



THE FLOOD, PART III

When we begin to look at Genesis, Chapter Six, we note that there seems to be a great deal of repetition.

Why is this? The chapter needs to be “rightly divided” in order to learn what we should from it. When properly divided, the reason for the apparent repetition becomes clear.

The chapter is to be divided as follows:

THE FIRST GENERATION: Verses 1 through 4

THE SECOND GENERATION: Verses 5 through 8

THE THIRD GENERATION: Verses 9 through 12

These divisions are based both on the natural divisions of the text and on the punctuation found in the Hebrew text. The titles for these, based on the text we are about to study, are explained below.

Then the Lord said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years." Genesis 6:3

The time associated with this chapter is 120 years, according to verse 3. Many numbers in the Bible are significant and such is the case here. What is significant about 120 years? Well, why didn't God make it easy and say “about a hundred years?” Why didn't God make it 150 years? We seek the significance of the 120-year time period.

We know of no particular Biblical significance to the number 120. We do know that 120 is obtained by multiplying 40 by three. There is great significance to the number 40. There is also significance to the number three.

The significance of the number 40 differs depending on whether you are speaking of years or days. Here we are dealing with years.

In Numbers 14:28-33 we find Israel condemned to the wilderness for forty years, the time required for that generation to die off and a new generation to arise.

Then we find

So the land had rest for forty years. . . Judges 3:11
So the land had rest for forty years. Judges 5:31
And the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon. Judges 8:28

Why 40 years in each case. The land had rest while that generation was alive. The concept is told us expressly below.

When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel. Judges 2:10

When that generation died, a new one rose up that brought God's wrath. So, according to the Bible, 40 years is the length (or was the length at that time) of a generation. 120 years would make up three generations. Hence the chapter division noted above.

Before we begin the first generation, there is one further note we make in the table below.

GENERATION	SUBJECT	HEBREW	OBJECT
FIRST	THE SPIRIT	רוח	SONS OF GOD
SECOND	YAHWAH (LORD)	יהוה	MAN ON THE EARTH
THIRD	ELOHIM (GOD)	אלהים	ALL FLESH

Each section becomes less specific than the previous one. The first dealt only with the “Sons of God,” the second with all “man upon the earth,” and the last with “all flesh.” Each becomes less personal. First the Holy Spirit working with man, then the LORD (the Son?) examining man, and, last, GOD (the Father?) condemning all flesh.

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, . . . when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. 1 Peter 3:18,20 NASB

Next week we will begin the study of this chapter.

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