

Day 7 - SATURDAY: October 29th

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# Bible Commentary

## Genesis 7

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### The flood begins

#### The Deluge Begins

God gave Noah instructions to build a large ship, capable of housing himself, his family, a pair of every unclean animal and seven pairs of every clean animal. The Hebrew of [Genesis 7:2](#) is literally “seven [and] seven” and the phrase is followed by “a male and his female.”

Incidentally, this passage proves that the distinction between clean and unclean animals came long before the Sinai Covenant at the time of Moses. Only clean animals could be eaten by people or sacrificed to God. (Request or download our free booklet [What Does the Bible Teach About Clean and Unclean Meats?](#) to learn more.) And thus we see a compelling reason that God instructed that more of the clean animals be taken on the ark than the unclean—perhaps in addition to the fact that the clean animals are often prey for the predators and any ecosystem needs much more prey than predators to persist.

Of course, atheists, unbelievers and scholars have scoffed at the idea that the account of the ark is true, claiming that such a ship would need to be of gargantuan proportions, far beyond what is recorded in Genesis or what was possible for the ancients to accomplish. But their criticism rests on some very questionable assumptions.

The critics frequently state that the number of animals aboard the ark would be in the scores of thousands if two of each were freighted. But this assumes that the biblical *kinds* are equivalent to scientific species. This is not necessarily the case. Biblical *kinds* appear to be distinct breeding groups, but scientific *species* can often interbreed—showing that multiple *interbreeding* species could perhaps make up a single kind. It may be that a biblical *kind* would be closer to a scientific genus, thereby dramatically reducing the number

of required animals. It is a well-known fact that all modern dog varieties could be produced from one pair of “generic” dog by the application of selective breeding principles, from the diminutive Chihuahua to the imposing Saint Bernard. Moreover, the objection also fails to consider that the vast majority of land-bound animals are insects, most of which would require only a few square millimeters of space. Furthermore, the average-sized land animal would require only a cubic foot and a half of space. Suffice it to say here that many studies have concluded that a ship the size and design of the ark would be capable of containing the required animals and still have a great amount of space left for storage and living quarters. The Deluge began in the 600th year of Noah’s life, the year also in which Methuselah died. The Bible records that it rained for 40 days and 40 nights, the “windows of heaven” being opened (which we’ll see more about in our reading of Genesis 9). But it is also recorded that “all the fountains of the great deep were broken up” ([Genesis 7:11](#)). This refers to subterranean aquifers which were emptied, perhaps by tectonic up-thrusting. A common critical objection raised against the story of the Flood is that there simply was not enough water required to cover the mountains, as required by verse 19. But this objection assumes that the topography of the earth today is what was present in Noah’s day. Scripture, however, seems to indicate that this may not have been so. For example, [Genesis 1:9](#) states that the waters of the earth (i.e., seas) were gathered into *one* place. It also seems to indicate that the land was one huge mass in its own place. Today, however, we see the land masses of the earth scattered about its surface, so that the seas are not literally in *one* place. It may be that some elements of the current topography of the earth have been altered since the time of Adam as the result of tremendous geologic upheaval at the time of the Flood or since.