

**BIBLE BIOGRAPHIES OR
STORIES FROM THE OLD
TESTAMENT, PP. 16-214**

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Bible Biographies or Stories from the Old Testament, pp. 16-214 by W. E. Littlewood

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BIBLE BIOGRAPHIES



ABRAHAM OFFERING UP ISAAC.

AND THEY CAME to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there; and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

AND Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

AND the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

AND he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

AND Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

GENESIS XXII. 2-13.

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floods from the earth. A wind was therefore caused to pass over the earth, and under its strong influence the tempests were stilled, the heavens were cleared, and the flood began to abate. Little by little the waters fell back, and in the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark touched the solid ground again, and rested on one of the mountains of Ararat. Whether these mountains were the same as those which now go by the name of Ararat is very doubtful. If they were, then the place where the ark rested was somewhere upon the high table-land of Armenia, between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea.

It was not possible, however, at once to leave the ark, which probably only at first grazed the ground with its bottom, and was surrounded for a long while on all sides with slowly-decreasing waters. Not until the first day of the tenth month, or—if we take a month as thirty days—seventy-four days later, were even the tops of the mountains seen, and Noah waited forty days more before he ventured to send anything out of the ark. Then, we read, he sent forth a raven—a bird which has been always supposed by its flight and by its croak to foretell changes of weather—and the bird returned to him no more. No doubt the raven, being a bird which feeds on flesh and carrion, found food and a perching-place upon some of the floating corpses of men or animals, and so felt no need to

return. But not so with the creature which, seven days later, was sent forth. Then it was not a raven, but a dove which Noah sent out; but she "found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark."—Gen. viii. 9. And Noah "stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; and the dove came in to him in the evening; and lo! in her mouth was an olive-leaf pluckt off."—Gen. viii. 10, 11. So Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth, and that God was once more at peace with the world which He had made.

But the peace which was now to exist had to be solemnly confirmed. This was accomplished on the part of Noah by a solemn sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise, accompanied by the offering of some of those animals which had been preserved in the ark. Around the altar thus furnished, Noah and his family—now the sole inhabitants of the world—thankfully assembled in an act of worship, consummated by the shedding of blood. God accepted this sacrifice, and declared His holy will to be that the earth should never again be visited by a flood. He promised also that, so long as the earth remained, the seasons should always follow in regular succession, and the fruits of the earth be duly gathered. Moreover, God was mercifully pleased to constitute the

rainbow as an eternal pledge of this new promise. No doubt the rainbow had always existed, at least ever since there had been raindrops and the light of the sun falling on them, by which the beautiful appearance to which we



give this name is produced. But now God gave it a particular meaning, and henceforward, whenever we see the rainbow shining in the midst of the storm, we may feel encouraged by the thought that a destruction like

the deluge will never be permitted to visit our world again.

Promises were not the only words of God on this occasion. To His promises God added a commandment against murder, and a permission to eat flesh, from which some have supposed that before the time of Noah men had used vegetable food only. Then Noah and his children seem to have been dismissed to the great task which was before them, the replenishing and cultivation of the earth. Large resources were at their disposal, for not only had they immense stores within the ark, but, when the waters had subsided, many of the possessions of the former inhabitants might be recovered and used. And that their resources soon multiplied, we can almost infer from the circumstance that the brothers soon separated. Shem went eastward, and became the progenitor of the Asiatic nations; Japhet travelled to the west, and founded the nations of Europe; Ham seems to have been exiled to Africa and the south.

It would be well if we might end the story of Noah here. But it is melancholy to have to relate that in his after life—for Noah lived for many years after his exit from the ark—even this good man fell into sin. "He planted a vineyard, and he drank of the wine and was drunken."—Gen. ix. 20, 21. We do not care to linger on