

**“The Ark — A Ship’s Log” based on Genesis 6:9-22, 7:24, 8:14-19, 9:7-16**  
**Preached by Rev. Jonathan New**  
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According to Genesis, the ark came to rest on Mt. Ararat after 150 days at sea. Since 1949, when a plane photographed something strange on Ararat at about 15,000 feet, speculation has been fueled that Noah’s story may have some basis in fact. Recent satellite images of Mt. Ararat also show an anomaly some say looks like a boat, appearing to be about 530 feet long and 80 to 90 feet wide. That fits the ark’s description, 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide. At 20 inches to the cubit, that makes it 500 feet by 83 feet. Such evidence may be exciting to some. But imagine what we could learn about the meaning of Noah’s story if we could unearth the Ark’s log, written by Captain Noah. Here’s what it might tell us:

Day 1: Praise Yahweh — she floats! Waters rising fast. Rain heavy, seas rough. No land in sight. Fortunately, provisions and plants, animals and crew safely aboard. All uneasy. Time will tell if this farmer is also an adequate shipwright... or captain... or zoologist for that matter! So this is what it’s like to be at sea...

Day 2: Visibility zero, rain constant. Between the pounding rain and the horrible din of creatures belowdecks we’re nearly deaf. Not to mention green — inexperienced, seasick, and perhaps a bit jealous of our neighbors whose deaths were at least mercifully quick.

Day 3: The weather’s dirtier, the crew’s greener. As a captain, I have lots to learn. Amazingly, she still floats. Yahweh’s design is good, but I’m not so sure about my carpentry. How frightening to think we’re only inches of cypress wood away from a watery grave!

Day 4: Weather unchanged. Crew up and about though weak. At least we’re saving ship’s stores — no one is hungry. Except the animals. Feeding, watering, and cleaning are constant tasks. Busy day and night.

Day 5: Weather same. Crew exhausted, though seasickness seems to have passed and appetites returned.

Day 8: Still no sign of a break in the weather. The atmosphere outside and inside is oppressive. The odors are unbearable and the squalor must be constantly kept in check.

Day 14: No change in the weather or seas but my pitch-sealed seams are now leaking. This suits the flamingos and crocodiles just fine.

Day 22: More rain. Crew restless. Reprimanded Shem for shirking his duties, asleep in the hay. He insisted he’s being overworked. This claim echoed by my other two sons and their wives.

Day 27: Incessant rain. Crew openly questioning my judgment. Am reminded of my neighbors who thought me ridiculous when I was building this monstrous great hulk. The project seemed crazy. Again, I’m feeling ridiculous. But I must have faith. What’s next though? Mutiny?

Day 31: Situation going from bad to worse. Four casks of drinking water burst soaking twenty sacks of grain. Japheth flatly refused to help clean up. I fear it’s not family ties staving off mutiny but the feeling that there’s simply nowhere better to be. The noise, smell, lack of privacy, cramped quarters, and damp are taking their toll. My wife suggests the ark-building and

the flood's arrival were simply coincidence, that I was mistaken about God's plan. "Besides," she said, "God may have told you he'd make a covenant with you, but he didn't say he'd save your wet hide!" Maybe. Yet how could I say no to Yahweh? Besides, the Holy One's advice about the ark was good. God will see us through... I think.

Day 38: Stormy outside... and inside. Supplies decreasing, leaks increasing. We have worked out better systems for tending the animals and plants. Got to keep these things alive, though nearly five weeks without sun has done a number on the vegetation. What if they die? Wouldn't be blameless then, would I? Would my fate be like the rest down under the seas? I must persevere!

Day 41: It's over! No rain!! The glorious sun shines bright. Never thought I'd see its face again. Everyone on speaking terms once more.

Day 50: Sunny skies and clear sailing. Only we have no sails... or rudder. And where to sail? Still no sign of dry land, only endless sea.

Day 63: Sunny and hot. Stench worse than ever. Crew moody.

Day 70: Heat now intense. Penguins and polar bears cranky. Crew following suit. Rations growing thin. Drinking water getting scarce.

Day 87: Weather unchanged. Crew listless. Most of the day spent scanning the horizon for signs of land. Oh, to walk on solid earth again! This assignment seems so impossible. What is to become of us?

Day 99: Now on very short rations. One crew member said she didn't see the point of starving to death with so many food sources around. All cast an appreciative eye on the livestock. Must admit it's tempting... but it simply wouldn't do! Have quietly gathered up and hidden all the knives.

Day 117: Endless water and sunshine. Still no sign of land.

Day 126: Rations reduced again. All are parched and peckish. Crew edgy. What's Yahweh up to? What did I miss? Some direction, some advice? These questions pursue me all day as I pursue my chores.

Day 139: Mirages, delusions, hallucinations. Maybe this is all just a hellish nightmare from which I'll soon awaken. Can I trust the dream Yahweh placed in my heart? I've had my doubts, but so far I've trusted that vision. But... how long can I continue to trust?

Day 147: Crew now close to despair with waiting. Hope seems dim. Must remember Yahweh's advice about the ark and the promise.

Day 150: Hallelujah! She's struck on solid ground! Praise Yahweh!

Day 161: Despite continued scarcity of food and water we're all revitalized. Listlessness and despair are gone. Many hearty laughs when I reissued knives to the crew.

Day 175: Waters are subsiding perceptibly. Spirits high.

Day 190: Have sent out birds to search for dry land.

Day 197: Released a dove this morning and — oh, joy! — it returned this evening with an olive leaf in its beak.

Day 204: Sent out another dove. I hope I won't see it again.

Day 205: Awoke this morning with my ears ringing. Yahweh — finally! — telling me it was time for us to leave the ark. I gave the order to abandon ship. Then we all heard God say, "never again." And as a sign of the everlasting covenant with every living creature Yahweh made

the rainbow — beautiful! — vindicating the ridiculous and affirming the impossible. Better still was the answer to the burning question of these many months: Where was God while we struggled? Now we know — with us — guiding, encouraging, inspiring. How else could a farmer be transformed into a captain. Praise God! It's back to the soil again!

Well, we don't actually have Noah's captain's log. Yet we do have the rainbow — a lasting symbol of God's faithfulness and promise to abide with and care for all creation. As we search for truth in the ways each of us must, may we strive to be as faithful as Noah; believing God's love will abide even in the midst of uncertainty and struggle, or when the service to which God calls us seems ridiculous, the goal impossible; ever trusting in God's promise that life will find a way and that joy will return.