

創造記 回聲

The Genesis Echo is an ongoing investigation of pre-Babel history as recorded in both the Bible and the characters of the Chinese language.

The Flood

We noted that man had corrupted himself through continual wickedness. God was sorry that He had made man, and thus determined to destroy all flesh from the face of the earth. The Genesis record tells us,
...the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth ... I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die.
(Genesis 6:7, 17, NKJV)

jǔ

沮

DESTROY

hóng

洪

FLOOD

A Chinese word for DESTROY (jǔ, 沮) pictures the destruction which God would bring. This character, like the Genesis account, identifies the source of the destruction as WATER (shuǐ, 氵) MOREOVER (qiě, 且). Hóng (洪), meaning FLOOD, reveals the extent of the flood; it would bring TOTAL (gòng, 共) WATER (shuǐ, 氵) upon the land. The word gòng (共) is significant, for it is a record of what would be left after the flood was done. There would be EIGHT (bā, 八) TOGETHER (gǒng, 井) on the EARTH (yī, 一). Only Noah, his wife, their three sons, and their wives would survive the flood.

The rest of mankind would DROWN (yǎn, 淹). This word does not reveal just a few people who were overcome by floodwaters. The WATER (shuǐ, 氵) would COVER or TRAP (yǎn, 夨) all. This is evident when we look at the etymology of yǎn (夨), which shows the water covered ALL (hé, 合) TOGETHER (gǒng, 井). Only the eight, who would make up the TOTAL (gòng, 共) population of the post-flood world, would not be covered or trapped by the floodwaters.

yǎn

淹

DROWN

God commanded Noah to make an ark. We read,
Make yourself an ark ... I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall go into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons wives with you. **(Genesis 6:14, 18, NKJV)**

fāngzhōu

方舟

ARK

The word for ARK in Chinese is fāngzhōu (方舟). Two words are joined here, fāng (方) which means SQUARE and zhōu (舟), which is a BOAT. That is basically what the ark was; a square boat. There was nothing fancy about its construction, it was essentially a huge floating box. It is interesting to note as well, the word fāng (方) can also mean UPRIGHT or HONEST, which describes the character of those who were permitted on board.

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This boat which Noah constructed was massive. It was a three-level vessel, with over 100,000 square feet of floor space. It would be rightly called a SHIP (chuán, 船). What are the characters which combine to give chuán (船)?

Notice carefully, the Chinese word for ship reveals a BOAT (zhōu, 舟) with EIGHT (bā, 八) PEOPLE (kǒu, 口) in it! What ship has only eight people on board? Cruiseliners are built to carry thousands of people, and have dozens of personnel on board. Freighters, though not built to carry passengers, still have dozens of crew members on board. Surely this pictures the ark Noah was commanded to build. God said to him that he, his three sons, his wife, and their wives (8 people in total) would go into the ark. The apostle Peter, comparing the physical salvation of Noah and his family with our salvation in Christ Jesus today wrote,

...the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us – baptism...
(1 Peter 3:20-21, NKJV)

chuán

船

SHIP

pèi

霈

TORRENT OF RAIN

Once the ark was build, God told Noah,
...after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made. ...on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.

(Genesis 7:4, 11-12, NKJV)

The waters of the flood did not come as a light sprinkle, but as TORRENTS OF RAIN (pèi, 霈). This word describes RAIN (yǔ, 雨) that was ABUNDANT / FULL / SUDDEN (pèi, 沛). This image pictures not only the rain coming from above, but water from below also, even as the Genesis record indicated that the fountains of the deep also opened. In pèi (沛) we see the words COMPLETE (shí, 十) and WIDE (jiōng, 冫).

After the flood had ended and the waters began to recede, a DOVE (gē, 鴿) was sent by Noah to see if there was any vegetation on the earth yet. He sent her out three times. The first time, she brought back nothing; the second time, she brought back an olive leaf; and the third time, she did not return (Genesis 8:8-12). The left side of this character is ALL (hé, 合), and the right pictures a BIRD (niǎo, 鳥). All doves are birds, but not all birds are doves. To grasp the significance of the character, we need to consider the components of hé (合). Three smaller images combine to give us hé (合), MAN (rén, 人), EARTH (yī, 一), and MOUTH (kǒu, 口). It seems the character gē (鴿) was developed to tell of the DOVE which was sent by the MAN Noah to seek food upon the EARTH. She would eventually return with an olive leaf in her MOUTH.

gē

鴿

DOVE

jì

祭

SACRIFICE

When the time came for Noah and his family to exit the ark, what do you suppose would be the first thing they would do? The Genesis record tells us,
...Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma...
(Genesis 8:20-21, NKJV)

The first thing he did was make SACRIFICE (jì, 祭). This word for sacrifice seems to infer that offerings had not been offered for some time, as the three components of the word are FLESH (yuè, 月) AGAIN (yòu, 又) as God had

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COMMANDED (shì, 示). Over a year had passed since Noah had last been able to make sacrifice to God.

Recall, when we looked at Noah's name, we saw that He was Nuòyà (諾亞), the SECOND APPROVED or SECOND PROMISE. The promise dealt with the weeds curse which was upon the earth. In naming his son, Lamech SPOKE (yán, 言) about the MAN (kǒu, 口) through whom the WEEDS (cǎo, 草) curse would be removed, and LIFE (p'ieh, 一) would be restored to the EARTH (yī, 一). God fulfilled that promise in Noah, for after he and his family stepped out of the ark and made sacrifice to God, we read:

...the LORD said in His heart, 'I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done. (Genesis 8:20-21, NKJV)

Nuòyà

諾亞

NOAH

ní

霓

RAINBOW

The LORD promised two things here: 1) He would not curse the ground again (ie. the weeds curse), and 2) He would not destroy the earth by a flood again. As a sign of this second promise, the LORD said to Noah,

It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. (Genesis 9:14-15, NKJV)

The rainbow signifies the end of the rain, as God sees the token of His covenant with all flesh and brings an end to the rain. The word ní (霓) literally refers to the FINAL PART (兒, 兒) of the RAIN (yǔ, 雨).

Our next article will consider the construction of the tower of Babel, and the division of the nations which took place there.

Other Resources

Nelson, Ethel R., and C.H. Kang. The Discovery of Genesis: How the Truths of Genesis Were Found Hidden in the Chinese Language. St. Louis, MO : Concordia Publishing House, 1979.

Nelson, Ethel R., Richard E. Broadberry, and Ginger Tong Chock. God's Promise to the Chinese. Dunlap, TN : Read Books Publishers, 1997.

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