

Chester Cycle 1572/2010**Play 4****Noah's Flood; Abraham and Melchisedeck; the Promise of Isaac**

Cast: GOD, NOAH, SHEM, HAM, JAPHET, NOAH'S WIFE, SHEM'S WIFE, JAPHET'S WIFE, THE GOOD GOSSIPS, MESSENGER, ABRAHAM, LOT, MELCHYSEDECK, KNIGHT, EXPOSITOR.

And first in some high place-- or in the clouds, if it may be – God speaketh unto Noah standing without the ark with all his family.

GOD	I, God, that all this world hath wrought, Heaven and Earth, and all of nought, I see my people in deed and thought are set foul in sin.	
5	My ghost shall now dwell in man that through fleshly lust is my fone -- but till six score years be come and gone to look if they will blin.	<i>foe</i> <i>cease</i>
10	Man that I made I will destroy, beast, worm, and fowl to fly, for on Earth they do me noy, the folk that are thereon. It harms me so hurtfully, the malice that doth now multiply,	 <i>harm</i>
15	that sore it grieves me inwardly that ever I made man.	
20	Therefore, Noah, my servant free, that righteous man art as I see, a ship soon thou shalt make thee of trees dry and light. Little chambers therein thou make and binding mud also thou take; within and without, see thou not slake to anoint it through all thy might.	 <i>be idle</i>
25	Three hundred cubits it shall be long and fifty broad to make it strong; the mast of height sixty, measure not wrong, thus measure thou it about. One window work through thy wit;	
30	a cubit of length and breadth make it. Upon the side a door shall sit, for coming in and out.	
35	Eating places thou make also three; round chambers one or two; for with water I think to flow Over man that I have mase. Destroyed all the world shall be -- save thou, thy wife, thy sons three, and their wives also with thee --	 <i>made</i>
40	all shall fall before thy face.	
NOAH	Ah, Lord, I thank thee aloud and still that to me art in such good will and spares me and my household to spill, as I now truly find.	
45	Thy bidding, Lord, I shall fulfill	

and nevermore thee grieve nor grill,
that such grace hath sent me till
amongst all Mankind.

*provoke
to me*

50 Have done, you men and women all.
Hurry, lest this water fall,
to build this ship, chamber and hall,
as God hath bidden us do.

SHEM
55 Father, I am already boun;
an axe I have, by my crown,
as sharp as any in all this town
for to go thereto.

prepared

HAM
60 I have an hatchet wonder keen
to bite well, as may be seen;
a better ground, as I ween,
is not in all this town.

believe

JAPHET
And I can well make a pin
and with this hammer knock it in.
Go we work, without more din,
and I am ready boun.

peg

prepared

NOAH'S
WIFE
And we shall bring timber to,
for we may nothing else do.
Women been weak to undergo
any great travail.

work

SHEM'S
WIFE
71 Here is a good chopping block;
on this you may hammer and knock.
Shall none be idle in this flock,
nor now may no man fail.

HAM'S WIFE
75 And I will go gather slitch,
the ship for to smear with pitch.
Anoint it must be, every stitch,
board, ribs, and pin.

mud

inch

JAPHET'S
WIFE
80 And I will gather chips here
to make a fire for you together
and for to mke your dinner
against you come in.

Then Noah beginneth to build the ark.

NOAH
85 Now in the name of God I begin
to make the ship that we shall in,
that we may be ready for to swim
at the coming of the flood.
These boards I pin here together
to bear us safe from the weather,
that we may row both hither and thither
and safe be from this flood.

*board
sail*

*Then Noah with all his family shall make a sign as though they wrought upon the ship
with diverse instruments.*

NOAH
Of this tree will I make the mast
tied with cables that will last,
and with a sail-yard for each blast,
and each thing in their kind.

95	With topcastle and bowsprit, both cords and ropes I have all meet to sail forth at the next weat. This ship is at an end.	<i>appropriate rainstorm</i>
	Wife, in this vessel we shall be kept, my children and thou I would in ye leapt.	
NOAH'S WIFE 101	In faith, Noah, I would rather thou slept. For all thy Frenchified fare, I will not do after thy read.	<i>judgment</i>
NOAH	Good wife, do now as I bid.	
NOAH'S WIFE	By Christ, not before I see more need, though thou stand all day and stare.	
NOAH 106	Lord, that women be crabbed ay, and none are meek, I dare well say. That is well seen by me today in witness of you each one.	
110	Good wife, let be all this bere, that thou makest in this place here, for all they know that thou art master -- and so thou art, by St. John!	<i>din</i>
	<i>And after that God shall speak to Noah as followeth:</i>	
GOD 115	Noah, take thou thy meny and in the ship hasten that ye be; for none so righteous man to me is now on Earth living.	<i>household</i>
120	Of clean beasts with thee thou take seven and seven before thou slake; he and she, mate to mate, quickly into that thou bring.	<i>stop</i>
125	Of beasts unclean two and two, male and female, and no mo; of clean fowls seven also, the he and she together; of fowls unclean, two, and no more, as I of beasts said before, that must be saved through my lore, for the time when I send this weather.	<i>more teaching</i>
130	Of all meats that may be eaten into the ship look they be gotten, for that may be no way forgotten. And do all this bedene to sustain Man and beasts therein until the water cease and blin.	<i>got quickly stop</i>
135	This world is filled full of sin, and that is now well seen.	
140	Seven days are yet coming, you shall have space them in to bring. After that, it is my liking Mankind for to annoy. Forty days and forty nights rain shall fall for their unrights. And what I have made through my mights	<i>pleasure grieve sins powers</i>

now think I to destroy.

NOAH
146 Lord, at your bidding I am bairn. *obedient*
Since no other grace will gain.
it will I fulfill fain, *eagerly*
for gracious I thee find.
150 An hundred winters and twenty
this ship-making tarried have I,
to see if through amendment thy mercy
would fall to Mankind.

155 Have done, ye men and women all,
hurry you lest this water fall,
that each beast were in stall
and into the ship brought.
Of clean beasts seven shall be,
of unclean, two, thus God bade me.
160 The flood is nigh, you may well see;
therefore tarry you not.

Then Noah shall go into the ark with all his family, his wife excepted, and the ark must be boarded around about. And on the boards all the beasts and fowls hereafter rehearsed must be painted, so that their words may agree with the pictures.

SHEM Sir, here are lion, leopards in;
horse, mares, oxen and swine,
goats, calves, sheep and kine *cattle*
here sit, thou may see.

HAM
165 Camels, asses, man may find,
buck and doe, hart and hind.
And beasts of all manner kind
here been, as thinketh me.

JAPHET
170 Take here cats and dogs, too,
otters and foxes, polecats also;
hares hopping gaily can go --
here, have kale to eat!

NOAH'S
WIFE
175 And here are bears, wolves set;
apes, owls, marmoset,
weasels, squirrels and ferret,
here they eat their meat.

SHEM'S
WIFE
180 Here are beasts in this house;
here cats making it crouse; *lively*
here a rat, here a mouse
that stand nigh together.

HAM'S
WIFE
And here are fowls less and more --
herons, cranes and bittore, *bitterns*
swans, peacocks – and them before *in front of them*
meat for this weather.

JAPHET'S
WIFE
187 Here are cocks, kites, crows
rooks, ravens, many rows,
ducks, curlews. Whoever knows
each one in his kind?
190 And here are doves, ducks and drakes,
redshanks running through the lakes --
and each fowl that sound makes
in this ship man may find.

- NOAH
Wife, come in. Why stands thou there?
Thou art ever impudent, that dare I swear.
Come in, in God's half, time it were --
for fear lest that we drown.
- NOAH'S
WIFE
200
Yea, sir, set up your sail
and row forth with evil hail; *bad luck to you*
for without any fail *doubt*
I will not out of this town.
- 205
But I have my gossips every one,
one foot further I will not go.
They shall not drown, by Saint John,
if I may save their life.
They loved me full well, by Christ.
But thou will let them into thy chest, *ship*
else row thou forth, Noah, when thou list, *wish*
and get thee a new wife.
- NOAH
210
Shem, son, lo! Thy mother is wrow; *angry*
by God, such another I do not know.
- SHEM
215
Father, I shall fetch her in, I trow, *trust*
without any fail.
Mother, my father after thee sends
and bids thee into yonder ship wend.
Look up and see the wind,
for we are ready to sail.
- NOAH'S
WIFE
NOAH
220
Son, go again to him and say
I will not come therein today.
Come in, wife, in twenty devils' way!
-- or else stand there without.
- HAM
SHALL WE ALL FETCH HER IN?
- NOAH
230
Yes, sons, in Christ's blessing and mine!
would ye haste you betime *soon*
for of this flood I stand in doubt. *fear*
- GOOD
GOSSIPS
227
The flood comes flowing in full fast
on every side that spreadeth full far.
For fear of drowning I am aghast,
good gossip, let us draw near.
- 230
And let us drink before we depart,
for oft-times we have done so.
For at one draught thou drinks a quart,
and so will I do before I go.
- 235
Here is a tankard full of Malmsey good and strong;
it will rejoice both heart and tongue.
Though Noah thinks we take too long,
yet we will drink atite. *quickly*
- JAPHET
240
Mother, we pray you all together --
for we are here, your own children --
come into the ship for fear of the weather,
for his love that you bought.

that clean been, you may know.

Whereas ye have eaten before
trees and roots, since ye were born,
of clean beasts now, less and more,
335 I give you leave to eat --
save blood and flesh, both together
of rotting carrion that is here.
Eat not of that in no manner,
for that always ye shall let.

*by no way
abandon*

340 Manslaughter always ye shall flee,
for that is not pleasant unto me.
They that shed blood, he or she,
anywhere amongst mankind,
that blood foully shed shall be
345 and vengeance have, men shall see.
Therefore beware now all ye,
you fall not into that sin.

shun

An agreement, Noah, with thee I make
and all thy descendants for thy sake,
350 from such vengeance for to slake,
for now I have my will.
Here I pledge thee an hest,
that man, woman, fowl nor beast
with water while this world shall last
355 I will no more spill.

cease

promise

slay

My bow between you and me
in the firmament shall be,
by true tokening that you may see
360 that such vengeance shall cease,
that man nor woman shall never more
be destroyed by water as hath before;
but for sin that grieveth me sore
therefore this vengeance was.

365 Where clouds in the sky have been,
that same bow shall be seen,
in tokening that my wrath and teen
shall never thus avenged be.
The string is turned towards you
and towards me is bent the bow,
370 that such weather shall never show;
and this I promise thee.

anger

My blessing now I give thee here,
to thee, Noah, my servant dear,
for vengeance shall no more appear.
375 And now farewell my darling dear

[Here the ship will leave the playing place]

MESSENGER All peace, lordings that been present,
and harken to me with good intent,
how Noah away from us he went
and all his company.
380 And Abraham, through God's grace
he is come into this place,
if ye will give him room and space
to tell you this story.

385 This play, truly, begin shall he
in worship of the Trinity
that ye may all hear and see
that shall be done today.
My name is Gobbet-on-the-Green
390 With you I may no longer be.
Farewell, my lordings, quickly,
so as not to hinder your play.

*Abraham having restored his brother [nephew] Lot into his own place,
doth first of all begin the play, and saith:*

ABRAHAM Ah, thou high God, granter of grace,
that ending nor beginning has,
I thank thee, Lord, that thou has
395 today given me the victory.
Lot, my brother that taken was,
I have rescued him in this case *situation*
and brought him home to this place *dominance*
through thy might and mastery.

400 To worship thee I will not wond, *delay*
four kings of foreign land
today delivered into my hand
riches with great array. *abundance*

405 Therefore, of all that I did win
to give the tenth part I will begin,
when soon to the city I come in,
and share with thee my prey *spoils*

410 Melchysedeck, that here king is
and God's priest also, iwiss, *indeed*
the tithe I will give him of this,
as wisdom says that I do.
God that has sent me the victory
over four kings graciously,
415 with him my spoils share will I,
when the city I come to

Here Lot, turning to his brother Abraham, doth say:

LOT Abraham, brother, I thank thee
who this day hast delivered me
from enemies hands and their posty; *power*
and saved me from woe.

420 Therefore I will give thee tithing
of my goods while I am living;
and now also of God's sending
the tithe I will give also.

Here the Knight doth come to Melchysedeck, King of Salem, and rejoicing greatly doth say:

KNIGHT My lord the king, tidings on right *true*
425 your heart to gladden and to light!
Abraham hath slain in fight
four kings since he went.
Here he will be this same night
and riches enough with him dight *arrayed*

430 I heard him thank God Almighty
for grace he hath him sent.

*Here Melchysedeck, looking up to Heaven, doth thank God for Abraham's victory,
and doth prepare himself to go present Abraham.*

MELCHYSE- Ah, blessed be God, that is but one!
DECK Towards Abraham will I go
to honour him, and that at once
435 mine office to fulfill,
and present him with bread and wine,
for the grace of God is him within.
Make haste, for love mine,
for this is God's will.

Here the Knight, offering to Melchysedeck a standing-cup (goblet) and bread also doth say:

KNIGHT Sir, here is wine, without were *certainly*
440 and with it bread both white and clear
to give him with good cheer,
that us so helped has.

Here Melchysedeck answering saith:

MELCHYSE- To God I know he is most dear,
DECK for of all things in his power
441 he has without danger, *permission*
and specially great grace.

*Melchysedeck, coming unto Abraham, doth offer to him a cup full of wine and bread
and saith unto him:*

445 Abraham, welcome may thou be –
God's grace is fully in thee.
Blessed ever must thou be
who victory so can wreak. *accomplish*
Here is bread and wine for thy degree *appropriate to your rank*
I have brought, as thou may see.
450 Receive this present now from me,
and that I thee beseech.

Here Abraham, receiving the offering of Melchysedeck, doth say:

ABRAHAM Sir king, welcome, truly;
thy present is welcome to my pay. *pleasure*
God hath helped me today,
unworthy though I were.
455 Ye shall have part of my prey *spoils*
that I won since I went away.
Therefore to thee that I take it may
the tithe I offer here.

Here Abraham offereth to Melchysedeck a horse that is laden.

460 And your present sir, take I
and honour it devoutly,
for much good it may signify
in time that is coming.
Therefore horse, harness and perry, *precious stones*
as befits your dignity,
465 the tithe of it take from me
and receive here my offering.

*Then shall Abraham receive the bread and wine, and Melchysedeck the laden horse
by way of tithe. Here Lot doth offer to Makchysedeck a goodly cup and saith:*

LOT
 And I will offer with good intent
 of such goods as God hath me lent
 to Melchysedeck here present,
 470 as God's will is to be.
 Abraham my brother offered has,
 and so will I through God's grace.
 This royal cup before your face, *in your sight*
 receive it now of me.

Here Melchysedeck receiveth the cup from Lot.

MELCHYSE-
 DECK
 Sir, your offering welcome is;
 477 and well I know, truly iwiss,
 that fully God's will it is
 that is now done today.
 Go we together to my city;
 480 and God now heartily thank we
 that helps us always through his posty *power*
 for so we full well may.

*Here they go together, and Abraham doth take the bread and wine,
 and Melchysedeck the laden horse*

EXPOSITOR (*riding on horseback*)

Lordings, what this may signify
 I will expound clearly,
 485 that the unlearned standing hereby
 may know what this may be.
 This present, I say verament, *truly*
 signifieth the New Testament
 that now is used with good intent *meaning*
 490 throughout all Christianity. *Christendom*

In the Old Law, without lying,
 when these two good men were living
 of beasts were all their offering
 and also their sacrament.
 495 But since Christ died on rood-tree, *cross*
 in bread and wine his death remember we;
 and at his last supper, our Maundy *Eucharist*
 was his commandment.

But before this thing practised should be
 500 afterwards, as now do we
 in signification – believe you me –
 Melchysedeck did so.
 And tithe-making, as you have seen here,
 by Abraham begun were.
 505 Therefore to God he was full dear,
 and so were both two.

By Abraham understand I may
 the Father of Heaven, in good fay *faith*
 Melchysedeck, a priest to his pay *at his pleasure*
 510 to administer that sacrament
 that Christ ordained the foresaid day - *Maundy Thursday (Last Supper)*
 in bread and wine to honour him ay.
 This signifieth, the truth to say,
 Melchysedeck's his present.

Here God appeareth to Abraham and saith:

GOD
515 Abraham, my servant, I say to thee,
thy help and succour I will be
For thy good deed much pleaseth me
I tell thee truly

Here Abraham, turning to God, saith:

ABRAHAM
520 Lord, one thing that thou wouldest see
that I pray for with heart full free!
Grant me, Lord, through thy posty
some fruit of my body. *attend to
most sincere
power*

525 I have no child, foul nor fair,
save my foster child to be my heir
that makes me greatly to apair. *suffer shame*
On me, Lord, have mercy.

GOD
530 Nay, Abraham, friend, believe thou me –
thy foster child thine heir shall not be;
but one son I shall send thee,
begotten of thy body.

535 Abraham, do as I thee say –
look and count, if thou may,
stars standing on the milky way;
that impossible were.
No more shalt thou, for any need,
number of thy body the seed
that thou shalt have, withouten dread;
thou art to me so dear. *assuredly*

540 Therefore, Abraham, servant free
look that thou be true to me;
and here an agreement I make with thee
thy seed to multiply. *noble*

545 To a great people father thou shalt be.
Kings of this seed men shall see;
and one child of great degree
all Mankind shall forbuy. *redeem*

550 I will henceforth alway
each man-child on the eighth day
be circumcised, as I thee say,
and thou thyself full soon.
Who circumcised not is
forsaken shall be with me, iwiss,
for disobedient that man is.
Look that this is done.

ABRAHAM
556 Lord, all ready, truly!
Blessed be thou ever and ay,
for thereby know thou may
thy folk from other men.
560 Circumcised they shall be all
at once, for ought that may befall,
I thank thee, Lord, thine own thrall
kneeling on my knees. *servant*

EXPOSITOR
565 Lordings all, take this intent
the meaning of this commandment:
this was sometimes a sacrament

in the Old Law, truly tane
As followeth now verament,
so was this in the Old Testament
But when Christ died, away it went,
570 and then began baptism.

truly understood

Also God a promise pledged us here
to Abraham, his servant dear:
so much seed, that in no manner
numbered it might be;
575 and one seed Mankind for to buy.
That was Christ Jesus, certainly,
For of his kind was Our Lady,
and so also was he.