

For you I have seen a righteous man before Me in this generation. (7:1)

The words "*a righteous man before Me*" are somewhat puzzling. It would seem implied that there existed during that time other righteous individuals, who despite their being honorable and virtuous, lacked the requirements of "*righteous before Me*". We may derive from here a noteworthy lesson. It is perhaps possible for one to be a moral and upright individual, even righteous and G-d fearing. However, there is a more sublime plateau of righteousness, this being the ability to stand before Hashem's scrutiny and nevertheless be viewed as a *tzadik*. This is defined as "*righteous before Me*" - a *tzadik* who remains virtuous even under Hashem's examination. This was the unique level attained only by Noach.