, and your soul will live. This is the same fundamental posture that Torah teaches — Sh'ma. Grace does not leave the hearer unchanged. It brings him into covenant life and calls him to walk in the ways of YHVH.

The Everlasting Covenant and the Nations

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Isaiah then speaks of an everlasting covenant, the sure mercies of David. The promise moves from Noach to Abraham and ultimately to David, gathering the covenants into the purpose of YHVH. The Beloved King becomes a witness, leader and commander for the peoples.

The movement towards the nations is important. Noach gives us the table of nations and the scattering at Babel. Isaiah now speaks of a nation not known being called and running because YHVH has glorified His Servant. The answer to Babel is not the destruction of the nations as nations, but their gathering under the true King.

This is why the portion can be read as a revelation of life "in Messiah". Noach and his household are safe within the Ark; the apostolic writings speak of believers as being "in Messiah". The Ark should not be reduced to a one-to-one allegory, but the pattern is powerful: YHVH provides the refuge, calls His people into it, shuts the door, carries them through judgement and brings them out into a renewed world.

The Haftarah therefore completes the Torah portion with an invitation. The world of violence and Babel cannot save itself. The thirsty cannot purchase life. The barren cannot produce the promise by human strength. But YHVH remembers covenant, gathers with mercy, gives water without price and calls the nations to the Beloved.

The hope of Tabernacles reaches its fulfilment in Revelation: a multitude from every nation stands before the Lamb, led to living water (Revelation 7:9–17). YHVH dwells with His people and gives them the water of life freely (Revelation 21:3–6). The river and the tree of life bring healing to the nations (Revelation 22:1–2, 17). From Noach's Flood to the river of life, YHVH gathers the nations and dwells with His redeemed people.

A Scripture Pathway Through Noach

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Grace, righteousness and faith. Genesis 6:8–9; Hebrews 11:7; Ephesians 2:8–10; James 2:17–18.

Walking with God. Genesis 5:24; Genesis 6:9; Leviticus 26:12; Ezekiel 36:27; Galatians 5:16.

The Ark, covering and ransom. Genesis 6:14–18; Exodus 30:12; Job 33:24; John 14:2.

Shut in and preserved. Genesis 7:1, 16; 1 Peter 3:18–22; 2 Peter 2:5.

Remembered and renewed. Genesis 8:1–5; Exodus 2:24; Genesis 1:2, 9–10.

Rest and resurrection hope. Genesis 8:4; Exodus 33:14; Hebrews 3:7–4:11; 1 Peter 3:21.

Dove, olive and hope. Genesis 8:6–12; Isaiah 11:2; Matthew 3:16; Romans 11:16–24.

The altar and pleasant aroma. Genesis 8:20–21; Leviticus 1:9; Ephesians 5:2.

The everlasting covenant and bow. Genesis 9:8–17; Isaiah 54:9–10.

Babel and the true city. Genesis 11:1–9; Proverbs 18:10; Hebrews 11:10; 12:22; Revelation 18:4.

The barren made fruitful. Genesis 11:30; Isaiah 54:1–3; Galatians 4:26–28.

Come to the waters. Isaiah 55:1–3; John 4:13–14; John 7:37–39; 1 Peter 1:18–19.

The covenant and the nations. Isaiah 55:3–5; Psalm 2:8; Acts 13:34; Revelation 21:24.