

Commentary Highlights

Genesis 7

NAC	New American Commentary
PTW	Preaching the Word
BST	The Bible Speaks Today
GIG	Gleanings in Genesis
CAL	Genesis: Calvin's Commentary
SOG	The Story of God Bible Commentary
BKW	Genesis by Bruce K Waltke
KUR	Genesis by Abraham Kuruvilla
REC	Reformed Expository Commentary

****The views presented in these commentary excerpts may not reflect the general understanding of these passages as expressed by Faith Bible Church, but are presented to help us better understand the Scriptures and how various scholars have interpreted them****

Genesis 7:1

(NAC) – Following the completion of the construction of the ark, 7:1 begins with a new command given to Noah to take with himself His family and enter into the ark. This verse, alongside God's command to "come out of the ark" in 8:16 serve as the bookends to the flood narrative.

(NAC) – Noah and his family's salvation from the coming floodwaters is once again attributed to Noah's righteousness. Compared to his contemporary generation, Noah served as a light among immense darkness. In other words, it is the righteousness of the individual (Noah) that allows for the salvation of his family. This is a small echo of the coming work of the seed of the woman, Jesus, whose righteousness would far surpass that of Noah and whose life would bring new life to many.

(NAC) – The phrase "I have seen" is reminiscent of Genesis 1 (where God saw His creation and called it good) and Genesis 6 (where God saw the wickedness of Noah's generation). It reminds us that God sees and acts in creation. "The Lord is depicted as the Overseer of all creation, which is subject to his ethical evaluation."

(CAL) – "Here God not only annihilates all hypocritical righteousness, which is devoid of inner holiness in the heart, but vindicates his own authority as he declares that he alone is competent to judge righteousness."

Genesis 7:2-3

(NAC) – Noah is told to take seven pairs of all clean animals and a pair of all unclean animals. This inclusion of "clean" versus "unclean" animal species is a foreshadowing of the sacrifices that would be given by Moses following their disembarking of the ark.

Ultimately, Moses will extend the sacrificial system in the Mosaic Law. There is a striking omission of the animals that “creep” along the ground, as they were all considered unclean (Leviticus 11:44). “It is not the Mosaic laws that introduce such distinctions in the life of the righteous. Genesis tells us that this was practiced before the time of Moses because such rites reflect the same understanding of God and his relationship to the righteous.”

(PTW) – ““Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals,” anticipates Noah’s offering sacrifices at the end of the voyage and also anticipates the sacrificial system that would develop after the flood.”

(CAL) – In the phrase “to keep their various kinds alive” we see that “in the middle of disaster, future restoration was promised to Noah.”

(NAC) – God’s command to have seven pairs, underscores the Bible’s use of the number seven to refer to completion, suggesting that these seven pairs of clean animals represented the “whole created order.”

Genesis 7:4

(NAC) – The number 40 occurs often in the biblical narrative. Isaac and Esau are forty years of age when they marry. Moses remains on the mountain forty days and nights in receiving the law and witnessing the glory of the Lord. Moses’ life is divided into period of forty years in Stephen’s rehearsal of his career. Israel’s spies are in the land for forty days and upon their disobedience God sentences them to forty years in the wilderness.” Israel wanders in the wilderness of Sinai for 40 years. “Moses’ fast is forty days of contrition because of the idolatry of Israel.” In many of these circumstances, the number 40 is used as a time of judgment or atonement.

(BKW) – “Forty is a conventional number for a long time and represents the introduction of a new age.”

(NAC) – Rainfall is often used to describe the judgment of the Lord upon the wickedness of mankind. In the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, God “rains down” fire upon the cities. In Egypt, Pharaoh’s hard heart brings upon the nation the “raining down” of hail upon the land.

Genesis 7:5-7

(NAC) – This is the first of three times in chapter 7 that we are told that Noah obeyed all of the commands of God (7:9, 16). Each time, “they occur at points in the developing story line where the ensuing stage of the flood will only take place upon Noah’s faithful completion of the assigned tasks.”

Genesis 7:8-10

(NAC) – This passage, along with its counterpart (7:14-15), are reminiscent of the story of Adam naming all of the animals after God brought each one to him. Here, Noah serves as a type of Adam. He is the second Adam that preserves creation.

(BKW) – “Reminiscent of when God brings the animals to Adam to name them (2:19), God now brings them to Noah to preserve them.”

(CAL) – “It was impossible, humanly speaking, that such a great assembly of all the different types of animals should take place in so short a time. But Noah simply trusted God, and in return God supplied the means by which his own precept would come about...The only way we can overcome difficulties [in this passage] is to be convinced that what is impossible for us is easy for God.”

Genesis 7:11-12

(NAC) – ““On that day” and “on that very day”...designate significant events in the life of later Israel. “On that day” distinguishes the entrance of Israel into Sinai, and “on that very day” acclaims Abraham’s circumcision, the Passover exodus, and Moses’ death.”

(BKW) – “Precise dates invest the story with importance and historical credibility.”

(PTW) – “Now in a massive act of *de-creation* [the waters] were unleashed back into chaos.”

(NAC) – In citing important people and events, the Bible often uses the names and years of the reigning monarch, so by Genesis citing Noah’s specific age, the narrator is placing the flood events within the context of real history (opposed to fable or myth). ““Second month” assumes a New Year, but two calendars were used by the Hebrews in their history, one with the New Year in autumn and another beginning the New Year in the Spring. Which is meant here remains uncertain, but the mention of “seedtime” in 8:22 may suggest the flood begins in the autumnal New Year with it’s heavy rains.”

(NAC) – By using the phrase “on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened”, the author reminds us of the second day of creation. In that day God took the chaotic waters of the globe and separated them into the heavens (sky/atmosphere) and the waters under the ground. Now, in this un-creation event, God is reversing the effects of day two by bringing the waters above and the waters below back together into a judgment over mankind.

(BKW) – In referring to the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven the narrator is telling the reader that “the earth is being returned to its precreation chaos by the release of the previously bounded waters above and by the upsurge of the subterranean waters.”

(SOG) – “Theologically, the picture of the earth completely covered by water is tantalizingly suggestive. After all, when the world was first created it began as a watery mass (Gen. 1:2) which God shaped into a functional and ordered universe over the next six days.”

(NAC) – In explaining the duration of the flood it is “best to explain the forty days as counted among the one hundred and fifty; thus forty days of rain were followed by a hundred and ten days of abatement until the first signs of land emerge...The landing of the ark on the specific date, “seventeenth day of the seventh month,” rhetorically matches the date of the first rains on the “seventeenth day of the second month”, that is, five months (=150 days), indicating thereby that the hundred and fifty days period includes the forty day rain and the duration of the abatement necessary for the ark to take hold.”

Genesis 7:13-16

(NAC) – As the second entrance narrative, this portion of scripture does not contradict what was previously said and includes supplementary material. The repetition of these events are meant to cause the reader to dwell upon the faith of Noah and his family to do all that God has required. Twice Noah and his family are said to have entered the ark, yet at the end of v.16 it is God who closes the door, sealing mankind in the ark, the means of their salvation from the judgment of the flood.

(CAL) – “These verses about the animals coming to Noah point to the fact that it was through the faith of holy Noah that they were drawn from their woods and caverns and were collected in one place, led by the hand of God. We see, therefore, that Moses deliberately emphasizes this point to teach us that each species of animals was preserved not by chance, not by human industry, but because the Lord reached out and offered to Noah himself whatever animal he intended to keep alive.”

(BKW) – “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.”

(CAL) – In describing God shutting the door Calvin says, “Moses declares in one word that the ark was made secure from the Flood not by human work, but through a divine miracle.”

Genesis 7:17-20

(NAC) – ““Waters” (5x), “increased” (2x), “rose” (3x), and “greatly” (3x in Heb.) dominate the short span of forty-seven Hebrew words (vv.17-20) to underscore the sense of the escalating waters.” Similarly, “the inclusive language, “all,” “every” and “everything,” imitates the universality and pervasiveness of humanity’s wickedness.” These words occur in rapid succession eight different times in 5 verses. Add to this, the narrator points out that even the highest of mountains was covered by the waters. All of this points to the fact that there was not one living thing was able to survive the cataclysmic flood, except the floating ark that stood as a symbol of God’s gracious salvation.

(BKW) – “The terrible, chaotic waters, which originally covered the earth, are implicitly likened to hostile warriors attacking and undoing God’s creation.” The reference to the waters rising to a height 15 cubits (~22.5ft) is a precise depth to show not only the

immensity of the flood but also it shows that the ark would not have grounded upon a mountain during the 150 days the flood was on the earth.

(PTW) – “The Scriptures present the flood as universal, a cataclysm that was worldwide in scope...The only way you can read a local flood in the Genesis account is to read it phenomenologically as describing what Noah saw, from his limited viewpoint. But this is not the way the writers of the Old and New Testaments understood the flood, nor the rabbinical exegetes, nor the church until the nineteenth century.”

(SOG) – “The proponents of [a localized flood] argue that the word translated “earth” in this paragraph could be translated “land.” However, the depth of the water (fifteen cubits=twenty-three feet over the mountains) almost certainly depicts a world-wide flood...Supporting the idea that the passage describes a worldwide flood is the fact that the judgment is said to be world-wide.”

Genesis 7:21-24

(NAC) – While every living and breathing thing died, verse 23 reminds us that only Noah and his family were left.

(NAC) – Verse 22 reminds readers of 2:7 when God breathed the breath of life into Adam, and now all that who were left on the earth have had that breath taken from them, and instead are filled with the waters of judgment.

(PTW) – “The picture is one of total, unexceptionable death. Moses says, “Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died” (7:22), which especially references man, into whose “nostrils” God had breathed “the breath of life” (2:7).”

(BKW) – “The water is death and judgment for the evil world but also divine cleansing and preservation for the elect remnant.”

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