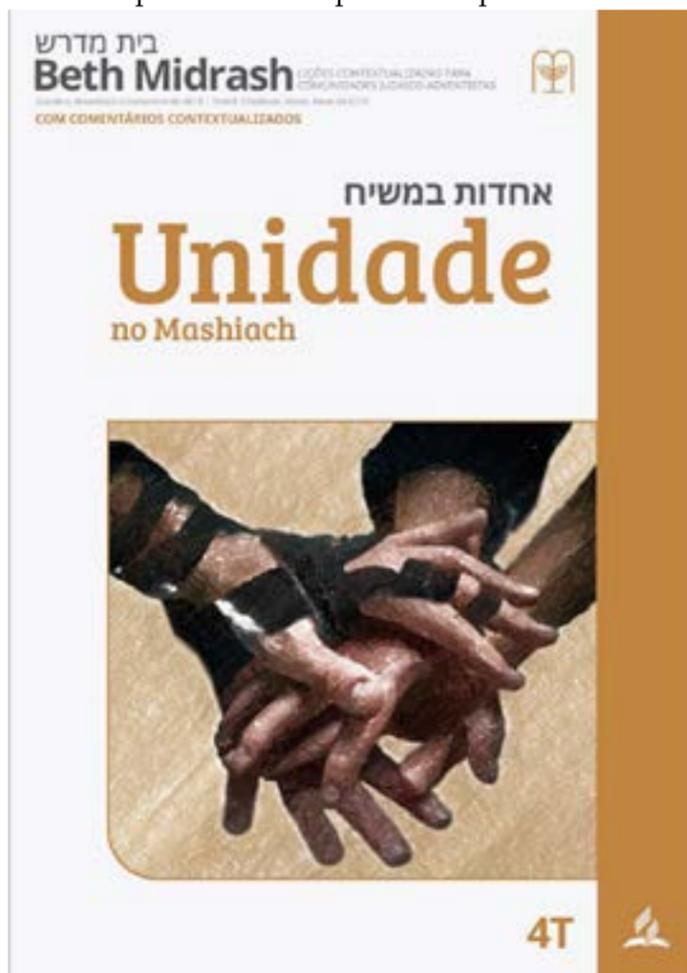


NEWS

Contextualized Sabbath School lesson in Portuguese

We are happy to share here a good news received from the team in charge of the Jewish Adventist Friendship ministry in Brazil. Here is the text we received from Carlos Muniz, one of the leader of this team, and director of the translation of this newsletter. "Every quarter, the Jewish Ministry Brazilian leadership team releases with a great team effort their contextualized Sabbath School lesson, made to be used in our Jewish Adventist congregations. It has the same theme as the world lesson but with a language that is Jewish friendly. If you speak or only read Portuguese or even would like to know this material, you can download the .pdf file via Dropbox at <http://adv7.in/RG>



European Pastors Council

The Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventists organized an European Pastors Council in Belgrade, Serbia on August 29 to September 1. This council was a very large gathering of pastors from the North of Europe: all Scandinavian countries, England, Iceland and continental European countries as, Netherlands, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Serbia, Albania, Montenegro, Croatia, Macedonia, Greece, and Cyprus, all together more than 1,000 pastors attended this meeting, the opening was led by Tes Wilson, President of the World Church, and Raafat Kamal, President of the TED.



The theme of this European Pastors Council was "Reach Europe." Again Richard Elofer was present there to teach about Jewish-Adventist Friendship ministry. He led five workshops every morning and afternoon: *Jewishness of Luke-Acts*, *Israel in Prophecy*, *Jesus and Israel*, *Presenting Jesus to Jews*, and *The 70 weeks of Daniel 9*, these workshops were attended by many pastors who expressed real interest for this ministry. A large number of photos can be seen at <http://adams.adventist.no/fotoweb/>



Let's Pray together
We pray every week for the Jewish Friendship Ministry. I suggest our partners to pray on October 14 to 20, for Dr Reinaldo Sequiera, who is professor at UNAPS (Adventist University of Sao Paulo, Brazil), and the Leader of the Jewish Adventist Friendship Ministry for the South-American Division. Let's pray for his ministries and his family.

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French Edition:
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Portuguese Edition:
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Parasha for this Week

Noach
נח

Parasha Overview:

Genesis 6:9-11:32

Noach

There were ten generations since the creation of the first human. Adam's descendants have corrupted the world with immorality, idolatry and robbery, and G-d resolves to bring a flood which will destroy all the earth's inhabitants except for the righteous Noah, his family and sufficient animals to re-populate the earth.

G-d instructs Noah to build an ark. After forty days and nights, the flood covers even the tops of the highest mountains.

After 150 days the water starts to recede. On the 17th day of the 7th month, the ark comes to rest on Mount Ararat.

Noah sends out a raven and then a dove to ascertain if the waters have abated. The dove returns. A week later Noah again sends the dove, which returns the same evening with an olive leaf in its beak.

After another seven days Noah sends the dove once more; the dove does not return.

G-d tells Noah and his family to leave the ark. Noah brings offerings to G-d from the animals which were carried in the ark for this purpose.

G-d vows never again to flood the entire world and designates the rainbow as a sign of this covenant.

Noah and his descendants are now permitted to slaughter and eat meat, unlike Adam.

According to the Jewish tradition, G-d commands to Noah and his sons the Seven Universal Laws: The prohibition against

Idolatry. Adultery. Theft. Blasphemy. Murder. Eating meat torn from a live animal. The obligation to set up a legal system.

The world's climate is established as we know it today. Noah plants a vineyard and becomes intoxicated from its produce. Ham, one of Noah's sons, delights in seeing his father drunk and uncovered.

Shem and Yafet, however, manage to cover their father without looking at his nakedness, by walking backwards. For this incident, Ham is cursed to be a slave. The Torah lists the offspring of Noah's three sons from whom the seventy nations of the world are descended. The Torah records the incident of the Tower of Babel, which results in G-d fragmenting communication into many languages and the dispersal of the nations throughout the world. The Parasha concludes with the genealogy of Noah to Avram.

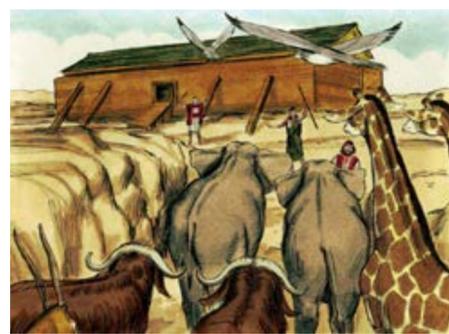
NOACH A RIGHTEOUS

Noah is presented in the biblical text as a righteous: "These are the genealogies of Noah. Noah was a righteous man. He was blameless among his generation. Noah continually walked with God." (Genesis 6:9). Not only a "righteous," but also "blameless" in Hebrew is *Tsadiq* (righteous) *Tamim* (blameless). What make a man a righteous? According to the sages of Israel, both of these attributes are included in the attribute of a *Tsadiq*. For our duty is to be just, that is the first meaning a being a *tsadiq*. Justice, is not our own possessions, it is a quality of God which is entrusted to us, which means we must deal justly and honestly, a *tsadiq* respect the *mitsvot* (commandments) between man and his fellow man, but also the *mitsvot* of morality. The text says "Noah was a righteous man. He was blameless among his generation." it is not written that he was a righteous before God, but "before or among his generation." A person can appear righteous in the sight of other people, and yet no righteous in the sight of God. That means the opinions of human beings are not always true. the meaning of words like "virtue," "justice," etc. can be distorted by people who will ascribe to them their own opinions. As Rabbi Hirsch put it, "There are times when the Name of God, too, is on everyone's lips, but is emptied of all content through the fault of the generation.

In fact, no one can detach himself from all the influences of his era; the spirit of the times penetrates everywhere, and the members of the generation influence one another. Hence, to be righteous in a generation of wicked people is not a small matter.

A MERCIFUL G-D

In the book of Genesis, the name of God is used intentionally, that is why the first chapter of Genesis used the name Elohim, while the second chapter used the holy name of God YHWH. In *parashat Noach*, it is the same, at the beginning of the *parasha* from the verse 9 of the chapter to the chapter 7 it is the name Elohim which is used, and suddenly the chapter 7 starts with the holy name of G-d YHWH, which is read as *Adonai* but the people of Israel: "Then *Adonai* said to Noah, "Come—you and all your household—into the ark. For you only do I perceive as righteous before Me in this generation." (Genesis 7:1). We are told that G-d, as Creator, Lawgiver, and Judge of the universe, set apart from the corrupt world the one man and the animals who were to be saved because they had not participated in the general corruption. They were to be saved because they were deserving of it. The primary purpose was "to keep alive" (Genesis



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6:19) to save their lives. Rabbi Hirsch says then, "the events that now follow are introduced by a reference to G-d as *Adonai*, in His attribute of mercy, the One Who educates mankind toward its goal and shapes every coming moment with this goal in mind. The salvation that is told in the verses that follow lays the foundation for a new future for mankind. This long-range goal is not only 'to keep alive' living creatures but 'to keep offspring alive on the face of the whole land.'" (Genesis 7:3).

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN ANIMALS

The Torah states: "The LORD then said to Noah, '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,'" (Gen 7:1-2). A legitimate question that can be asked is how many animals came to Noah to be rescued? in 6:2 it is written, "will come to you to be kept alive." And in 7:2 "you shall take with you" We can think that the animals came to Noah, and he took the initiative to choose the couple of animals that were admitted in the ark. It is the first time that the Bible mentions pure and impure animals. Rabbi Hirsch confirms that this distinction was not made in this verse in connection with *Kosher* food because "Animals were not yet permitted to man as food, and the distinction between "pure" and "impure" animals emerged only later, in the Law given at Sinai, nevertheless, G-d's Word to Noah distinguishes between pure animals and animals that are not pure. This means that even in those early days man was required to make this distinction — namely in connection with offerings. For the *Noachides* (Jewish designation of all non-Jews who are descendants of Noah) were permitted and are permitted to offer only pure animals. Thus G-d's people are permitted to eat only those animals that are fit to be offered by all men. The table and the altar of *Noachides* and G-d's people stands at the same level. The reason for the choice of permitted animals must be the same, then, for both. That is why the World Jewish Adventist Friendship Center and its affiliated religious community (Seventh-day Adventists) affirm that the distinction between pure and impure animals abides to everyone, Jews and non Jews.

"The clean animals, the animals which were not clean, the birds, and all that walked the earth came two by two to Noah, to the ark. They were male and female, as G-d had commanded Noah." (Genesis 7:8,9)

The word *Tabor* (pure) relates according to Hirsch to transparency, to be receptive and the light of G-d penetrates it. That is why he says that "A pure person is one who is receptive to the spiritual, to the divine: one whose mind, heart and body are suffused with the light of G-d." In the same way, pure animals are those who are receptive to human influence, they submit to man by their nature, without requiring taming; they serve his purpose; and beastliness and passion do not overwhelmingly predominate in them.

Hirsch asks the question: Which animals are suitable for offerings? The prototype of mankind is not the savage. The first human being and his children (Hevel, Seth, Noah, Avraham, Yitzchak, Ya'akov...) were close to G-d, their offerings were an expression of complete devotion, Hence, only those animals that are nearest to man's nature and are fit to be his representative are suitable for offerings.

A PATTERN OF TIME

At the end of the flood, we discover a pattern of time. "So he waited yet another seven days and again he sent the dove out from the ark." (Genesis 8:10). Again Noah waited another seven days to pass before he would again send out the dove from the ark. Indeed, the destruction, too, had come in just such a time pattern: First seven days and then forty (7:10, 12). Seven days passed between the decreed end and the doomed generation and the beginning of the flood. During those days, nothing changed; but in those days the end came upon the generation which was condemned to annihilation. Rabbi Hirsch says "Perhaps a similar time pattern was now to mark the transition to the new, dawning future. Noah saw that God had not forgotten him; the ark had come to rest, and the tops of the mountains had become. But Noah did not open the ark, for he figured that the waters would subside in the same manner in which they had come. That is why he

"The dove could not find any place to rest its feet, and it returned to him, to the ark. There was still water over all the earth's surface. [Noah] stretched out his hand, and brought it to him in the ark." (Genesis 8:9)

waited 40 days before sending out the raven. But then he realized that there were still no habitable places on earth. He therefore assumed that, similar to what had transpired at the beginning of the flood, an interval of seven days would now have to elapse between the end of the destruction and the start of the new era. That is why "he waited yet another seven days."

PEACE ON EARTH?

The Torah states: "The whole earth was of one language and of common purpose. (Genesis 11:1) It sounds like peace on earth, good will to all men, utopia.

Indeed, it was peace on earth, but a war against heaven. Rashi tells us that the people of the earth had united around the following idea: "G-d has no right to take the heavens for Himself; let us go up to heaven and wage war with Him." (*Bereishit raba*, 38,6.)

This very strange idea is presented as the underlying theme of the Generation of the Dispersal. The consequence of this war with G-d was the splitting of mankind into seventy different languages and cultures: "And G-d dispersed them from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel, because it was there that G-d confused the language of the whole earth, and from there G-d scattered them over the face of the whole earth. (Genesis 11:8-9).

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

According to the Jewish tradition: The sins of immorality and robbery of the generation of the Flood were merely symptoms of the underlying disease of deficient character development. Noah attacked the symptom, but failed to cure the disease. He did not teach them to know God through contemplation of His *middot* (ethical behavior) and to walk in His ways by correcting and developing their own character traits. Hence he was unsuccessful. His rebuke may occasionally have suppressed the symptoms, but they soon reappeared, since the underlying cause had not been treated. Without changing their underlying character, no true repentance was possible.



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APOSTOLIC WRITINGS

Mark 10:17-27

Continuing reading our *Besorab* of Mark in parallel with the *parasha* for the week we discover that the portion for this week in Mark 10 is about a man who would like to get eternal life. It was the concern of Noah and his family, they were alone following the will of G-d in order to get eternal life, and it was also the concern of the generation of the Babel Tower at the end of our *parasha*. The people who built the tower did it, because they wanted to go to heaven, they wanted to join G-d, they wanted to see G-d, and in their simple understanding: if G-d is in heaven, then we just have a build a tower which will reach the sky or heaven and then we will be equal to G-d and we will get eternal life."

In the *Besorab* a man came to Yeshua and asks him a question everyone would like to have the answer: "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17). In the parallel text of Luke, it is written that this man was "a ruler" (Luke 18:18), a ruler is someone who knows the "rules" thus he knows the laws, he is a doctor of the law, today we would say "a lawyer" but a lawyer, at that time, was not graduated from a profane university, a "ruler" or "Lawyer" was graduated from a *Yeshiva*, where he learned about the Torah, the rules of the L-rd, the commandments of G-d. Thus, if there was someone in the world who would know the "rules" and how to get eternal life, it should be this man. In fact we are sure that many people of his time came to him asking him advices about a good application of the rules and laws in their life. However, this man was not satisfied, the teaching of his "Masters/Rabbis" were not enough for him, he felt that there was something else that he did not know, or did not understand. Looking at the behavior and teaching of Yeshua he understood that this man would have the answer to his existential question. But he had from the very beginning a wrong understanding of human beings, and Yeshua understood that. The Lawyer called Yeshua "Good master" we know that Yeshua was "good" I would say: "The Good" but Yeshua wanted to correct his understanding of human nature: "Why do you call me good? No one is good except G-d alone." (Mark 10:18), some would say: it is a very pessimist view of humanity, but let's remember that this text was read in parallel with the story of Noah, and the text of Genesis says: "The L-rd saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5), no one was good, everyone was a wicked, every intention, every thought of every heart were only oriented towards evil and bad things. The story of the flood and Noah is a demonstration of the evil heart of human beings.

Yeshua, therefore, corrected this man saying that nobody is "good."

After establishing this truth, —nobody is good, Yeshua answered this man with his own references, this man was a "ruler" a "lawyer", that means he knows enough about the commandments. Yeshua said: "You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" (Mark 10:19), Yeshua answered with general commandments not too specific, commandments. Everyone accept them as universal moral commandments. The Jewish people would say that Yeshua answered with the *Noachic* commandments, universal commandments which are valid for all humanity and all the descendants of Noah, not only Jews.

Of course, this doctor of the Law knew these basic laws "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." (Mark 10:20). Yeshua is now just a teacher, not a "good" teacher anymore, he understood the lesson: "Jesus, looking at him, loved him," (Mark 10:21). It is interesting to check in the four *Besoroth* (gospels) who was loved by Yeshua. We have the word "love" about 66 times in the text, but the people Yeshua loved particularly were few: This ruler (Mark 10:21), Martha, Miryam and Lazarus (John 11:5), his disciples (John 13:1; 34; 15:9; 12), the disciple John (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7; 21:20), those who believe in him (John 14:21). Thus, each one of us, who believe in him, we are loved by Yeshua. We are among those who have accepted Yeshua and believed that he is the Messiah. Then the last advice of Yeshua was to follow the example of Noah: "sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." (Mark 10:21). This famous lawyer was not ready: "The man became sad and went away grieving, for he had much property." (Mark 10:22). Then Yeshua turned to his disciples and gave a lesson for each one: "How hard it will be for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! The disciples were amazed at His words. But Yeshua answers again and says to them, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.'" (Mark 10:23-25)

Noah was certainly rich in his time, if not he could not pay the expenses of his big ark or boat. However he was ready to give up everything to follow God's order to get eternal life with his family. "Then who can be saved?" Looking at them, Yeshua said, 'With men it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God!'" (Mark 10:26-27) Are we ready to follow Noah's example?

Haftara

Isaiah 54:1-55:5

This text of Isaiah is a beautiful text full of promises for Israel. It is a text that reminds G-d's love for Israel and the unconditional quality of the brith (covenant) G-d has "cut" with Israel.

G-d starts to describe the situation of Israel which is "a barren woman" a woman desolated, divorced but with a future. She will have many children. "Sing, O barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband," says the LORD. (Isaiah 54:1).

Israel must, as a spiritual nation extend her tents, she has to be a light for the nations and dispossess the G-ds of the nations in order to help all the nations to worship the G-d of Israel "Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities. (Isaiah 54:2-3)

Even though G-d is angry, upset against Israel, he will get her back and will be her husband and her G-d for ever, "Do not be afraid; you will not suffer shame ... For your Maker is your husband — the LORD Almighty is his name — the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; ... The LORD will call you back as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit... "For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. (Isaiah 54:4-7)

To be sure that G-d will not revoke his covenant with Israel, he is reminding to Israel the covenant with Noah. "To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again. (Isaiah 54:9).

As the covenant with Noah is still valid, the covenant with Israel is still valid and will be until the end. Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54:10). That is why we can be sure that G-d loves Israel today (Rom 11:28).

STORIES AND TRADITIONS

WINE IN JEWISH WISDOM

The *Midrash* tells that when one drinks one cup of wine, he becomes like a lamb, docile and peaceful. After two cups, he becomes like a lion, boastful of all the great things he believes he will accomplish. After three cups, he dances like a monkey. After four cups, he rolls in the mud like a pig.

HOW THE KOTEL REMAINED?

When the Roman Legions laid siege to the Temple Mount in Yerushalayim they divided their forces into four divisions. The officer in charge of each

was instructed to destroy one of the four walls which surrounded the sacred mountain. Three of them indeed carried out this order but one left the wall entrusted to him intact. When the emperor reprimanded him for failing to follow his orders, the officer explained: "Had I destroyed that wall as did the other officers, future rulers would not be able to appreciate what grandeur you succeeded in destroying. Now that I left this wall untouched, future generations will be able to marvel at the destruction you achieved!"

Tradition has it that the wall he left alone was the Western Wall — the *Kotel*.

WHAT IS YOUR IDENTITY

Rebbe of Kotzk said "If I am I because you are you, and you are you because I am I; then I am not I and you are not you. However, if I am I because I am I, and you are you because you are

you; then I am I and you are you."

SWORING OR NOT SWORING?

The *Midrash* relates the following which teaches us how careful one should be. "King Yannai ruled over two thousand cities. Yet they were all destroyed because they were accustomed to swearing — even in truth!" "How so? A person would say to his friend, 'I swear that I will go and eat this and this in such a place; I swear that I will drink this and this in that place.' Then they performed exactly as they swore. They were still punished although they didn't swear falsely."

The *Midrash* concludes: If for those who swore the truth, the punishment was so severe; how much more so does one have to be careful not to swear falsely.

A TALMUDIC VERSION OF THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS

A king invited all his servants to a royal banquet, but didn't tell them the time when it would take place. Everyone was anxious to attend the banquet.

Not knowing exactly when the king would open the banquet hall, the wise servants said, "The king has everything he needs at his command. Therefore, he can call the banquet at any moment." They immediately went home, washed, got dressed and returned to the banquet hall, ready to enter as soon as the king called them in.

The foolish servants, on the other hand, said, "A banquet takes a lot of preparation. Surely, we still have time until the banquet begins." They didn't prepare themselves and mingled around doing nothing.

Suddenly, the king opened the chamber doors and invited everyone in.

The wise ones entered dressed for the occasion, while the foolish ones came in their "street clothes". Naturally, the wise servants were welcomed by the king and invited to partake in the meal, while the foolish ones were not even allowed near the dinner table.

The banquet is the World-to-Come where the soul will be awarded for its efforts in this world.

Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai (1st Century) compares the people who push off preparing for the World to Come, through performing *mitzvot* and good deeds, to the foolish servants. Those who perform as many *mitzvot* and good deeds as possible to the wise servants.

For one should consider each day of their life as if it were the "one day before." (to die).

Inspirational Corner

Before the Flood God sent Noah to warn the world, that the people might be led to repentance, and thus escape the threatened destruction. As the time of Messiah's second appearing draws near, the Lord sends His servants with a warning to the world to prepare for that great event. Multitudes have been living in transgression of God's law, and now He in mercy calls them to obey its sacred precepts. All who will put away their sins by repentance toward God and faith in Christ are offered pardon. But many feel that it requires too great a sacrifice to put away sin. Because their life does not harmonize with the pure principles of God's moral government, they reject His warnings and deny the authority of His law. (PP 102)

