

The Book of Beginnings – Studies in Genesis

LESSON XXXVI : GENESIS 7: 1–16 – THE FLOOD: NOAH, HIS FAMILY, AND THE ANIMALS ENTER THE ARK

“The increasing detail of this frame signifies the escalating tension. The narrator first represents the essential facts of the frame (7:6-10): the date of Noah’s six-hundredth year, the broad classification of the ark’s occupants, and the seven-day time span prior to the Flood. The frame of this historic moment continues with greater detail and flourish (7:11-16). The precise date is the seventeenth day of the second month of Noah’s six-hundredth year (7:11), the rain begins and lasts forty days (7:12), and on the very day that the Flood begins, Noah and his wife as grand marshals, followed by their sons and their wives, enter the ark. As the animals parade two by two into the ark – which, in fact, happens during the preceding week – the narrator calls off with greater specificity the names of the embarkees. He draws this frame to the climactic conclusion: ‘Then the LORD shut him in’ (7:16b).” [Waltke, 138f]

*“[Vv. 5-16] is narrative that relates the complete and total obedience of Noah and the animals to God’s command to enter the ark and the onset of the flood. **The fullness of description, the use of epic apposition, and repeated mentions of the date give this scene weight and solemnity. The day when the old creation died is described with a gravity befitting the occasion. The threefold refrain ‘as God (the LORD) had commanded him’ emphasizes the other central fact: Noah’s fidelity to God led to his salvation.**” [Wenham, 1:177]*

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE — Along with my usual references, this and the following Flood lessons will be using much material from ‘*Grappling with the Chronology of the Genesis Flood*,’ Steven W. Boyd & Andrew A. Snelling, editors; Master Books, Green Forest AR; first printing 2014; sixth printing 2022. The translation used in these next few studies will be from this resource.

Episode 2 Theme: *God’s instruction for Noah, his family, and pairs of land-dwelling and flying creatures to board the Ark, followed by the actual embarkation of the Ark by Noah and the others, and the closing of the Ark by God; the coming of the Flood, forty days and nights of rain, bringing mighty waters over the surface of the whole earth and causing the destruction of all non-aquatic life, while sparing only Noah and those with him in the Ark.*

Episode 2, Scene 1: Genesis 7:1-5; **Theme:** *God’s instruction for Noah and his family to board the Ark, along with precise numbers of all living creatures (clean and unclean land-dwelling creatures, as well as flying creatures), for the purpose of their preservation; and Noah’s full obedience to God’s instruction.*

¹ And YHWH said to Noah, “Enter, you and all your household, into the ark, because you I have seen as righteous before Me in this generation. ² From all the clean beasts you shall take seven pairs, a male and his mate, and from the beasts that are not clean, take two, a male and his mate. ³ Also, from the flying creatures of the skies, take seven pairs, a male and female, to keep their seed alive on the surface of all the earth. ⁴ For in seven more days I will make it rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights. And I will wipe out everything alive that I made from upon the surface of the ground.” ⁵ And Noah did according to all that YHWH commanded him.

Rabbi Cassuto's translation:

**v. 1 – Then the Lord said to Noah,
'Go, you and all your household / into the ark,
for I have seen that you / are righteous before Me / in this generation.**

**v. 2 – Of all / the clean animals
take with you / seven pairs, / the male and his mate;
and of the animals / that are not clean,
a pair / the male and his mate;**

**v. 3 – also of the flying creatures of the air / seven pairs, / male and female,
to keep their kind alive / upon the face of all the earth.**

**4. For in seven days / I will send rain upon the earth
forty days / and forty nights;
and I will blot out / every living thing that I have made
from the face of the ground.'**

5. And Noah did / all that the Lord had commanded.

v. 1 – And YHWH said to Noah, “Enter, you and all your household, into the ark, — The ark (here with the definite article) is now completed and prepared, since it is referred to as something existing. Noah had already finished all that he had been enjoined to do, and he was waiting for new instructions to apprise him when to enter the ark that he had prepared. This would have been the tenth day of the second month because the chronology is simply given:

‘Then the Lord said to Noah, Come into the ark’ (7:1)

‘For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights’ (7:4)

‘And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.’ (7:10, 11)

The *Mabbûl* started in the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, second month, seventeenth day. When the Lord came to Noah telling him to enter the ark was seven days prior, thus this announcement came on the tenth day of the second month.

***because you I have seen as righteous before Me in this generation.* —** We are told for the first time explicitly that the salvation of Noah and his family is due to his virtuous character. ‘You’ (singular, i.e., Noah) stands at the head of the Hebrew clause for emphasis. In contradistinction to what was stated earlier (6:12), the Lord says, as it were, ‘I have seen all the other inhabitants of the world, and behold, they are corrupt; but I have seen you, and behold, you are righteous before Me.’ **“The Lord is depicted as the Overseer of all creation, which is subject to his ethical evaluation.”** [Mathews, 1:371] We cannot infer from this however that the seven other family members were not (as we would say today) believers. According to Ezekiel (14:20; 18:20), Noah’s righteousness cannot save his family; God holds each family member responsible. [Cassuto, 2:71f; Waltke, 137]

v. 2 – From all the clean beasts — ‘Clean,’ Hebrew, *tāhōr*. The Hebrew means ‘pure, pure-formed’. Practically speaking, ‘fit for sacrifice and human food.’ This is the first occurrence of the root (see Lev. 11 and Deut. 14:3-12). The earth’s future depends on these typical, sacrificial animals.

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN ANIMALS BEFORE THE LAW OF MOSES? — This verse raises a question: how is it possible to speak of animals that are clean and not clean at a time when the Torah laws distinguishing between these categories had not yet been formulated? The most accepted explanation is that the concepts of clean and unclean animals were already in existence prior to the Torah, even among the Gentiles, particularly in relation to sacrifices. *“This is the first direct reference to the distinction between clean and unclean animals, which, however, originated at the appointment of animal sacrifices just after the fall of man. The reference here assumes that the distinction is well understood, too long established and common to call for explanation.”* [Carroll, 1:179] *“It is characteristic of Gen 1-11 to trace back the fundamental religious institutions to primeval times: Sabbath (2:1-3); the Garden of Eden, the ideal sanctuary (2-3); sacrifice (4:1-8); and here the difference between clean and unclean. As a righteous and blameless man, Noah knew the difference between clean and unclean and the necessity of sacrifice. Furthermore, the timetable of the flood with its seven-day periods of waiting may indicate that he observed the Sabbath.”* [Wenham, 1:177] That the Gentiles also had clean and unclean animals is well known among the ancients. As a rule the Babylonians and Assyrians brought oblations only of herds and flocks, and in rare instances of mountain goats. If a dog was to enter one of their temples by chance, the sanctuary required a ceremony of purification. In Ur of the Chaldees sheep and oxen were in their list of acceptable sacrifices. In the Sumerian story of the Flood, the oldest recension we have of this tradition, it is expressly stated that the hero of the Deluge offered up an ox and sheep after the flood. [Mathews, 1:372; Cassuto, 2:75; Lange, 1:300; Waltke, 138]

you shall take seven pairs, a male and his mate, — According to 6:19-20, pairs of all kinds of creatures would come to the ark to preserve life on earth. Here Noah is told specifically to bring ‘seven’ or ‘seven pairs’ of the ‘clean’ animals and birds (v. 3). The reason for the precept becomes apparent later when we are informed: ‘Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.’ (8:20) Had not Noah taken extra pairs of clean animals and birds into the ark, he would not have been able to offer sacrifices without completely exterminating the species involved. *No mention of a future sacrifice is mentioned to Noah at this point; the intention is not to command Noah to bring sacrifices but to make it possible for him to do so.* [Mathews, 1:371; Cassuto, 2:73]

‘SEVEN’ OR ‘SEVEN PAIRS’? — The Hebrew here is *shivh^e’āh shivh^e’āh*; literally, ‘seven, seven.’ Commentators differ as to whether this means ‘seven’ (‘three pair and a single one,’ Keil, 1:144; see also Calvin, 1:267; Lange, 1:300; Morris, 191) or ‘seven pairs’ (‘Since seven is an odd number, and ‘seven’ is qualified as male and female, only seven pairs can match the description,’ NET Study Bible, 20; see also Mathews, 1:370; Wenham, 1:176; Cassuto, 2:74; Waltke, 137f; Hamilton, 1:287; Ham; 188). A few of our English versions render this quite literally, ‘seven and seven’ (Wycliffe, Douay-Rheims 1899, ASV); a few ‘by sevens’ or something similar; the question then becomes does this mean ‘seven’ only or ‘seven of each male and female’ (e.g., ‘You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female,’ NKJV; see also KJV, Geneva 1599, Darby Translation, Legacy Standard Bible, Modern English Version). Most of our English versions render this as ‘seven pairs’ (RSV, YLT, ESV, NASB, NIV, NET, NLT, New American Bible Revised Edition, Amplified Bible, Holman Christian Standard Bible, most paraphrases, et. al.).

IS THERE A DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE ‘TWO PAIR’ MENTIONED EARLIER AND THE ‘SEVEN PAIR’ NOW MENTIONED? — *There is no conflict between the general announcement in 6:19-20 that pairs of all animals will embark and the more detailed injunctions of 7:2-3 about added clean animals; these verses are simply more precise than 6:19-20 about the types and number of animal passengers. “These directives clarify, not contradict, those of 6:19-20.”* [Waltke, 137; see also Wenham, 1:176f]

a male and his mate — Hebrew, *’ish* and *’ishshāh* ; literally, ‘a man / a woman, a wife;’ cp. 2:23, 24.

and from the beasts that are not clean, take two, a male and his mate. — To be accurate, the text does not say that Noah is to take aboard ‘clean’ and ‘unclean’ animals, but rather he is to bring animals that are ‘clean’ and those that are ‘not clean.’ The chapter discreetly avoids using the word *ṭāmē*, ‘unclean.’ “When the Torah speaks of unclean animals and refers to them by this term, it wishes to emphasize positively the quality of uncleanness and its laws; but here the only positive quality of interest is that of the clean animals, which excludes them from the rule of ‘two of every sort;’ all the other animals (including, of course, the wild beasts), since they do not possess this attribute, are not excepted from the general rule.” [Cassuto, 2:74] **Still, it is interesting that Yahweh mandates the preservation of the animals that are not clean. They are as much an object of Yahweh’s compassion as Noah himself.**

v. 3 – Also, from the flying creatures of the skies, take seven pairs, a male and female, to keep their seed alive on the surface of all the earth. — Note the Torah here does not differentiate between clean and unclean flying creatures, as it did in the case of the animals. Clean or not clean, Noah had to take seven pairs since he would need to make use of both categories – not only of the clean birds for sacrifices, but of the two kinds together for the purpose of sending some of them forth to ascertain the state of the water upon the earth. Thus we are told later that Noah employed to this end both a raven (an unclean bird) and a dove (a clean bird). [Cassuto, 2:75f]

v. 4 – For in seven more days I will make it rain on the earth — **“God does not shrink from the responsibility of the impending cataclysm. The Hebrew construction of v. 4 emphasizes the first-person (‘I’) role of God as the responsible agent for the destruction.”** [Mathews, 1:373]

make it rain — “The word for ‘send rain’ here (*māṭar*) refers to a regular rainfall. It is not normally a torrential downpour. What makes this storm so potent is that it is to last forty days and nights. The word used later in v. 12 for ‘rain’ – *geshem* – by itself does designate a heavy rain, as seen by the fact that *geshem* may be accompanied by words emphasizing that point (1 Kings 18:41, 45; Ezek 13:11, 13). There can be a mighty, rushing *geshem*, but not a mighty, rushing *māṭar*.” [Hamilton, 1:288]

for forty days and forty nights. — Day and night, without cessation.

And I will wipe out everything alive that I made from upon the surface of the ground.” — ‘everything alive’ — Hebrew, *yēqûm*, ‘living substance, that which stands or exists, existence.’ The word is found only in this section (7:4, 23) and in Deut. 11:6, another situation of total destruction (when the earth opened up and swallowed up Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab).

v. 5 – And Noah did according to all that YHWH commanded him. — Almost identical with 6:22 except for the replacement of ‘YHWH’ for ‘God,’ and the omission of ‘so he did.’

Episode 2, Scene 2: Genesis 7:6-9; **Theme:** *The boarding of the Ark by Noah and his family, as well as the land-dwelling and flying creatures, to escape the coming Flood.*

⁶ Now Noah was six hundred years old when the Mabbûl came, water upon all the earth. ⁷ And Noah and his sons and his wife and the wives of his sons went into the ark because of the presence of the waters of the Mabbûl. ⁸ From the clean beasts and from the beasts that are not clean, and from the flying creatures and all that creeps upon the ground, ⁹ two by two they came to Noah, to the ark, a male and a female, as God had commanded Noah.

Rabbi Cassuto's translation:

***v. 6 – Noah / was six hundred years old
when the flood came, / water upon the earth.***

***v. 7 – And Noah went in, / and his sons
and his wife and his sons' wives / with him,
into the ark, / because of the waters of the flood.***

***v. 8 – Of the clean animals, / and of animals / that are not clean,
and of the flying creatures, / and of everything that moves on the ground,***

***v. 9 – two and two went in unto Noah / into the ark,
male and female, / as God had commanded Noah.***

v. 6 – Now Noah was six hundred years old — “The initiation and duration of the flood is measured by the age of Noah himself, who is six hundred years old at its inception and six hundred and one at its completion, a course of one year and eleven days (vv. 6, 11; 8:14).” [Mathews, 1:373]

when the Mabbûl came, water upon all the earth. — ‘when [literally, ‘and’] the flood CAME’ [literally, ‘was’]. The word ‘came’ connotes here, ‘came into being, happened.’ “This particular section of Genesis (7:6-16) swings back and forth between describing the Flood and the entry into the ark:

flood (v. 6)

entry into the ark (vv. 7-9)

flood (vv. 10-12)

entry into the ark (vv. 13-16)” [Hamilton, 1:291]

v. 7 – And Noah and his sons and his wife and the wives of his sons went into the ark because of the presence of the waters of the Mabbûl. — Some of the comments here by Jewish commentators simply amaze me. “Noah’s failure to try and influence his generation is why the Flood is called ‘waters of Noah’ (Isa 54:9), implying that he was responsible for the Flood.... The implication is that Noah and his family entered the Ark only when the rising water forced them to seek refuge. Indeed, the Midrash comments that his faith was less than perfect, for if the water had not reached his ankles, he would not have entered (Rashi; Midrash). He may have thought that God, in His mercy, would relent, or that the people would repent at the last minute. Nevertheless, the verse implies a criticism of his reluctance, for man should not allow his calculations to stand in the way of his compliance with God’s command.” [Rabbi Nosson Scherman, *The Chumash: The Stone Edition*, or *The Five Books of Moses* in book form (Mehorah Publications LTD, Brooklyn NY) 2011, page 31, 33]

v. 8, 9 – From the clean beasts and from the beasts that are not clean, and from the flying creatures and all that creeps upon the ground, two by two they came to Noah, to the ark, a male and a female, as God had commanded Noah. — “There were at least two from every species; but there were seven pairs of clean animals. R’ Yaakov Kamenetsky notes that this states that the unclean animals ‘came to Noah’ on their own, but verse 2 implies that the clean animals did not come, for Noah had to ‘take’ them. The unclean animals were in the Ark only to preserve their species, but the clean animals had the additional purpose of being offerings after the Flood was over. God wants offerings to come as a result of human effort. Therefore He commanded Noah to search them out and bring them.” [Rabbi Nosson Scherman, *The Chumash: The Stone Edition*, or *The Five Books of Moses in book form* (Mehorah Publications LTD, Brooklyn NY) 2011, page 34]

Episode 2, Scene 3: Genesis 7:10-12; **Theme:** *The coming of the Flood.*

¹⁰ When the seven days passed, the waters of the Mabbûl came upon the earth. ¹¹ In the six hundredth year of the life of Noah, on the seventeenth day of the second month; on this day all the springs of the great deep split open and the windows of the heavens opened. ¹² And the rain came upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.

Rabbi Cassuto’s translation:

**v. 10 – And it came to pass / at the end of the seven days,
that the waters of the flood / were upon the earth.**

**v. 11 – In the six hundredth year / of Noah’s life,
in the second month, / on the seventh day of the month,
on that day —**

**there burst forth all the fountains / of the great deep,
and the windows of the heavens / were opened.**

**v. 12 – And rain fell / upon the earth
forty days / and forty nights.**

v. 10 – When the seven days passed, the waters of the Mabbûl came upon the earth. — “Why a seven-day pause? According to Jewish midrash, the seven-day interval is a period of mourning for the death of Methuselah, who dies in the year of the flood (see 5:27-28), or a period for God’s own grief for the world (e.g., *Genesis Rabbah* 32.7); *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* adds that the respite is a final opportunity for repentance. The passage does not give any indication of the week’s purpose. *Verse 10 can be misread to indicate that the ark’s occupants reside in the ark for a week until the rains begin, but this is illusory because v. 13 clarifies that it is on the same day that the family enters the ark that the rains commence. Rather, v. 10 indicates that the rains fall precisely on the day that God had forewarned one week earlier (v. 4). Noah’s confidence is not misplaced. His devoted obedience exemplifies the later psalmist’s exhortation, ‘Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this’ (37:5).*” [Mathews, 1:374]

v. 11 – In the six hundredth year of the life of Noah, on the seventeenth day of the second month; — The year 1656 from Creation, according to the Jews. So momentous is the event that the narration underscores its commencement, ‘on that day’ (v. 11) and ‘on that very day’ (v. 13). The day of eruption is marked by a specific date, the ‘seventeenth day of the second month’ of Noah’s six hundredth year. **“No other event in Genesis is dated at all (excluding births and deaths) – not creation, the fall, Abel’s murder, the tower of Babel, nor the call of Abram –**

and usually only the vaguest indications are given as to how long particular episodes lasted. The flood story is unique. Five times it gives a very specific date, not simply to the nearest year, but to the very day of the month, that a particular stage of the flood developed (7:11; 8:4, 5, 13, 14), and it also mentions periods of seven, forty, and a hundred and fifty days for different phases of the flood. The phrase ‘on this very day’ links the onset of the flood to other decisive events like Abraham’s circumcision (17:23), the exodus from Egypt (Exod 12:41), or Moses’ death (Deut 32:48).” [Wenham, 1:204]

WHAT TIME OF YEAR WAS THIS? — Several commentators give their opinions as to what time of year this ‘second month’ would be. My opinion, as discussed in lesson 31: “Since the Jews keep two calendars, it is also questioned which was used in the Flood narrative: the theocratic year which the Jews kept after the Exodus and begins with Nisan in April (so that the beginning of the flood would have fallen in the month Ijar, or May), or whether it was after the civil years’ reckoning, according to which Tisri (September and October) made the beginning of the year (Exod 23:16; 34:32). Some of their arguments involve such things as the rainy season and its influence on the narrative, but that would be superfluous since the events of the Flood are clearly miraculous in nature and therefore not dependent upon the normal seasonal events. *I therefore have taken the month-and-day references to be tied to Noah’s life itself and thus independent of any particular calendar.*”

WHAT WAS THAT DAY LIKE? — “*What was the day like for the people of Noah’s generation? It was like any new morning – no alarm and no thought for their doom. Jesus makes this point in portraying his own sudden coming. That generation will be like Noah’s, ‘eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage’ (Matt 24:37-39). They are carrying on with the normal affairs of their lives, indifferent to the gathering clouds above. In Peter’s day the detractors had not yet learned the lesson of Noah’s waters (2 Pet 3:5-7), and likewise today many regard it as no more than a children’s tale.*” [Mathews, 1:376]

on this day all the springs of the great deep split open and the windows of the heavens opened. — According to Rabbi Cassuto, this is an actual verse of poetry as one can see from its structure, rhythm, parallelism and the poetic words that it contains. As mentioned in the last lesson, *this was no mere flood but a total destruction and re-arranging of our planet. “Earth’s disruption is comprehensive; ‘all’ the waters of the ‘great deep’ came forth. The immense floodwaters involve the flow of waters from below and from above, a merism indicating the complete transformation of the terrestrial structures.... Noah’s waters are not just a memorable rain but an unparalleled event in human memory that is brought about by the unique work of God. In the Babylonian Gilgamesh the gods were terrified at the flood and ‘cowered like dogs.’ ... But it is Israel’s Lord of creation who rends the heavens and the earth in judgment.*” [Mathews, 1:376] “*We can infer from the statement about ‘the great deep’ and ‘the windows of heaven’ a vast upheaval of the sea-bed, and torrential rain; but the expressions are deliberately evocative of chapter 1: the waters above and below the firmament are, in token, merged again, as if to reverse the very work of creation and bring back the featureless waste of waters.*” [Kidner, 90f] “*The breaking up (literally ‘cleaving open’) of the fountains of the great deep is mentioned first and so evidently was the initial action which triggered the rest. These conduits somehow all developed uncontrollable fractures on the same day.... The volcanic explosions and eruptions which would have accompanied these fractures would have poured great quantities of magma up from the earth’s mantle along with the waters. Furthermore, immense quantities of volcanic dust would have been blown skyward, along with gigantic sprays of water and turbulent surges of the atmosphere.*” [Morris, 196f; see also Wenham, 1:181; Waltke, 139]

the deep — Hebrew, *têhôm*, ‘deep, depths, deep places, abyss.’ This is the same word that is used for the cosmic waters of creation in Gen 1:2. Prov 8:28 mentions the ‘*springs of the deep*’ in relation to the creation account and possibly refers to the ‘*waters below*,’ the subterranean waters which were the source of the springs that flowed upon the ground (Gen 1:7).

the great deep split open — Hebrew, *bāqa*, ‘to break up / open, to split, cleave, divide, break up.’ A very strong word, used of the earthquake or earth-cleaving (Num 16:31; Zech 14:4). It is used in passages that allude to any example of God’s unlimited dominion over the waters of the world, such as the dividing of the Red Sea or the bringing forth of the water from the rock. “In our verse the meaning is that the fountains, which in normal times furnish sufficient water for the needs of man, the animal world and the irrigation of the fields, on that day burst open and poured out terrific quantities of water that augmented the water raining down from the heavens and together with them, created the mighty Flood.” [Cassuto, 2:86]

and the windows of the heavens opened. — Hebrew, *ʾrūbōth*, ‘windows, openings.’ An unrestrained downpour from the sky. “[The] Israelites accepted the use, if only as metaphorical expressions, of such idioms as ‘*the opening of the windows of heaven*.’ We find the phrase, in the undoubted sense of sending down rain, in Mal. 3:10: ‘*if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing*.’ [see also 2 Kings 7:2; Isa 24:18] ... Here in our verse, in keeping with the previous sentence, which speaks of the fountains of the great deep, the expression connotes that *during the Flood it did not rain in normal measure, but the windows of heaven were opened wide and the water poured from them in large quantities without any restraint. It is thus manifest that according to this verse two different constituents intermingled in the waters of the Deluge – the waters of the deep from below and the rain-water from above.... Scripture’s intention apparently is to teach us that the Judge of the whole earth, who directs His world with righteousness and rules over the whole of nature according to His will, is able to turn the waters of the springs and of the rain, which He utilizes as sources of blessing to humanity when they are guiltless, into an instrument of blight to mankind when they are guilty.*” [Cassuto, 2:87f]

v. 12 – And the rain came upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. — The Hebrew word is *geshem* (8:2; cf. Ezra 10:9, 13), ‘rain, abnormal rain,’ more particularly ‘*that which is abundant; a very great rain that comes down in a body, as it were*,’ used of the heavy winter rains. As noted in v. 4, this is distinguished from the more general word *māṭar*, a word denoting common rain.

Episode 2, Scene 4: Genesis 7:13-16; **Theme:** *The boarding of the Ark by Noah and his family, as well as pairs of all land-dwelling and flying creatures; and God’s act of closing the Ark.*

¹³ On that very same day, Noah; and Shem, Ham and Japeth, the sons of Noah, and the wife of Noah and the three wives of his sons with them went in to the ark — ¹⁴ they and all the living things according to their kind and all the beasts according to their kind and all the creeping things that creep on the ground according to their kind, and all the flying creatures according to their kind — every winged creature of every sort. ¹⁵ And they came to Noah, to the ark; they came two by two, from all the flesh in which was the breath of life. ¹⁶ And those that came, male and female from all flesh, went in as God had commanded them. And YHWH closed the ark behind him.

Rabbi Cassuto's translation:

**v. 13 – *On the very same day / entered Noah
and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, / and Noah's wife
and the three wives of his sons / with them, / into the ark;***

**v. 14 – *they —
and every beast / according to its kind,
and all the cattle / according to their kinds,
and every moving thing that moves on the earth / according to its kind,
and every flying creature / according to its kind,
every bird / of every sort.***

**v. 15 – *They went in unto Noah / into the ark,
two and two / of all flesh
in which there was / the breath of life.***

**v. 16 – *And they that entered, / male and female of all flesh,
went in / as God had commanded him;
and the Lord shut him in.***

v. 13 – *On that very same day, — This fairly rare phrase connotes a memorable occasion; e.g., Abraham's circumcision (17:23, 26), the Exodus (Exod 12:41, 51), Moses' death (Deut. 32:48).* This removes any possibility of this being a legendary or mythical account. “This second entrance narrative is not contradictory to vv. 6-10 but supplementary, giving additional specifics so as to reinforce the critical act of faith by this small band of eight trusting souls who do not turn back.” [Mathews, 1:378] Noah and the animals had begun entering the ark a week earlier (v. 4, 10) but on the day they had completed the entering it began to rain.

Noah; and Shem, Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, — ‘Shem, Ham, and Japheth,’ named only here and in 6:10 and 9:18 Elsewhere in the story always ‘his sons.’ Note the sons are named but neither Noah's wife nor the sons' wives are named; possibly because of the next *tôlê dôth* of the Table of Nations.

and the wife of Noah — ‘Noah's wife’ only here. Elsewhere ‘his wife’ (7:7; 8:18) or ‘your wife’ (6:18; 8:16).

and the three wives of his sons with them went in to the ark — Another unique phrase: elsewhere ‘the wives of his sons.’ Cassuto suggests the unusual grammatical form draws attention to the wives being a distinct group. “In spite of the early example of Lamech (4:19) and the general moral decline, Noah and his sons were monogamous: the family numbered eight in all (1 Pet 3:20). Among the godly the first mention of polygamy is in the story of Abraham.” [Kidner, 91]

v. 14 – *they and all the living things according to their kind and all the beasts according to their kind and all the creeping things that creep on the ground according to their kind, and all the flying creatures according to their kind — every winged creature of every sort. —* “The full roll call of all the creatures echoes Gen 1. Note especially the refrain ‘according to their types.’ Similar lists omitting the refrain occur again at 7:21 (the flood victims) and 8:17 (those who left the ark). Again the narrative makes the point that only through boarding the ark does creation survive.” [Wenham, 1:182]

v. 15 – And they came to Noah, to the ark; they came two by two, from all the flesh in which was the breath of life. — “The animals ‘came’ to Noah at the ark (also 7:9), suggesting that they volitionally arrive, an interpretation found in early Jewish midrash. But 6:19 has the command to ‘bring’ the animals, indicating that Noah plays some part in their recruitment.” [Mathews, 1:378] **“Here we find man in his loftiest state, for the entire world comes ‘to Noah;’ it was because of him that they were all saved and preserved. The verse stresses that they came in matched pairs – not one species was missing – which was a miracle! ‘Such precision would have been impossible by natural means (R’ Bachya).”** [Rabbi Nosson Scherman, *The Chumash: The Stone Edition*, or *The Five Books of Moses in book form* (Mehorah Publications LTD, Brooklyn NY) 2011, page 35]

v. 16 – And those that came, male and female from all flesh, went in as God had commanded them. And YHWH closed the ark behind him. — These last two clauses, ‘as God had commanded him ... the LORD shut him in,’ point to the divine director behind the operation, the divine protection that kept out the raging seas. Noah and his companions did their part ‘as God had commanded;’ now the covenant Lord does his part, sealing the door, which could result in either their doom or their salvation. **“‘And the Lord shut him in’: the expression beautifully shows God’s fatherly touch, at the very brink of judgment. The same care that saw this matter through carries our salvation to its conclusion.”** [Kidner, 91] **“In the Mesopotamian parallels, the heroes shut the hatch themselves. Noah’s salvation is due to divine grace. God’s act signals the divine protection that keeps the raging flood from capsizing the vessel. God’s works of grace are both sovereign and particular.”** [Waltke, 137]

‘YHWH’ — **“Here most distinctly presents itself the contrasting relation of these two names. Elohim gives him the prescription in relation to the pairs of animals for the preservation of the animal world, but Jehovah, the covenant God, shuts him in, that is, makes sure the closing of the ark for the whole voyage, and for the salvation of his people. This inclusion was, at the same time, an exclusion of the race devoted to death.”** [Lange, 1:306] **“It is for this reason that the Tetragrammaton and not ‘Elohim is used here, in conformity with the customary usage of the Hebrew tongue, which prefers the name YHWH when a direct relationship between God and His creatures is referred to.”** [Cassuto, 2:92]