

How much do you know about Noah and the Ark and the Flood?

Your first thought at this question might be, "That's a children's story, why should I care?" Indeed the story is told to many children and few Pastor's preach on it, but the reality is that the story is true, it happened to an adult who was given a seemingly impossible task, while living in a world that was seething in corruption and evil. If anything, it seems that this story has more pertinence in our day and age than perhaps in any other since the flood.

There are those who attempt to dismiss the authenticity of the story by using this specific question: They - meaning the world - present the simple question "How could God have possibly put all the animals of the world in the ark?"

I remember when that question was posed to me, and I remember just standing there with this stupid look on my face as I realized, "Yeah, how *could* God put all those animals on the ark? There doesn't seem to be enough room." They walked away with a victory, and I walked away in defeat.

That was many years ago, and I wish I knew then, what I know now. Had I known the answer to their question, perhaps they could have been convinced that not only is the story real, but that Jesus is too. I have never seen that person again. The chance I had to share the gospel slipped through my hands because I had relied on the verbal account others had told me, rather than reading the story for myself.

So, let me ask you, "How *did* God get all the animals of the world on that boat? Before you turn the page, think about it. What is your answer??



Did you notice the little pictures of the arks on the front of the previous page? Aren't those pictures cute with the animals sticking their heads out looking around? Awww.....

A picture is worth a thousand words, and It is because of pictures like these that people get the idea that the ark was small and crowded. The bible gives us the dimensions of the ark in Genesis 6:15-17 "...The ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. Make a roof for it and finish the ark within 18 inches of the top. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks." (300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, 30 cubits high)

So, what can we compare these dimensions to? If we use a football field, the ark was 1-1/2 football fields long, 1/2 the width of the football field and slightly taller than the height of a 4 story building. or....

It is a 45 story building lying on its side, 45 feet tall and 75 feet deep. or...

Slightly smaller than The Pacific Princess (also known as *The Love Boat*) which is 592 feet long and 83 feet wide.



The Titanic was 883' feet long, 92 feet wide boat deck. (From the bottom of the keel to the top of the smoke stacks was a total of 175 feet.) That makes the ark about one-half the length of the Titanic!

Now that you have some perspective of the actual size of the ark, how many animals do you think would fit now? Remember, animals that live in the water were not on the ark.

God told Noah to make lower, middle and upper decks. The different decks helped to separate the animals, provide internal structural soundness, and provide places to store food for both the animals and the people, as well as sleeping areas for the people. The structural innards also helped create habitat for many of the smaller, climbing animals and birds. To stabilize the ark and keep it structurally sound, interior walls (just like on modern ships) would be necessary and would create rooms where different animals would habitate and where food could be stored. Genesis 6:14, 21

With all the work Noah and his sons (and probably their wives, too) had to do, God sent the animals to Noah that He wanted saved and used to repopulate the earth. "You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. Two of every kind of bird, and of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive." Genesis 6:19-20

So, there we have it. Two of every kind of creature, right? Wrong. In Chapter seven, God gives some additional instructions concerning the animals. He says, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. Take with you seven of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and two of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, and also seven of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth."
Genesis 7:1-3

How many animals can you name that are larger than a sheep? Elephant, giraffe, hippo, rhino, water buffalo, tiger, lion, bear, horse, donkey, mule, kangaroo, buffalo, zebra, cow...and a handful more. Each deck consists of 33,750 square feet. Multiply that by 3 and that is a total of 101,250 square feet! 1,518,750 Cubic Feet! Most animals are smaller than a sheep. According to the Smithsonian Magazine, April 4, 2014, 2.15 million sheep could have fit on Noah's ark! That is a lot of sheep!

The point could be argued that God would send young, healthy animals to board the ark to repopulate the earth. But, with so much space, does it really matter? Birds would nest in rafters, ground animals in corners, snakes and squirrels on columns larger animals on beds of straw. Since not all animals live on the ground, just like in our modern world, each type of animal would live in its own type of space.

God told them "You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them." Genesis 6:21 Grass, hay, alfalfa, grains, vegetables, olives, grapes, fruits, animals and bugs. Bugs would have been on and in the grasses that were stored, which would feed the animals that consume them. Animals that eat grasses and grains would eat those items. Animals for consumption would also have been brought to feed Noah and his family, as well as the animals that only eat meat. (These would be in addition to the ones God sent to the ark to repopulate the earth) Remember that God told them to bring seven of each clean animal and bird? We find later in Genesis 8:20 "Then Noah, built an altar to the Lord and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it." God intended the animals to have different uses.

God gave Noah an incredibly impossible task: building an ark by hand, the size of which was like that of a small cruise ship. A ship larger than those of pirates and ancient sea-faring navies. It wasn't until 1880 that a ship larger than the ark was built.

Noah surely put up with a lot of ridicule, but he didn't say, "no". God provided everything that was needed to complete *His* plan, in *His* time. The account of Noah can be found in Genesis 5:28 through 9:29. Take the time to read it so when the subject of Noah and the Ark comes up, you will know the truth, and will be able to answer the harder questions with truth and confidence.



