

Genesis 7: 17-24; “Noah’s Baptism in the Flood”, Sermon # 5 in the series – “The Life of Noah”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on April 16th, 2023, in the Morning Worship Service.

We are making our way slowly through the account of Noah and the ark. And I hope that as we do so, that you have begun to understand the relevance of it to yourself. Everyone who would know the Lord, and walk with Him closely, even as Noah did, will want to take notice of Noah’s life in particular. For Noah in the ark, passing through the waters of the Flood, has a typical meaning and significance for all New Testament believers. It has significance to our salvation and also our obeying God in entering the waters of Baptism.

The question that I would like to answer for you in this message is this: How is Noah in the ark, passing through the waters of the Flood a type of the believer passing through the waters of Baptism? The answer is, that Noah, in the ark, passing through the waters of the Flood, shows all New Testament believers what Christ’s death and resurrection has accomplished. And, it shows us also, what it really will accomplish in our lives, in the future, as we shall see. Just as Noah was in the ark, those who are in Christ Jesus will experience all of the certain realities and blessings of grace that He will bring us into. And so, I want to make 3 comparisons between the ark and what Christ has done in His death and resurrection.

1st of all – I want you to see, that as the ark saves from wrath; so also does Christ’s death. (verses 17, 18)

One of the main things that God wanted to accomplish, in giving us the Old Testament Scriptures was to be able to convey to our minds and hearts the reality of what He would have to do for us in grace, through our Lord Jesus Christ, if any one of us was to be saved. The Lord wants to show us the reality of the gospel of our salvation in Jesus Christ. And so He gives us types and pictures of that great salvation which Christ died to purchase. And, it certainly is true that we can better understand those types and pictures now that we have the New Testament Scriptures to interpret their fulfillment. The ark, I have said, is a type of Christ. All who came to it, and entered through its great and wide door would be saved.

The animals, clean and unclean, I have said, are a picture of the kind of sinners whom God will save. He will have all kinds be saved, from the vilest sinner to the most cultured, moral, and refined sinner, repent and enter into Christ. All of God’s Elect will come, being drawn to this ark by the Spirit’s power, even as the animals were drawn whom God chose to save. I have said to you that being saved is not something to be put off, lest you come looking too late. There was a time for the closing of the door of the ark, and those who were shut in by God were saved from drowning. Even so, those who believe in Christ before the door of the Day of Grace is closed in their life, or at the time of Christ’s coming, will be saved.

Whereas, as we looked at in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, there will be a good many people who think that common grace will be enough, and so they will try to enter into a saving relationship with Christ at a time too late – after the door was shut! But they will not be able to enter because they were too concerned with all the good things of this world. They neglected of the saving of their souls. This is indeed a sad thing, when people go on thinking that they can live for themselves without having private dealings with Christ, and without any public profession of Christ. They can keep coming to church even, and yet not enter in to God’s purpose for their lives.

They will perish if they do not have saving grace, no matter how fine and moral a person they were humanly speaking. This is because they have judged things for themselves, instead of letting God’s Word speak to them and define things for them. The ark was a work of Noah’s construction, which he did at the commandment of God. In the construction of it, he was a type of Christ. In entering into the ark, to be delivered from wrath, Noah was the type of a New Testament believer. Our salvation is all of God’s design, and so was the ark. God is the One who tells us that He is bringing wrath upon all unrepentant sinners. In that day God spoke through Noah as a preacher of

righteousness. When Christ came, and began His earthly ministry, God was speaking to all men through Him. By His obedience and His sufferings, He undertook to construct the salvation of all God's Elect people. He did His great work of redemption for all who will believe in Him by doing a work on our behalf. It was a work of substitutionary atonement. It was a work of great magnitude when He obeyed God's law perfectly. All the details of a perfect obedience were worked out in love to God and sinful men. He did this at great cost to Himself; even laying down His life at the cross so that we could find complete deliverance from God's wrath.

Noah constructed the ark according to the exact dimensions specified by God. But it is harder for us to grasp the width and length and depth and height of the love of Christ in dying for us. For us who were unworthy of that love, He bore the wrath of God at the cross for us there. God's wrath would have been against us as sinners forever, unless He intervened. He intervenes on behalf of all those who will trust in Him for salvation and deliverance from their sins. God's wrath is something which abides upon all men and women and children because of their sin. They cannot remove it by their own efforts. It is too great a lift. Jesus alone could bear it, and lift it from us.

Sin, in God's holy mind, is something which deserves to be punished by our physical death. And, if there is no repentance, it will result in our eternal death. All sin is disobedience to God, and it dishonors God. It is something that He must punish, because sin is the antithesis of His holy nature. He will punish all those persons who do not change their mind about it. He will punish them for all eternity. He will not relent. If we are not seen by God as being in Christ, His wrath is something that is increasing as our sins increase. And His righteous judgment will prevail over each unrepentant person to their eternal destruction, even as the waters of the Flood prevailed on the earth in Noah's day.

No one will escape the wrath of God unless they are found in Christ. When a person will not repent, they are storing up wrath for themselves in the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. God will prevail over all sinners in judgment, because no man will be able to declare himself righteous by even the best of his words, works, or deeds. In Noah's day, God decided that the only way for people to escape His judgment upon all flesh was by their entering the ark. He has decided in our days and time that the only way to escape His wrath is by believing in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

This is seen very clearly portrayed for us over in 1st Peter 3: 18-20. Peter says – "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water." So, Christ suffered the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. He was put to death in the flesh on the cross, but He was made alive once again in the flesh, by the Holy Spirit.

By this same Holy Spirit, Peter says, Christ went and preached to the people of Noah's day. That is, He preached to the people of that day through Noah Himself. All during the 120 years period of time in which God's patience was kept waiting, Noah built the ark. And the longsuffering of God waited for a response from those people. There was no response. It is important for you and I to better understand how great is the depravity of every person, by nature. And an unbelieving person will never respond to the gospel, without God's opening their mind to their need to believe the truth of the gospel for themselves.

God, through Noah, and his building of the ark, was faithful to declare that His wrath was coming. And that the people should have received the gospel of that day, which was, to repent and to enter the ark. At the end of verse 20 it says that a few, "only eight souls, were saved through water." Now we are ready to look at verse 21. It says there that there is also an antitype which now saves us – that is, baptism. It is not the removal of the filth of the flesh by earthly water, but the answer of a good conscience toward God. This good conscience is found by believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." In verse 20b it says that "they were saved through

water,” or “by going through the water. Some translations say, “Baptism now saves you.” It would be easy to take this phrase and conclude that water baptism saves a person’s soul. But Peter is quick to deny that this is what he is saying. He says that it is not the physical washing away of the filth of the flesh. And we might add, that it is not a ceremonial bestowal of a few drops of water to an infant’s head. Neither is it the pouring of water over an adult’s head, or even the immersion of a person in a pool of water, that saves them. It is “the answer of a good conscience toward God,” reads the NKJV and KJV.

It is “an appeal to God for a good conscience,” it says in the NAS. Simon Kistemaker in his commentary on 1st Peter says that many translators think that it could also be translated, “the pledge of a good conscience toward God.” There is some powerful truth here indeed. What the apostle Peter is clearly stating, is that baptism is defined as one who is pledging to follow and to serve God. And they are doing so because their faith in Christ’s finished work has brought to them a clear conscience. It was because they had come to know the reality of their sins being forgiven. That person is now, in their water baptism, appealing to God. They are saying to God that they will follow Christ. And they will maintain that good conscience that they have received by believing in Christ, by striving to live righteously, and keep God’s commandments, through the resurrection power of Jesus Christ.

It is that kind of declaration at the time of water baptism that saves us. It is pictured so well for us in Noah’s obedience to God’s way of being saved from His wrath. When we are baptized in believer’s baptism in water, we are saying that we believe that we have been saved from the wrath of God because we have believed in Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection. It was the ark that bore up and saved those eight persons in that day of earthly judgment in Noah’s day. “The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The believer, spiritually speaking, rides on the finished work of Christ on top of the waters God’s judgment. Even as the ark moved about on the surface of the waters, so Christ bore all the buffeting and beating and the wrath of God against our sins, so that we can be saved and be safe forever. This is what every true believer is declaring as they enter the waters of baptism.

2nd – Even as the ark separated Noah from the sins of the world, so also does Christ’s death, which is pictured in baptism. (verses 19-22)

When Noah stepped into that ark, he was leaving the sinful world of his day behind. God was judging the world, and He was separating Noah from it. He was doing this for his good. He did it so that Noah would be rescued from the sinful world of his day. That world of sinners was drowned in the waters of judgment in the flood, but Noah was benefited by it in every way. This is a picture of what happens to us in our conversion to Christ. Turn with me over to Romans chapter 6.

Here in verse 1 there is a question being asked by Paul, “What shall we say then?” “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” “Certainly not!” “How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?” “Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” When we believe in Jesus Christ we are baptized into His death. We share in the communion of what He died to bring to sinners. When He died on the cross, we who believe in Him, died with Him. We are crucified with Him and this brings about a blessed change.

When you believe in Christ He takes away not only the guilt of your sins, but He also delivers you from the bondage and the domination of sin over your life. Christ not only died for our sins, but He died to sin once for all. He did this so that we would be able to experience newness of life in an ongoing sense. We are dead to sin and can reckon on it. And then we can proceed to live for God’s glory. We have power now to keep His commandments in a way that we never have had before. All this, because we are buried with Him in this baptism into his death. This is well pictured well for us in Noah’s being in the ark and the ark passing through the waters. The ark was shaped somewhat like a coffin. Noah and the other 7 persons were “buried” in that ark while all the unrepentant sinners of that day were drowned in judgment. Noah and his family would have perished as well if

God had not provided the ark. So, a definite separation took place from the world. And a definite realization of the greatness of God's grace came to Noah in that year that he was in the ark. All his sins were buried in the watery sea of God's judgment. All of his sins would fall on another, even Christ.

The ark was his salvation in picture form, and that picture is of Christ. It is the same picture which is presented in water baptism. There, in the baptismal waters, the believer is lowered into the water, having believed in Jesus Christ, and having entered into His finished work on the cross. All of his sins are "washed away" in his profession of Christ, his entering in to Him. I am sure that there were times in Noah's experience when he looked out the window of the ark, when it was tossing upon the waves, and he spoke to himself words something like we find in Micah 7: 18 & 19. "Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy." "He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities." "You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." That is the picture of water baptism.

3rd – The ark transports men to a new life and a new world, and so also does Christ's resurrection. (verses 23, 24)

Our text says in verse 23 – "So God destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground; both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air." "They were destroyed from the earth." "Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive." The parallel is complete, is it not? In Galatians 6: 14 it says, "But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation." The old world was gone. And Noah knew it. It would never be the same.

So it is in conversion. The old things have passed away, Behold all things are new. All the radical elements of sin are destroyed and there is a new birth and a new beginning. Noah, in the ark, did have to suffer some, in his identification with Christ. I am sure that it was not pleasant at times on the stormy seas, and I am sure that it was not always a pleasant thing, caring for all those animals. But there was grace in his heart, and mind, and life, that made his attitude one of faith and hope and joy at all that God had done for him and would do for him yet. There was newness of life, in himself and most of the others with him. He was experiencing a new life and on his way to a new world.

The new life was one of living to God without the molestations of gross sin, as it had been in the old life. The new world would not be without sin, but it would be a better place for a time. He looked beyond it in faith to the time when God would bring, through Jesus Christ, a new heavens and a new earth in which dwelt righteousness. This is also what we find in water baptism. It is a picture of leaving the old world and life of sin behind. It is the reality and the anticipation that 'all things have or are becoming new. In Christ we are united with Him in His resurrection. "If we died with Christ we believe that we shall also live with Him." We are now alive to God and can live to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There is the power, there is the joy, there is the delight in God's grace and His truth, and His people. There is delight in all that He will do for us to make us over into the image of the One who is truly righteous; even Jesus our Lord. This is also the picture of water baptism. You are raised out of the water, leaving your sins behind, your old life behind. And now you present yourself to God as being alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. This is significance of water baptism, not that it saves from sin, but that it pictures so well what Christ does for every believer. It was not the water that saved Noah, it was the ark. Water can be a picture of cleansing, but only on the basis of Christ's death and resurrection. Otherwise, it may become a picture of drowning. Water was the judgment that God brought to that old world of Noah's day. It was Noah in the ark, who passed through the waters of judgment, unscathed. That is the picture of the baptism which now saves us.

