Noah

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*This article is about the biblical Noah. For other uses, see*[*Noah (disambiguation)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noah_%28disambiguation%29)*.*

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| **Noah** |
| *Noah's Sacrifice* by [Daniel Maclise](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Maclise) |
| **Venerated in** | [Judaism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism)[Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity)[Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam)[Mandaeism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandaeism)[Baha'i Faith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baha%27i_Faith) |

In the [Abrahamic religions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abrahamic_religions), **Noah** ([/ˈnoʊ.ə/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIPA_for_English); [Hebrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_language): נֹחַ, נוֹחַ, [Modern](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_Hebrew) *Noaẖ*, [Tiberian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiberian_vocalization) *Nōăḥ*; [Syriac](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syriac_language): ܢܘܚ‎ *Nukh*; [Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language): نُوح‎‎ *Nūḥ*; [Ancient Greek](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greek): Νῶε) was the tenth and last of the [pre-flood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antediluvian) [Patriarchs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarchs_%28Bible%29). The story of [Noah's Ark](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noah%27s_Ark) is told in the Bible's [Genesis flood narrative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genesis_flood_narrative). The biblical account is followed by the story of the [Curse of Canaan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curse_of_Ham).

Besides the Book of Genesis, Noah is also mentioned in the [First book of Chronicles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Chronicles), and the books of [Tobit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Tobit), [Wisdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Wisdom), [Sirach](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sirach), [Isaiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Isaiah), [Ezekiel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ezekiel), [2 Esdras](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2_Esdras), [4 Maccabees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4_Maccabees); and in the New Testament in the [Gospel of Matthew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Matthew), the [Gospel of Luke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Luke), the [Epistle to the Hebrews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistle_to_the_Hebrews), [1st Peter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Epistle_of_Peter) and [2nd Peter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Epistle_of_Peter). Noah was the subject of much elaboration in the literature of later Abrahamic religions, including the [Quran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) ([Sura 71](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sura_71)).

Biblical account

12th-century Venetian mosaic depiction of Noah sending the dove

The primary account of Noah in the Bible is in the [Book of Genesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Genesis).

Noah was the tenth of the pre-flood ([antediluvian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antediluvian)) Patriarchs. His father was [Lamech](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lamech_%28father_of_Noah%29) and his mother is unknown. When Noah was five hundred years old, he begat [Shem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shem), [Ham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ham%2C_son_of_Noah) and [Japheth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japheth) ([Genesis 5:32](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_%28King_James%29/Genesis#5:32)).

**Genesis flood narrative**

*Main article:*[*Genesis flood narrative*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genesis_flood_narrative)

The Genesis flood narrative makes up chapters 6–9 in the [Book of Genesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Genesis), in the [Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible). The narrative, one of many [flood myths](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flood_myth) found in human cultures, indicates that [God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yahweh) intended to return the [Earth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth) to its pre-Creation state of watery [chaos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaos_%28cosmogony%29) by flooding the Earth because of humanity's misdeeds and then remake it using the microcosm of [Noah's ark](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noah%27s_ark). Thus, the flood was no ordinary overflow but a reversal of [creation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genesis_creation_narrative). The narrative discusses the evil of mankind that moved God to destroy the world by the way of the flood, the preparation of the ark for certain animals, Noah, and his family, and God's guarantee (the [Noahic Covenant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noahic_Covenant)) for the continued existence of life under the promise that he would never send another flood.

**After the flood**

*Main article:*[*Covenant (biblical) § Noahic covenant*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Covenant_%28biblical%29#Noahic_covenant)

After the flood, Noah offered burnt offerings to the LORD, who said: "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart *[is]* evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done." ([8:20–21](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_%28King_James%29/Genesis#8:20))

"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." ([9:1](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_%28King_James%29/Genesis#9:1)) They were also told that all fowls, land animals, and fishes would be afraid of them. Furthermore, as well as green plants, every moving thing would be their food with the exception that the blood was not to be eaten. Man's life blood would be required from the beasts and from man. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." (9:6) A rainbow, called "my bow", was given as the sign of a covenant "between me and you and every living creature that *[is]* with you, for perpetual generations", ([9:2–17](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_%28King_James%29/Genesis#9:2)) called the Noahic covenant or the [rainbow covenant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_covenant).

Noah died 350 years after the flood, at the age of 950, the last of the extremely long-lived [antediluvian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antediluvian) Patriarchs. The maximum human lifespan, as depicted by the Bible, diminishes rapidly thereafter, from almost 1,000 years to the 120 years of [Moses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses). ([Genesis 6:3; Deuteronomy 31:22; 34:37](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gen.6%3A3%3BDeut.31%3A22%3B34%3A37&version=9))

**Noah's drunkenness**

Noah's drunkenness, Ham mocks Noah, Noah is covered, Canaan is cursed. [Egerton Genesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Egerton_Genesis&action=edit&redlink=1)

After the flood, Noah became a [husbandman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Husbandman) and he planted a vineyard: and he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and was uncovered within his tent. Noah's son Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his brethren, which led to Ham's son Canaan being [cursed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curse_of_Ham) by Noah. As early as the [Classical era](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_era), commentators on [Genesis 9:20–21](http://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0109.htm#20) have excused Noah's excessive drinking because he was considered to be the first wine drinker; the first person to discover the soothing, consoling, and enlivening[[*tone*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AWriting_better_articles#Tone)] effects of wine. [John Chrysostom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Chrysostom), [Archbishop](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archbishop) of [Constantinople](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantinople), and a [Church Father](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_Father), writes that Noah's behavior is defensible: as the first human to taste wine, he would not know its effects: "Through ignorance and inexperience of the proper amount to drink, fell into a drunken stupor".

[Philo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philo), a [Hellenistic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hellenistic_philosophy) Jewish philosopher, also exonerates Noah by noting that one can drink in two different manners: (1) to drink wine in excess, a peculiar sin to the vicious evil man or (2) to partake of wine as the wise man, Noah being the latter.

In [Jewish tradition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_tradition) and [rabbinic literature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noah_in_rabbinic_literature#His_lapse), rabbis blame [Satan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satan) for the intoxicating properties of the wine.

**Curse of Ham**

*Main article:*[*Curse of Ham*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curse_of_Ham)

*Noah curses Ham* by [Gustave Dore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustave_Dore)

In the field of [psychological biblical criticism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychological_biblical_criticism), [J. H. Ellens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._Harold_Ellens) and W. G. Rollins address the narrative of [Genesis 9:18–27](http://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0109.htm#18) that narrates the unconventional behavior that occurs between Noah and Ham. Because of its brevity and textual inconsistencies, it has been suggested that this narrative is a "splinter from a more substantial tale". A fuller account would explain what exactly Ham had done to his father, or why Noah directed a curse at [Canaan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canaan) for Ham's misdeed, or how Noah came to know what occurred. The narrator relates two facts: (1) Noah became drunken and "he was uncovered within his tent", and (2) Ham "saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without". Thus, these passages revolve around sexuality and the exposure of genitalia as compared with other Hebrew Bible texts, such as [Habakkuk 2:15](http://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt2002.htm#15) and [Lamentations 4:21](http://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt3204.htm#21).

**Table of nations**

The dispersion of the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth (map from the 1854 *Historical Textbook and Atlas of Biblical Geography*)

*See also:*[*Sons of Noah*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sons_of_Noah)

[Genesis 10](http://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0110.htm#1) sets forth the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, from whom the nations branched out over the earth after the flood. Among Japheth’s descendants were the maritime nations. (10:2–5) Ham’s son [Cush](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_Cush) had a son named [Nimrod](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nimrod), who became the first man of might on earth, a mighty hunter, king in [Babylon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylon) and the land of [Shinar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shinar). (10:6–10) From there [Asshur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashur) went and built Nineveh. (10:11–12) Canaan’s descendants – Sidon, [Heth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_Hittites), the [Jebusites](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jebusite), the [Amorites](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amorite), the Girgashites, the [Hivites](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hivites), the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites – spread out from [Sidon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidon) as far as [Gerar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerar), near [Gaza](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_City), and as far as [Sodom and Gomorrah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sodom_and_Gomorrah). (10:15–19) Among Shem’s descendants was [Eber](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eber). (10:21)

These genealogies differ structurally from those set out in Genesis 5 and 11. It has a segmented or treelike structure, going from one father to many offspring. It is strange that the table, which assumes that the population is distributed about the Earth, precedes the account of the [Tower of Babel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tower_of_Babel), which says that all the population is in one place before it is dispersed.

Family tree

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| [Adah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_minor_Biblical_figures#Adah) |   | [Lamech](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lamech_%28descendant_of_Cain%29) |   |   |   | [Zillah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_minor_Biblical_figures#Zillah) |   |   |   | [Enoch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enoch_%28Biblical_figure%29) |  |  |  |
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|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | [Shem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shem) |   | [Ham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ham_%28son_of_Noah%29) |   | [Japheth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japheth) |
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Narrative analysis

According to the [documentary hypothesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Documentary_hypothesis), the first five books of the Bible ([Pentateuch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentateuch)/[Torah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torah)), including Genesis, were collated during the 5th century BC from four main sources, which themselves date from no earlier than the 10th century BC. Two of these, the [Jahwist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jahwist), composed in the 10th century BC, and the [Priestly source](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Priestly_source), from the late 7th century BC, make up the chapters of Genesis which concern Noah. The attempt by the 5th-century editor to accommodate two independent and sometimes conflicting sources accounts for the confusion over such matters as how many of each animal Noah took, and how long the flood lasted.

*The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible* notes that this story echoes parts of the [Garden of Eden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garden_of_Eden) story: Noah is the first vintner, while Adam is the first farmer; both have problems with their produce; both stories involve nakedness; and both involve a division between brothers leading to a curse. However, after the flood, the stories differ. Noah plants the vineyard and utters the curse, not God, so "God is less involved".

Other accounts

Noah appears in several non-canonical books.

**Pseudepigrapha**

The [Book of Jubilees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Jubilees) refers to Noah and says that he was taught the arts of healing by an angel so that his children could overcome "the offspring of the [Watchers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watcher_%28angel%29)".

In 10:1–3 of the [Book of Enoch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Enoch) (which is part of the [Orthodox Tewahedo biblical canon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthodox_Tewahedo_biblical_canon)), [Uriel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uriel) was dispatched by "the Most High" to inform Noah of the approaching "deluge".

**Dead Sea scrolls**

There are 20 or so fragments of the [Dead Sea scrolls](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_Sea_scrolls) that appear to refer to Noah. [Lawrence Schiffman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence_Schiffman) writes, "Among the Dead Sea Scrolls at least three different versions of this legend are preserved." In particular, "The [Genesis Apocryphon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genesis_Apocryphon) devotes considerable space to Noah." However, "The material seems to have little in common with Genesis 5 which reports the birth of Noah." Also, Noah's father is reported as worrying that his son was actually fathered by one of the [Watchers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watcher_%28angel%29).

Comparative mythology

*Main article:*[*Flood myth*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flood_myth)

Many non-Middle-Eastern civilizations also have flood myths, and some have very similar stories containing characters who are very like Noah. Some have argued that these similarities are evidence that Noah actually existed, being called different names by different peoples. Others argue that civilizations must have borrowed details of Noah's life for their own Noah-types, or that they all spring from the same source. Yet others say that these Noah-like stories are completely unrelated.

**Mesopotamian**

The Noah story of the Pentateuch is almost identical to a flood story contained in the Mesopotamian [Epic of Gilgamesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epic_of_Gilgamesh), composed about 2500 BC. The few variations including the number of days of the deluge, the order of the birds, and the name of the mountain on which the ark rests. The flood story in Genesis 6–8 matches the [Gilgamesh flood myth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilgamesh_flood_myth) so closely that "few doubt that [it] derives from a Mesopotamian account." What is particularly noticeable is the way the Genesis flood story follows the Gilgamesh flood tale "point by point and in the same order", even when the story permits other alternatives.

The earliest written [flood myth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flood_myth) is found in the [Mesopotamian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesopotamian) [Epic of Atrahasis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epic_of_Atrahasis) and [Epic of Gilgamesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epic_of_Gilgamesh) texts. "These mythologies are the source of such features of the biblical Flood story as the building and provisioning of the ark, its flotation, and the subsidence of the waters, as well as the part played by the human protagonist." The *Encyclopedia Judaica* adds that there is a strong suggestion that

an intermediate agent was active. The people most likely to have fulfilled this role are the [Hurrians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurrian), whose territory included the city of [Haran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haran), where the Patriarch [Abraham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham) had his roots. The Hurrians inherited the Flood story from Babylonia.

The encyclopedia mentions another similarity between the stories: Noah is the tenth patriarch and [Berossus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berossus) notes that "the hero of the great flood was Babylonia’s tenth antediluvian king." However, there is a discrepancy in the ages of the heroes. For the Mesopotamian antecedents, "the reigns of the antediluvian kings range from 18,600 to nearly 65,000 years." In the Bible, the lifespans "fall far short of the briefest reign mentioned in the related Mesopotamian texts." Also the name of the hero differs between the traditions: "The earliest Mesopotamian flood account, written in the Sumerian language, calls the deluge hero [Ziusudra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ziusudra)."

[Gilgamesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilgamesh)’s historical reign is believed to have been approximately 2700 BC, shortly before the earliest known written stories. The discovery of artifacts associated with [Aga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aga_of_Kish) and [Enmebaragesi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enmebaragesi) of [Kish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29), two other kings named in the stories, has lent credibility to the historical existence of Gilgamesh.

The earliest [Sumerian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumer) Gilgamesh poems date from as early as the [Third dynasty of Ur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_dynasty_of_Ur) (2100–2000 BC). One of these poems mentions Gilgamesh’s journey to meet the flood hero, as well as a short version of the flood story. The earliest [Akkadian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akkadian_language) versions of the unified epic are dated to ca. 2000–1500 BC. Due to the fragmentary nature of these Old Babylonian versions, it is unclear whether they included an expanded account of the flood myth; although one fragment definitely includes the story of Gilgamesh’s journey to meet [Utnapishtim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utnapishtim). The "standard" Akkadian version included a long version of the flood story and was edited by [Sin-liqe-unninni](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sin-liqe-unninni) sometime between 1300 and 1000 BC.

**Sumerian**

Utnapishtim, a character in The Epic of Gilgamesh, tells the story of a flood very similar to that of Noah. In this story, the gods are enraged by the noise that man has raised from the earth. To quiet them they decide to send a great flood to silence mankind. Various correlations between the stories of Noah and Utnapishtim (the flood, the construction of the ark, the salvation of animals, and the release of birds following the flood) have led to this story being seen as the inspiration for the story of Noah. However, his role in Gilgamesh is to provide the secret of everlasting life to the hero, who promptly falls asleep before Utnapishtim gives him the secret of life.

**Ancient Greek**

Noah has often been compared to [Deucalion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deucalion), the son of [Prometheus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prometheus) and [Pronoia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pronoia) in [Greek mythology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_mythology). Like Noah, Deucalion is warned of the flood (by [Zeus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zeus) and [Poseidon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poseidon)); he builds an ark and staffs it with creatures – and when he completes his voyage, gives thanks and takes advice from the gods on how to repopulate the Earth. Deucalion also sends a pigeon to find out about the situation of the world and the bird returns with an olive branch. Deucalion, in some versions of the myth, also becomes the inventor of wine, like Noah. [Philo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philo) and [Justin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justin_%28historian%29) equate Deucalion with Noah, and [Josephus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josephus) used the story of Deucalion as evidence that the flood actually occurred and that, therefore, Noah existed.

**Hindu**

A story involving Lord [Vishnu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vishnu) and King [Manu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sraddhadeva_Manu) is found in the [Hindu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu) chronicle [Matsya Purana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matsya_Purana). Lord Vishnu in his 'matsya' (fish) [avatar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avatar) ordered the virtuous king Manu to construct a huge boat with animal and plant specimens of all forms, to escape the Great Deluge, and finally when the water receded, the great boat was found atop the [Malaya Mountains](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malaya_Mountains). *Encyclopedia Britannica* notes that "Manu combines the characteristics of the Hebrew Bible figures of Noah, who preserved life from extinction in a great flood, and Adam, the first man", which view is reflected in several other works. [Indologist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indologist) Shulman writes that borrowing between the myths of Manu and Noah "cannot be ruled out". For [Krishna Mohan Banerjee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krishna_Mohan_Banerjee), the names "Noah" and "Manu" "had the same etymological root: 'Manu' must have been the Indo-Aryan ideal of Noah." Philologist and founder of the [Asiatic Society of Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asiatic_Society_of_Bengal), [William Jones](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Jones_%28philologist%29), "identifies Manu with Noah", along with whom, "the seven sages can be identified with the eight people aboard the Ark." Furthermore, researcher [Klaus Klostermaier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Klaus_Klostermaier) reports a Muslim writer who "identifies Brahma with Abraham .... and Manu with Noah." Others, however, would say that "the story is thoroughly Indian" and the "boat is not the equivalent of Noah's Ark, though it is still the symbol of salvation" According to Purana Manu's story occur before 28 chaturyuga in the present Manvantara which is the 7th Manvantara. This amounts to 120 million years ago. According to Bible, Noah was 9 generations after Adam (4004 BC – 3074 BC) which is about 3500 BC.

Religious views

**Judaism**

*See also:*[*Noah in rabbinic literature*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noah_in_rabbinic_literature)*and*[*Noach (parsha)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noach_%28parsha%29)

A Jewish depiction of Noah

The righteousness of Noah is the subject of much discussion among rabbis. The description of Noah as "righteous in his generation" implied to some that his perfection was only relative: In his generation of wicked people, he could be considered righteous, but in the generation of a [*tzadik*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tzadik) like [Abraham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham), he would not be considered so righteous. They point out that Noah did not pray to God on behalf of those about to be destroyed, as Abraham prayed for the wicked of [Sodom and Gomorrah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sodom_and_Gomorrah). In fact, Noah is never seen to speak; he simply listens to God and acts on his orders. This led such commentators to offer the figure of Noah as "the man in a fur coat," who ensured his own comfort while ignoring his neighbor. Others, such as the medieval commentator [Rashi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashi), held on the contrary that the building of the Ark was stretched over 120 years, deliberately in order to give sinners time to repent. Rashi interprets his father's statement of the naming of Noah (in Hebrew נֹחַ) "This one will comfort us (in Hebrew– yeNaHamainu יְנַחֲמֵנו) in our work and in the toil of our hands, which come from the ground that the Lord had cursed", by saying Noah heralded a new era of prosperity, when there was easing (in Hebrew – nahah – נחה) from the curse from the time of Adam when the Earth produced thorns and thistles even where men sowed wheat and that Noah then introduced the plow.

According to the [*Jewish Encyclopedia*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Encyclopedia), "The [Book of Genesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Genesis) contains two accounts of Noah." In the first, Noah is the hero of the flood, and in the second, he is the father of mankind and a husbandman who planted the first vineyard. "The disparity of character between these two narratives has caused some critics to insist that the subject of the latter account was not the same as the subject of the former." Perhaps the original name of the hero of the flood was actually *Enoch*.

The [Encyclopedia Judaica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Encyclopedia_Judaica) notes that Noah's drunkenness is not presented as reprehensible behavior. Rather, "It is clear that ... Noah’s venture into viticulture provides the setting for the castigation of Israel’s Canaanite neighbors." It was Ham who committed an offense when he viewed his father’s nakedness. Yet, "Noah’s curse, ...is strangely aimed at Canaan rather than the disrespectful Ham." (p. 288)

**Christianity**

An early Christian depiction showing Noah giving the gesture of [orant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orant)as the dove returns

[2 Peter 2:5](http://www.bibler.org/versions/nasb/nasb_2peter02_sml.htm#2peter_2:5) refers to Noah as a "preacher of righteousness". In the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke, Jesus compares Noah's flood with the coming [Day of Judgement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last_Judgement): "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so too it will be in the days of the coming of the [Son of Man](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_of_man_%28Christianity%29). For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."

The [First Epistle of Peter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Epistle_of_Peter) compares the saving power of [baptism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptism) with the Ark saving those who were in it. In later Christian thought, the Ark came to be compared to the [Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Church): salvation was to be found only within Christ and his Lordship, as in Noah's time it had been found only within the Ark. [St Augustine of Hippo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Augustine_of_Hippo) (354–430), demonstrated in [*The City of God*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_City_of_God_%28book%29) that the dimensions of the Ark corresponded to the dimensions of the human body, which corresponds to the [body of Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_of_Christ); the equation of Ark and Church is still found in the [Anglican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican) rite of baptism, which asks God, "who of thy great mercy didst save Noah," to receive into the Church the infant about to be baptized.

In [medieval Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_medieval_Christianity), Noah's three sons were generally considered as the founders of the populations of the three known [continents](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continent), [Japheth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japheth)/Europe, [Shem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shem)/Asia, and [Ham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ham_%28son_of_Noah%29)/Africa, although a rarer variation held that they represented the three classes of medieval society – the priests (Shem), the warriors (Japheth), and the peasants (Ham). In medieval Christian thought, Ham was considered to be the ancestor of the people of black Africa. So, in racialist arguments, the curse of Ham became a justification for the slavery of the black races.

**Mormon theology**

In [Mormon theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormonism), Noah plays an important role prior to his birth as the angel [Gabriel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabriel) and then lived in his mortal life as the patriarch-prophet Noah. Gabriel and Noah are regarded as the same individual under different names. [Mormons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormons) also believe that Noah returned to earth as Gabriel after his earthly life and appeared to [Daniel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_%28biblical_figure%29) to teach him about the [Second Coming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Coming); to [Zacharias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zechariah_%28priest%29), the father of [John the Baptist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_the_Baptist); and to [Mary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latter_Day_Saint_views_on_Mary), the mother of Jesus.

Noah is considered the head of a [dispensation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dispensation_%28period%29) along with [Adam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam_and_Eve_%28LDS_Church%29), [Enoch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enoch_%28ancestor_of_Noah%29), [Abraham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham), [Moses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses), [Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus) and [Joseph Smith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Smith). A dispensation is a period of time in which the Lord has at least one authorized servant on earth who bears the keys of the holy priesthood. Noah became the means by which the gospel of Jesus Christ— the [plan of salvation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plan_of_salvation_%28Latter_Day_Saints%29) —is revealed anew, the means by which divine transforming powers, including saving covenants and ordinances, are extended to people during an age of time called a dispensation.

**Islam**

*Main article:*[*Noah in Islam*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noah_in_Islam)

An Islamic depiction of Noah in a 16th-century [Mughal miniature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mughal_painting).

Noah's ark and the deluge from Zubdat-al Tawarikh

Noah is a highly important figure in [Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam) and is seen as one of the most significant of all prophets. The [Quran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) contains 43 references to Noah, or *Nuḥ*, in 28 chapters, and the seventy-first chapter, [*Sūrat Nūḥ*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuh_%28surah%29) ([Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language): سورة نوح‎‎), is named after him. His life is also spoken of in the commentaries and in Islamic legends.

Noah's narratives largely cover his preaching as well the story of the [Deluge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flood_myth). Noah's narrative sets the prototype for many of the subsequent prophetic stories, which begin with the prophet warning his people and then the community rejecting the message and facing a punishment. Noah is not the first prophet sent to mankind, according to the Qur'an. The first prophet according to Islam is Adam, who was the first man and he was sent to populate earth.

Noah has several titles in Islam, based primarily on praise for him in the Qur'an, including "True Messenger of God" (XXVI: 107) and "Grateful Servant of God" (XVII: 3).

The Qur'an focuses on several instances from Noah's life more than others, and one of the most significant events is the Flood. God makes a [covenant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Covenant_%28biblical%29) with Noah just as he did with Abraham, [Moses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses), [Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus) and [Muhammad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad) later on (33:7). Noah is later reviled by his people and reproached by them for being a mere human messenger and not an angel (10:72–74). Moreover, the people mock Noah's words and call him a liar (7:62), and they even suggest that Noah is possessed by a devil when the prophet ceases to preach (54:9). Only the lowest in the community join Noah in believing in God's message (11:29), and Noah's narrative further describes him preaching both in private and public. Noah prays to God, "Lord, leave not one single family of Infidels from the land: / For if thou leave them they will beguile thy servants and will beget only sinners, infidels." The Qur'an narrates that Noah received a revelation to build an [Ark](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noah%27s_Ark), after his people refused to believe in his message and hear the warning. The narrative goes on to describe that waters poured forth from the Heavens, destroying all the sinners. Even one of his sons disbelieved him, stayed behind, and was drowned. In the Qur'an, Noah originally had four sons, but they are not named. After the Flood ended, the Ark rested atop [Mount Judi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Judi) ([Quran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [11:44](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2002.02.0006%3Asura%3D11%3Averse%3D44)).

Also, Islamic beliefs deny the idea of Noah being the first person to drink wine and experience the aftereffects of doing so.

[Quran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [29:14](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2002.02.0006%3Asura%3D29%3Averse%3D14) states that Noah had been living among the people who he was sent to for 950 years when the flood started.

And, indeed, [in times long past] We sent forth Noah unto his people, and he dwelt among them a thousand years bar fifty; and then the floods overwhelmed them while they were still lost in evildoing.

According to the [Ahmadiyya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmadiyya) understanding of the Quran, the period described in the Quran is the age of his [dispensation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dispensation_%28period%29), which extended until the time of [Ibrahim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_in_Islam) (Abraham, 950 years). The first 50 years were the years of spiritual progress, which were followed by 900 years of spiritual deterioration of the people of Noah.

**Gnostic**

An important Gnostic text, the [*Apocryphon of John*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apocryphon_of_John), reports that the chief [archon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archon_%28Gnosticism%29) caused the flood because he desired to destroy the world he had made, but the First Thought informed Noah of the chief archon's plans, and Noah informed the remainder of humanity. Unlike the account of Genesis, not only are Noah's family saved, but many others also heed Noah's call. There is no ark in this account. According to [Elaine Pagels](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elaine_Pagels), "Rather, they hid in a particular place, not only Noah, but also many other people from the unshakable race. They entered that place and hid in a bright cloud."

**Bahá'í**

The [Bahá'í Faith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bah%C3%A1%27%C3%AD_Faith) regards the Ark and the Flood as symbolic. In Bahá'í belief, only Noah's followers were spiritually alive, preserved in the ark of his teachings, as others were spiritually dead. The Bahá'í scripture [*Kitáb-i-Íqán*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kit%C3%A1b-i-%C3%8Dq%C3%A1n) endorses the Islamic belief that Noah had a large number of companions, either 40 or 72, besides his family on the Ark, and that he taught for 950 (symbolic) years before the flood.

**Isaac Newton**

[Isaac Newton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_Newton), in his religious works on the development of religion, wrote about Noah and his offspring. In Newton's view, while Noah was a monotheist, the gods of pagan antiquity are identified with Noah and his descendants. "Newton argues that Noah is ultimately deified as the god Saturn."

Newton thus traces all ancient political and religious history back to Noah and Noah's offspring and simultaneously gives an historical account of the rise of polytheism and idolatry in these gentile nations as the result of the posthumous deification of their leaders and heroes, a polytheistic process which thoroughly corrupts the core monotheistic truth ... in the original religion of Noah.

This page was last modified on 19 April 2017, at 17:20.