

The Days of Noah

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P8 DAVIS, John. *Dyddiau Noah*. (The days of Noah.) *Merthyr Tydfil: John Davis, Printer, 1850*.

4 p. 17 cm. *Welsh Mormon Writings* 45.

This rather lengthy narrative poem carries the same date (28 June 1850) as *Testimony of the Saint* (P7). It is, as the title suggests, a poetic account of events that preceded the building of the ark and the devastation of the Flood. John Davis moralizes considerably about those who rejected the message of the prophet Noah.

The poem consists of thirty stanzas of four lines each. Each line has thirteen syllables. In 1868, when Davis published *Beehive Songster* in Salt Lake City, the first of the twenty-one items he included was his English version of *The days of Noah* (pp. 5–11).

The Days of Noah

By J. Davis, Merthyr.

The days before the deluge—those are the days of my song,
 The days Noah saw—some of the last of the world before:
 If Moses did not give the complete history, it will do no harm
 If I enlarge upon it, by going according to my pleasure.
 When the Lord looked down to the old world,
 He perceived all mankind, and all their great wickedness:
 He saw his “sons” were turning to the daughters of man,
 And he perceived the whole host of the earth going their own way.
 God said, “I repent for having created man,
 Together with all the creatures of every color and shape:
 I shall now completely destroy them from off the ground;
 I shall send flood waters to drown the great and the small.”
 Yet lest he deal unjustly, God revealed to man
 His intent, before the day of the grievous vengeance.

He called on Noah to be a messenger to go to mankind,
To proclaim the gospel, and tell of God's intent.
The people were obstinate—wickedness filled the earth,
And God knew from the start they would not believe his word:
He commanded Noah to build an ark on the hill,
So that if some believed, they could be saved by going there.
No one but Noah alone recognized God now;
No one knew of Him, except through their great “fathers:”
Recognizing God at that time was a teaching too foolish for the world;
They always did what their fathers fancied.
Noah went to his task, not doubting the word of his God;
He preached to the people the only way to live:
He warned them of the flood that was to cover the world;
And he said, if they did not believe, they would all be drowned.
What effect could be expected for such a thing to have?
One man going to the whole world to testify of so strange a thing!
One man saying that no one but *he* was right!
And if they did not believe him, their reward was full vengeance!
What! not one religious man but Noah in the world?
Where was the old gospel, since the time of Adam so long ago?
He was a true emissary, and the only servant to God!
What will become of those who died, and of all those who live?
Things must have been like this, else they would all have believed Noah;
Godly power must have been completely lost throughout the world:
Yet Noah did not slacken, but stuck to his task,
Though hearing many times “false prophet,” and “deceiver.”
The ark, with deliberation, he began on top of a great mountain,
So it would be obvious to hosts down on the earth.
Its wood was all of gopher, and its shape was according to Heaven's plan,
But it was laughed at by everyone, excepting him.

Word the flood would come spread throughout the world,
But not without being followed, by shouting, "All deceit."
It was believed that Noah was a crazy man, with empty hisses.
And that his awful intent was to dupe the world with his nonsense.
What! wise, learned, and noble men,—all
To tolerate being led by one who was lost?
All these to believe the story of the ark,
That God was going to drown them!—To God they gave more reverence.
Preaching, building, and carrying the timber together,
And suffering every persecution, is what brave Noah did still:
Plank to plank the iron nails fastened,
And sermon after sermon proved his words to be true.
The world in peace was living, marrying, building houses,
Feasting, planting vineyards; who would have thought that wrong?
Why should anyone believe Noah's warning that a great deluge would come,
When nothing like that had ever happened before?
Ere it could be expected that men would believe such stuff,
There should be miracles openly worked through hill and vale;
Or, then, the messenger should be a holier man,
His garments wrapt in glory, like an angel of God each one.
In six score years the ark was ready,
And Noah, with his family, went to dwell therein:
The creatures also, of every kind and sex,
Two by two they entered in, according to God's counsel.
Now to see the fulfillment of foolish Noah's words,
That which he had long been babbling, and his constant "miracle:"
He is now within his vessel on top of the great mountain;
And all the people are laughing, waiting for the rain to descend.
After seven days the fountains of the great deep broke out,
And all of heaven's windows opened now:

The firmament wore darkness, and heavy rains were come,
When all the mockers hastened to find a shelter home.
The children would ask their parents, are we all going to drown?
No, no; do not believe the brawl of the biggest old deceiver in the world:
It has rained before, you know, and this is just a shower;
God shows far greater mercy than drowning nearly the whole world.
The rain poured down in torrents, it filled all the rivers;
And the floods began to threaten great destruction and loss:
The water flowed to the dwellings, and the people hastened out,
Saying, "Is this the deluge?—nothing but a heavy shower!"
The waters rose swiftly, and the mother gathered her children
Up to the nearby hill, lest they be swept away:
Some feared that something was about to happen to the old world,
And all ran to the hills, to wonder there together.
The deluge had begun, and some of the houses were hidden,
And the deceit that had caused laughing now turned to sadness:
Some said they had never witnessed such rain as that before,
But the bravest testified, that Noah had completely deceived them!
The waters increased more and more on the plains,
And streams ran down from the tops of great mountains:
The trees completely uprooted by the power of the huge flood,
And every creature went wild trying to escape to higher ground.
But now what about Noah, and his company in the ark?
Was there any hope that he would receive more respect?
Oh, he would indeed, I assure you, had he opened wide the door;
But because he did not do so, they mocked him and his faith.
Now the host is drowning, and the deluge is rising higher;
You can hear the frightful shrieks in many places;
But still the most religious have hope in their God,
And hosts believe also that they can still be saved.

To the tops of the trees they climb, with the water after them,
Which testified with power that Noah was no fool:
And now the ark they witnessed afloat on the great deep,
And they themselves just descending to their watery graves in mass.
The deceiver had become wise, and the false prophet a true one,
Wailing came instead of mocking, and an ocean instead of land:
All now are silent, except the grey surface of the water;
And the barque of the patriarch Noah is the only refuge.
The disobedient spirits were put together in prison,
Disbelief is their transgression—Christ will come to see them some time;
But not before the debt is paid, and justice replaces evil;
For having refused the Savior, it is just that they suffer for their scorn.
Well, such were the days of Noah, not the days of the Son of Man;
The latter are approaching to prove *us* each one:
As it was in the days of the flood, so will it yet truly be,
“Devouring flames” shall come to test the truth before long.
Merthyr, June 28, 1850.