

# Noah's ark: Lessons for humanity's survival in a changing world

Exploring Noah's story reveals the urgency of sustainable development, urging leaders to act before it's too late and build a resilient path for humanity's future

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Noah's Ark, large wooden ark on dry land, Noah standing beside, pairs of animals boarding the ark  
(photo credit: SHUTTERSTOCK)

It is worth considering, in light of humanity's profound struggle against the world's climate and matters of elemental justice, how the onset of [the Biblical](#) tale of Noah is relevant today.

According to ancient Hebraic commentaries, Noah actually grew the timber he used for his ark from cedar seeds. In fact, the entire process of building the ark is said to have taken 120 years.

The theme of this portion of the story is that the people, the public, any witnesses or observers, and anyone willing to listen had years of warning that a calamity, in this case utter destruction, was on its way.

Of course, many of us can relate to this idea in our own lives and situations when something less positive comes upon us, and we look back to how many signs appeared of what ultimately befell.

How many times could we have corrected our actions, and in how many ways might we have adjusted or done something differently?



(credit: INGIMAGE)

Considering experiences of sustainable development and the projects that create livelihood opportunities while safeguarding [the environmental](#) future, it is also certainly apparent that there is overwhelming opportunity and, rarely, if ever, a lack of community vision and ideas for lasting, positive change if people are given the assistance they need to analyze and find the specific initiatives that will enhance their futures.

At the same time, the so serious difficulty in securing the funds needed to implement those ideas—whether in water infrastructure, public health, education, or small businesses—makes implementation relatively uncommon, explaining at least in significant part, rampant, constant poverty.

But we know the systemization of losing humanity's potential. We have been warned about this and live through this. An ample warning was fixed in the flood story. In Noah's time, Divinity's patience (or that of binding universal energy) seemed to have dissipated too low.

Ancient commentaries about this Biblical episode explain what it was that finally brought torrential submersion upon civilization. It is described as a consequence of that time's rule of law as an injustice against the common person where they were legally robbed of the value they created.

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Might our time be characterized in such ways, with nations entrapped by other nations via debt, where mighty conglomerates pay nothing to their national public purse, where farmers of the world grow what is invaluable and retain just a fraction of the real value, where innocence is no shield.

Only, in our time and perhaps in Noah's, so much of this occurs unbeknownst to the one and the many who are stripped of their value.

Hebraic immemorial knowledge about Noah's time also explains that he did not enter the ark when the light rains first began to fall and, in fact, only finally entered when the waters reached his knees.

The deluge had come and the wellsprings of the deep began to open. Sages debate whether his hesitancy was due to a challenge of faith, or whether he held on to continue warning whoever could hear.

However this question may be settled, some faulted Noah for not beseeching God Almighty enough on behalf of the people, his contemporaries, to save them and their world.

What lesson can workers for sustainability learn who already so honestly worry about our time, who may have spent years building their mission ark, who may have done what they feel is their own best to espouse and try to build a pathway to prosperity's harbor?

The lesson we can apply as leaders in our circles, as ones who may be able to represent others, organizations, groups, communities, or even just our own selves, is to relentlessly implore representatives of localities, states, and nations, presidents, prime ministers, and kings and queens. Tell what it is that people need and where.

Explain why it matters again and again, and do not stop ever, not once, even as the waters rise and the heat and cold burn. And, as we are beseeched, we will

try to give the response we hope for when we are a beseecher.

The rainbow, according to ancient thinking, seems a bit double-edged.

Yes, it is a promise, a pact that we will last and we will continue forward. At the same time, we are also warned not to dwell upon looking at the rainbow, however impossible it seems to not fixate on total beauty.

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Why not take in as long as we can that assurance that somehow humanity will find a way to sustain itself and our environment?

Considering the warning not to settle one's eyes on the rainbow for too long beyond just the time needed to recognize its good meaning, perhaps it may be explained that fixation upon the promise may take it for granted, may come to subdue our luster by believing in a guarantee sealed by the perfect beauty of a rainbow.

This makes one think, then, how certain is this actual promise if taking it for granted might ultimately mean its undoing?

Where are we in our time along the 120-year spectrum? Have the light rains started?

Are we calling out to any and all who may be open to the call? Have we fortified our own ark of service to others?

Are we heeding Noah's lessons so that whether flood or not, climate ruin or not, mutually assured destruction or not, regional wars or not, sudden disappointment or not, that we have done all we can and live on together, we shall?

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