

# Genesis 6:14–22 — Make Thee an Ark of Gopher Wood

*Faith and Fear in Hebrews 11, Pitch Within and Without, the Universal Flood, the Exclusive Gospel, and Eternal Security*

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## Scripture Reading: Genesis 6:14–22; 7:1–5; Hebrews 11:7

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*“Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.” (Genesis 6:14)*

*“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” (Hebrews 11:7)*

## What Was Going On Inside Noah: Faith and Fear

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Genesis 6:14 says simply, make thee an ark. To understand what was going on inside Noah when God said that, one must wait for Hebrews 11:7. By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. There were two things operative within him: faith and fear. But the fear was itself rooted in the faith. He believed God, and because he believed God, he was moved with fear — or as the King James margin has it, moved with godly awe. Both were expressions of the same root: he believed what God said.

This also shows the consistent principle of righteousness by faith running through Scripture from the very beginning. Hebrews 11:7 says Noah became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Genesis 15:6 says Abraham believed God

and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Hebrews makes explicit what Genesis records historically. The faith-righteousness connection is not a New Testament innovation; it is how God has dealt with all his saints from Abel onward. What was symbolized in Noah's trusting the ark — his whole weight resting upon it, himself inside it while the flood destroyed everything outside — is what faith in Christ means: not faith in faith, not looking inward for faith as the thing that saves, but trusting in Christ as the ark, as the only refuge, while judgment falls on all that is outside.

### **Pitch Within and Without: Security and Comfort**

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The ark was to be pitched within and without with pitch. The pitch on the outside kept the water out. But why pitch on the inside? The pitch on the outside could only be inspected by going outside — impossible in the midst of a worldwide flood. But Noah could inspect the inside. He could go down into the lower decks, look at the pitch on the inner hull, and take comfort. It was holding. He was secure. He did not need to go overboard to confirm what he could verify from within.

The application to the believer's security is apt. God has not only made us safe — he has also told us we are safe, taught us the doctrine of eternal security, given us the inner witness of the Spirit, and the promises of the Lord Jesus himself: I know my sheep, and no man plucks them out of my Father's hand. The security would be true whether taught to us or not. But he has taught it, and the inner pitch is for our comfort — that from within, from the testimony of Scripture and the witness of the Spirit, we may know that we are secure.

### **The Size of the Ark: No Apologetic Needed**

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The ark's dimensions — 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, 30 cubits high — translate to approximately 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. That is

one and a half football fields in length. By any standard, even modern shipbuilding, this is a large vessel. The question of how it accommodated all the animals is addressed by recognizing that God called for kinds, not species. Enormous variety may have been contained within created kinds, just as enormous variety among dogs has been generated from a common stock within living memory. The relevant category is the baramin — a term coined from the Hebrew bara (to create) and min (kind) — the created kind, not the modern biological species. The number of kinds required is far smaller than the number of modern species, and the variety we see today may well have proliferated from those post-flood founders.

The animals did not need to be gathered by Noah through traps and cages. God sent them. He commanded, and his creation obeyed. The same Creator who caused a fish to bring a coin to Peter's hook has full authority over every beast of the field and every bird of the air. The hand of God was openly and obviously manifest throughout the entire episode. One cannot account for what happened in Genesis 6–8 by ordinary processes; the divine hand was immediately active at every point.

## **The Universal Flood: Evidence and Arguments**

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The universality of the flood is not a peripheral point. Second Peter 3:6 divides earth history into two main epochs: the world that then was, being overflowed with water and perishing, and the heavens and the earth which are now, preserved for fire. A local flood does not divide earth history into two such epochs. Furthermore, every living substance that I have made will I destroy from the face of the ground — this is not the language of a regional catastrophe. And the inclusion of birds in the ark is a conclusive argument: birds are not confined to a local region the way ground animals might be. For birds to need refuge in the ark, the flood had to be extensive enough that no bird could fly to escape it.

The objection that mountains could not have been covered because the air would become too rarefied for breathing assumes that all the mountain ranges were as high as they are now — which we cannot know — and also assumes the air would remain at surface level rather than rising with the water. Neither assumption is secure enough to build an argument on. If the text describes a worldwide flood, let someone propose wording that would describe a worldwide flood more clearly than this. No one has done so.

## **The Exclusive Gospel and the Window Above**

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There were no handholds on the outside of the ark. There was no provision for passengers clinging to the hull. Those outside perished. This is not cruel; it is the truth. The ark was the only place of safety, and access to it was available — the preaching of Noah made sure of that. But when the door was shut, it was shut. There is salvation in none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. The exclusivity of the gospel has always been its offence: one Savior, one way. But the breadth of it is equally plain: whosoever will. The one name is proclaimed to every nation, to whosoever has ears to hear.

The window in the ark, finishing it to a cubit above, was not for navigation. There was nowhere to steer to and nothing to navigate from. The window was upward. It maintained a connection between those within the ark and heaven above. Even in the midst of universal judgment, shut away from a perishing world, the connection with God above was preserved. This brings to mind Daniel's windows open toward Jerusalem, and Solomon's prayer that those carried to a strange land might look toward the place where God had set his name. There is always a window upward, a connection with heaven, for those who are in the place of safety.

*By faith Noah... prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*