

THE CONSTRUCTION OF NOAH'S ARK

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The Bible's depiction of Noah's Ark is contains significant details. The beauty of its description often goes overlooked because of the difference in time between the events in Noah's day and the present perspective of the modern-day reader. Here is a brief introduction to the construction of Noah's ark.

NOT A SMALL BOAT

Many depictions of Noah's Ark look like modern ships with steeply curved hulls that come to clear point to cut through the water at speed. This is not how the text describes the Ark. In reality, it would look much more like a large barge than a speedy ship. Remember, the Ark's purpose was preservation, not destination. There is no reason to "read back" into Scripture's description additional elements of modern day shipbuilding. The Bible does give a clear description of the type of boat it would be in Genesis 6:14-16.

UNKNOWN WOOD

The exact type of wood that God instructed Noah to use is unknown. The word "Gopher" is a transliteration of the Hebrew word and has no relation to the English word for a small brownish rodent.

HOW LONG IS A CUBIT

Different measurements of a cubit were used in the ancient world. Both the Hebrews and Egyptians used common cubits from 17.5 to 17.65 inches which is why 18 inches is used as the average cubit length.

NOT ALL WOODEN

Genesis 4:22 tells us that tools were made of bronze and iron before the construction of the Ark began. Here is no reason to assume the builders of the Ark did not also have metal tools at their disposal.

CONSTRUCTION TIME

One of the key objections made to the historicity of the Ark narrative is the accusation that Noah did not have enough time to build something as large as the Ark. This is not true. First, it is often assumed that Noah had to build it alone or with only the help of his three sons. Neither of these ideas are in the text. The Bible doesn't say directly how many pairs of hands participated in building the Ark. Here's an overview of how the math of the man hours for 120 years could have worked out.

NOAH ALONE

If Noah worked alone, 8 hours a day, 6 days a week, for 120 years, he would have worked for just shy of 300,000 hours.

NOAH AND HIS SONS

If Noah's sons joined him when they were old enough, that could bring the man hours up to 900,000 hours.

NOAH, SONS, & WIVES

If all four wives assisted in construction, this could bring the total to over 1.8 million man hours of labor!

MODERN DAY ARK BUILD

To put the hours into perspective, the full-size Ark replica in Kentucky took 280,000 hours to build. This means Noah and his sons could have built the ark in less than 28 years without outside help.

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OBJECTIONS TO THE ARK

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Noah's Ark is not only a beautiful portrait of God's grace and love, but it is also a major engineering marvel. It should be no surprise then that objections to the historicity of the Ark exists. Here is a brief introduction to objections to the Ark and how do answer them.

UNINTELLIGENT AMATEURS COULD NOT HAVE BUILT A SEAWORTHY BOAT

One of the largest objections to the construction of the Ark comes from the idea that people living in Noah's days were unskilled and unschooled. This is usually (but not always) based in the naturalistic idea that humans evolved from lower primates. The foundation of this objection is the mistaken idea that humans at the time of Noah were less intelligent than they are today. The idea that humanity gradually evolved from primates to neanderthals to today's thinking humans assumed and then used as justification for why Noah and his contemporaries could not have been intelligent to build a massive seaworthy vessel like the Ark.

CITIES, MUSIC, AND METAL

The Bible's description of the people who lived before Noah is nothing like the brutish caveman like description offered by this objection. Cain, the son of Adam and Eve, built a city (Genesis 4:17). The sons of Jubal played stringed and wind instruments (Genesis 4:21). Tubal-Cain forged tools of bronze and iron before the construction of the Ark began, possibly before Noah was even born! There is no reason to assume the builders of the Ark did not also have the intelligence or tools to build the Ark.

MILLIONS OF ANIMAL SPECIES COULD NOT HAVE FIT ON THE ARK

Another major objection to the historicity of the Ark narrative is the claim that it is impossible for millions of species of animals to fit on the Ark, therefore it must be false. The logic is supposed to require that any species that is alive today also had to be on the ark. The foundation of this objection is the observation of the amazing plethora and diversity of animals we see alive on the planet today. Large animals like the elephant, rhinoceros, and giraffe capture the imagination and make it hard to picture their fully grown size aboard the ark for a year, There are two key details, age and kind of animal, which make this objection not just problematic, but simply not accurate.

YOUNG ANIMAL KINDS

First, the accusation that "millions of animals could not fit" assumes the Bible claims millions of animals did fit. This is not what the Bible says. The Bible uses the word "kind" not "species" to describe animal life. The Old Testament divided all animals life into certain "kinds". The scientific term "species" wasn't coined until 1735. All that is required to have dog-like descendants today is a single pair of the original dog kind. The purpose of the Ark was to preserve life. It is more reasonable that God would have directed young, and therefore smaller, animals aboard the Ark.

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