

Gen 8:6 At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made

Gen 8:7 and **sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up** from the earth.

Gen 8:8 Then he **sent forth a dove** from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground.

Gen 8:9 But **the dove found no place to set her foot**, and **she returned to him to the ark**, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him.

Gen 8:10 He waited another seven days, and **again he sent forth the dove out of the ark.**

Gen 8:11 And **the dove came back to him in the evening**, and behold, **in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf**. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth.

Gen 8:12 Then he waited another seven days and **sent forth the dove**, and **she did not return to him anymore.**

1Ki 17:1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.”

1Ki 17:2 And the word of the LORD came to him:

1Ki 17:3 “Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan.

1Ki 17:4 You shall drink from the brook, and **I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.**”

1Ki 17:5 So he went and did according to the word of the LORD. He went and lived by the brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan.

1Ki 17:6 And **the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening**, and he drank from the brook.

1Ki 17:7 And after a while the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

Lev 11:13 “And **these you shall detest among the birds; they shall not be eaten**; they are detestable: the eagle, the bearded vulture, the black vulture,
Lev 11:14 the kite, the falcon of any kind,
Lev 11:15 **every raven of any kind**,
Lev 11:16 the ostrich, the nighthawk, the sea gull, the hawk of any kind,
Lev 11:17 the little owl, the cormorant, the short-eared owl,
Lev 11:18 the barn owl, the tawny owl, the carrion vulture,
Lev 11:19 the stork, the heron of any kind, the hoopoe, and the bat.

Luke 12:24 **Consider the ravens**: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and **yet God feeds them**. Of how much more value are you than the birds!

Gen 7:7 And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood.

Gen 7:10 And **after seven days** the waters of the flood came upon the earth.

Gen 7:11 In the **six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month**, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened.

Gen 7:12 And rain fell upon the earth **forty days and forty nights**.

Gen 7:17 The flood continued **forty days on the earth**. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth.

Gen 7:24 And **the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days**.

Gen 8:3 and the waters receded from the earth continually. At **the end of 150 days the waters had abated**,

Gen 8:4 and in the **seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month**, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.

Gen 8:5 And the waters continued to abate until **the tenth month**; in **the tenth month, on the first day of the month**, the tops of the mountains were seen.

Gen 8:6 At the **end of forty days** Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made

Gen 8:13 In the **six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month**, the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry.

Gen 8:14 In the **second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month**, the earth had dried out.

Question 1 : In Genesis 8, what is the significance of raven vs dove? Why wasn't it a flamingo? Why not raven each time or dove each time? Other verses in the Bible mention the raven, and they do not appear to have as negative of a connotation as expected (although not in a very positive light either). For example, the ravens fed Elijah in 1 Kings, and Jesus points out that they are fed by God without sowing or reaping.

In the Bible, the raven is considered to be an unclean bird. The dove, among other birds, is not included in the list of unclean birds, and may be regarded as clean (please see the verses highlighted). However, in Genesis 8, it is striking that Noah sends out both the raven and the dove, but the raven first, and then the dove. Why? And why did Noah choose these two birds, and not other kinds?

Noah opens the window of the ark (typifying Christ and the church, and more practically, the church life), and first releases the raven. In the Bible, even though the raven is considered unclean, it also features in a positive sense, as in the case of Elijah who was fed by the ravens, according to God's command, to supply man's need (please see the highlighted verses in 1 Kings). Thus, the raven is obedient to God's command in both 1 Kings and Genesis 8.

At the same time, negatively, the raven is a scavenger, feeding on carcasses, and, in the Bible, a symbol of death. Thus, in 1 Kings, only the raven, because of its scavenging ability, was able to bring Elijah meat. In Genesis 8, Noah releases the raven first to test the level of the receding waters, expecting the raven to return, either with some evidence of life or not. However, the raven goes to and fro and does not return to Noah. Since the raven was a scavenger, we must assume that it found plenty of food (carcasses) to sustain it and not return to the ark. Even if there was vegetable life, the raven would not have returned with evidence in its beak.

Noah performed a similar test with the dove. We know the dove is a clean herbivore. The dove also goes to and fro, looking for dry land, but, unable to find it, returns to Noah and the ark. Eventually, the dove is released a second time, and this time returns to Noah with an olive leaf in its beak. The third time the dove is released, she does not return. What does this mean to us?

In the church life, we are in Christ (the ark), in the midst of the world (the death waters). However, Christ's death, and His resurrection life in us, are able to cause us to live in the world, and, at the same time, experience His resurrection life. God will test us, again and again, so we can grow and know Him as resurrection. How?

The Lord sends us to preach the gospel, to testify Him, in the world, where we live, in our school, our workplace, to our friends. Or He may send us to another locality. Are we the raven or the dove? The raven listens to Noah and obeys. We may listen to the Lord, and even obey. However, when we go, do we depend on ourselves, or on the Lord? Even more, do we depend on other saints in the church life? Are we part of a team of saints? This is a test. The raven went, but found no life. However, it fed on death to sustain itself. We may fall into this trap, even in serving the Lord. For example, we may find a job in another locality, and we may, with a good heart, desire to preach the gospel to raise up the Lord's testimony. But without a companion, without a team, it will be very hard and discouraging. There may seem to be no dry land (resurrection life). Eventually, the world will come in and sap our desire to serve the Lord, and we will feed on the world. This is our raven nature. The raven did not return to Noah and the ark. When we are weak, when our life-level is low, do we stay in the church life? For example, if we are in another locality, and are struggling, do we seek fellowship and prayer with saints in another locality. That is why, when we move to another locality, we must find a companion. We can never be independent. The raven is characterized by independence.

Neither does the dove find dry land the first time. But she returns. Do we return? That is, do we attach ourselves to older brothers and sisters with whom we can fellowship, who, like Noah, can put out their hand and take us back into the ark, to strengthen us, encourage us, and also perfect us, perhaps sometimes with strong words! To preach the gospel is not easy. It is much easier to become discouraged and give up. That is why we may preach the gospel once, maybe twice to someone, and that person is not open. Then we do not preach again to anyone else.

Noah waits seven days before sending the dove out again. We need to grow. The preaching of the gospel should result in growth, regardless of results. Results are not the issue. Noah could not force the dry land to appear. Only God could do that. But Noah could prepare himself and those with him, to be ready to recognize life, touch life, and bring it back. So the dove came back with an olive leaf in its mouth. This is growth. When we preach the gospel, do we know the Lord? Do we know the saints around us? Are we joyful? Do we enjoy grace in preaching the gospel? It is not a matter of how many people believe. Is there one more person that I can contact? How much time can I spend with them? What do they need? I need to pray with my companions for this. Then, I will grow.

Eventually, the dove did not return to Noah and the ark. Once the waters had receded, she was able to make her home again in a new realm. As we grow and know Christ's life within us, and the life of Christ in the saints, we may be able to shepherd and even raise up someone else, to become a pillar, and eventually the Lord's testimony in another place. This, we may say, is a burden today. Who can go to other areas to pioneer for the Lord? Who are the doves who can be sent? But, we also realize that we have both the raven nature and the dove nature, and so we need the speaking and perfecting of the servants of the Lord, typified by Noah, the saints, typified by the eight members of Noah's family, and God's word.

Question 2: What is the meaning of the different lengths of time mentioned in this chapter? (e.g. 40 days = test/trial etc.) What can we learn from this timeline that Noah was in the ark?

Please see the Flood Timeline on the next slide. The reference is:

<https://answersingenesis.org/bible-timeline/biblical-overview-of-the-flood-timeline/>

I do not attempt to interpret every number in the Flood account. That is beyond me for the moment. However, there are some numbers that are significant, according to their use elsewhere in the Bible:

1. The number seven: the number seven signifies completion in time. Thus, God created the heavens and the earth in seven days (Genesis 2:2). There are seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3. These churches represent the totality (in nature and development) of all the churches on the earth since Acts 2.
2. The number forty: the number forty signifies trial and testing by God. Thus, the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years. Moses spent forty days and nights with God on the mountain. Jesus was tried in the wilderness for forty days.
3. The seventeenth day of the seventh month (Genesis 8:4): the day the ark rested on Mount Ararat. The seventh month, in the civic calendar, was actually the first month in the Jewish calendar, and marked a new beginning. This became the month of the Passover, a new beginning, the month of Abib (Exodus 13:4). This was the month when Jesus was crucified. Jesus entered Jerusalem on the tenth day of the month of Passover, in fulfillment of Exodus 12:3, was examined for four days by the religious people, as a fulfillment of Exodus 12:6, and was crucified on the fourteenth day of the month, as a fulfillment of Exodus 12:6. He then resurrected on the seventeenth day of the month (three days later), as a fulfillment of Genesis 8:4, the day that the ark (Christ) rested on dry land (Mt. Ararat), a type of the day of resurrection.

What I have shared above is mainly by way of knowledge. Please see the slide after the timeline to see the application.

0	Initial reference point	600th year of Noah's life: 2nd month, 17th day of the month	The fountains of the great deep broke apart and the windows of heaven were opened; it began to rain. This happened on the seventeenth day of the second month. Noah actually entered the Ark seven days prior to this.	Genesis 7:11
40	40 days and nights	3rd month, 27th day of the month	Rain fell for 40 days, and then water covered the earth's highest places (at that time) by over ~20 feet (15 cubits) and began the stage of flooding until the next milestone. ²	Genesis 7:11–12 , Genesis 7:17–20
150	150 days (including the initial 40 days)	7th month, 17th day of the month	The water rose to its highest level (covering the whole earth) sometime between the 40th and 150th day, and the end of these 150 days was the seventeenth day of the seventh month. The Ark rested on the mountains of Ararat. On the 150th day, the springs of the great deep were shut off, and the rain from above ceased, and the water began continually receding.	Genesis 7:24–8:5
150 + 74 = 224	74 days	10th month, 1st day of the month	The tops of the mountains became visible on the tenth month, first day.	Genesis 8:5
224 + 40 = 264	40 days	11th month, 11th day of the month	After 40 more days, Noah sent out a raven.	Genesis 8:6
264 + 7 = 271	7 days	11th month, 18th day of the month	The dove was sent out seven days after the raven. It had no resting place and returned to Noah. ³	Genesis 8:6–12
271 + 7 = 278	7 days	11th month, 25th day of the month	After seven more days, Noah sent out the dove again. It returned again but this time with an olive leaf in its beak.	Genesis 8:10–11
278 + 7 = 285	7 days	12th month, 2nd day of the month	After seven more days, Noah sent out the dove again, and it did not return.	Genesis 8:12
314	29 days	601st year of Noah life: 1st month, 1st day of the month	Noah removed the cover of the Ark on the first day of the first month. The <i>surface</i> of the earth was dried up, and Noah could verify this to the extent of what he could see.	Genesis 8:13
370 (371 if counting the first day and last day as full days)	56 days	2nd month, 27th day of the month	The <i>earth</i> was dry, and God commanded Noah's family and the animals to come out of the Ark. From the first day of the year during the daylight portion there were 29.5 more days left in the month plus 26.5 more days left in the second month until the exit.	Genesis 8:14–17 , Genesis 7:11

Such a detailed timeline indicates that growth in the Christian life takes time, and requires our exercise. Growth does not come magically, and is hard to measure. But what can be measured are time, preparation and exercise. Every stage requires time and preparation. I would divide the timeline into eight stages, based on their breakdown, duration and result. But this is inspirational and may not be quoted as truth:

1. Revelation, which leads to preparation: 7 days inside the ark (the church life) before the flood actually comes. This may be the sweet church life, with rich enjoyment of the word, fellowship and prayers.
2. Testing: 40 days. After revelation, there must be testing, usually through trials and suffering, to test that revelation. This requires a life of crucifixion.
3. Truth, or the living out of revelation: 150 days including the 40 days of testing. Thus 110 days. This is where the water rises to the highest level (Mt. Ararat), and the ark finally rests. Such a living is eventually a living in resurrection. There is a rich church life, the gospel is preached, there is much praise and thanksgiving and prayers, the financial grace offering is healthy. Pillars are raised up.
4. Elevation: 74 days. The tops of the mountains are now visible (Genesis 8:5). If the Lord is merciful, and we are not satisfied, we begin to ask: "Is there anything more?" Like Abraham, we may even be afraid of missing the Lord because we are so satisfied and full, and feel that we have done and arrived at our maximum capacity. Thus, we need to be elevated. How?
5. Further testing: 40 more days (Genesis 8:6).
6. Enlargement: sending out, and being sent out: 21 days (three cycles of seven: threefold competition in time): Genesis 8:6-12). The raven and dove sent out (please see fellowship concerning first question). Being burdened not just for own locality, our local church life (typified by the ark), but being sent out to skim the death waters (the earth) to look for a resting place (a place where God can rest and place His name).
7. Extra-local burden and labor: 29 days (Genesis 8:13). Removing the covering of the ark. Not being satisfied with enjoying a congregational life, but venturing out on the mountains to seek the lost sheep.
8. Development and raising up of a ministry: 56 days (Genesis 8:14-17). Exiting the ark onto dry land and multiplying. Eventually, we exit the ark. This may mean that we leave any kind of shell or form that we may have held onto, to have only Christ as our content. We even leave behind our former enjoyment of Christ, which may have become a shell, to raise up a new and higher church life, beyond our limitations and confinement.