

# Torah Portion for Noach

*Shabbat beginning October 28, 2022*

This week's portion has some of the best-known origin stories in our world: Noah's ark, his vineyard, and the Tower of Babel. Humans were told to be fruitful and multiply, but overpopulation led to violence. Thus, God started over with a single righteous seed, Noah's, and flooded the rest. Noah created the first vineyard but became the first drunk. When his youngest son told on Noah's nakedness, his brothers covered him. Thus, the young son's clan became slaves to his brothers. These clans moved on with a common language but chose to make bricks to build a city with a great tower to make a name for themselves and not be dispersed. Thus, God confused their speech to spread them across the earth.

Each story illustrates the consequences of excess. Populating is good but too much in one place fosters violence. Wine is good, but too much brings drunkenness and ridicule. Language enables collaboration and invention, but too much breeds stagnation. The ancients understood how good qualities that are overused bring about evil. It is easy to find examples in the daily news. Becoming aware of the evil effects of excess even of good practices helps us lead worthy lives.