

## SAFETY IN THE ARK

The Flood is history. The same kind of carnal unbelief that said in Noah's day, "there *will* be no Flood," says today, "there *was* no Flood." Both are rooted in the love of the world and hatred of the God of Jesus Christ, truth, and judgment. The church must proclaim the history of the Flood.

In the 600th year of Noah's life in the 2nd month on the 17th day of the month, God came in the Flood. For 40 days and 40 nights rain fell. The sluice gates of heaven let down a wall of water from above and the fountains of the deep unleashed a wall of water from beneath. This was accompanied by a great tearing, rending, and shaking of the earth. Those waters went up until they covered the mountains of that world to a depth of 15 cubits. The waters prevailed for 150 days. The Flood lasted one year and ten days.

The Flood was the manifestation of the power of God. The Bible says the waters "prevailed," and the waters "prevailed exceedingly" (Gen. 7:18, 19, and 24).

The Flood was the power of God to judge and destroy a world smug in its sins. They were deaf to Noah's preaching and warnings and mocked at his word about righteousness and safety in the ark. Such is God's word always to the unbelieving and the impenitent. They will be destroyed.

The Flood was the power of God's grace to save believing Noah and his family and the animals that were with him. "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (Gen. 6:8). In grace, God gave an unconditional promise to save Noah. In grace, he made a covenant with Noah. The grace of God lifted Noah up and separated him from the destruction of the world happening beneath the waves.

Noah was saved by faith alone. By faith alone, Noah was righteous before God. Righteousness is God's judgment that a man is perfect and worthy of eternal life. God saved Noah because God forgave his sins and declared him righteous. This is the stated ground for Jehovah's call of Noah into the Ark, "for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation" (Gen. 7:1).

The Flood is a type of the salvation of God's elect church in Christ. As God saved righteous Noah, so

God saves the righteous man today. The righteous man is the man whose conscience is cleansed from guilt by faith in the resurrection of Christ.

Christ's resurrection is the promise from God that the Flood is past for the believer because Christ underwent the judgment of the Flood at the cross. Scripture describes the reality of the cross for Jesus Christ: "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me" (Ps. 42:7). Jesus went down into the flood of God's wrath at the cross and with him went the whole cosmos, God's elect church at the heart of the cosmos, and all the sin and guilt of all God's people. He emerged from that flood the third day when he came out of the grave. He arose because he made satisfaction for sin.

Since he emerged, the believer cannot be submerged anymore in the judgments of God. The resurrection is the confirmation that we are perfectly righteous in Christ and worthy of eternal life. When the believer experiences a flood of troubles in this life, the resurrection of Christ is the promise that those sufferings are for salvation and not for destruction. When God comes in judgment at death, then the believer will not perish, but really begin to live through the dying off of sin. When God shakes the world once more at the appearance of Christ, he will deliver the believer at last into the new heavens and earth.

In the death and resurrection of Christ, believers have been buried with him, raised to new life. As really as those Flood waters came in and lifted up Noah and his family and separated them from the destruction of the world, so does the blood of Christ separate the church from the world. The blood of Christ separates in the very depths of the being of the child of God. It destroys all flesh. It destroys flesh, too, in the sense of the old man of sin. The old sinful man is killed and the sanctified and renewed man emerges. By the blood of Christ, believers are washed from sin's guilt and accounted righteous before God in Christ. By the blood of Christ, they are washed from the pollution and dominion of sin and consecrated to God. God will preserve them until he sets them down on their Ararat in the newborn

world of the new creation.

God saved Noah and his family in the ark. The word *ark* means a box or chest. We can conceive of a very large wooden pole barn or better, of a huge coffin into which Noah entered by faith, and by the wonder of God's grace emerged from the flood.

The ark was an instrument that God used to save Noah. The ark did not save and preserve Noah because it floated or because it was so well constructed. The Flood would have destroyed the largest ships man has ever built. The Scriptures say that "the LORD shut him in" (Gen. 7:16). That phrase means that God took the ark into his bosom, enfolded it with his arms, stood under it, held it up, and preserved it by his great power in the Flood.

The ark was part of the wonder of grace in the Flood. The power of God's grace in the waters lifted up the ark, preserved that ark in the Flood, and caused that ark to rest on Ararat. The fact that Noah built the ark at all was a work of God's grace. Noah built by faith, so God built the ark.

The pressing question about the ark is, what is its application today? The ark is a word of God in scripture to his covenant friends in the last days about their calling in the midst of a wicked and perverse world. The ark stands as the everlasting reminder of the part that God's people have in his covenant to cleave unto him in true faith, firm hope, and ardent love and to forsake and condemn the world. The ark is the calling to come out of the world and into the true church of Christ. The ark is the calling of God's people to build in God's covenant, kingdom, and church in antithetical separation from and in condemnation of the world.

Things were humming along in that world. Man was making tremendous strides in the world in every area of science and technology. There was a flourishing religious side to the world. They called themselves the sons of God, so those men claimed the name church for themselves. But God says in Genesis 6:13: "the end of all flesh is come before me and the earth is filled with violence through them." The words "the end of all flesh," mean the extremity of man's wickedness. Sinful man had come to the bitter end of the development of sin and unbelief so that flesh was as wicked as flesh could get in that age.

The ark was a word of God that he hated their religion, their sin, their unbelief, and their impenitence, and that he would destroy them. The ark stood like a pointing and accusing finger and like a coffin warning of impending doom.

The ark calls the church to be separate from and condemn the world. The ark is especially the condemnation of the amalgamation of the apostate church and the ungodly world. The believer is not called to build a good and godly culture, hold hands with the wicked, and make a pleasant society, but to build in God's covenant, kingdom, and church, separate from the world. By building in God's covenant, the believer condemns as Noah did when he built the ark. When believers build and maintain a separate school, that is an act of condemnation. It says that they can be part of no other. When believers build and maintain a separate church, that is an act of condemnation because they cannot belong to another.

There is safety in separation from the ungodly world and apostate church world. In the union of church and world, there is destruction. Denial of the antithesis is the death of the church. Not only the antithesis over against the ungodly world, but also the antithesis between those that adhere faithfully to God's word and those that have departed from the truth of the word of God and have become like the world. To deny that antithesis and to attempt to overcome it is ecclesiastical suicide as much as if Noah would have stopped building the ark or opened the door of the ark in the Flood.

Second, the ark was the commendation of Noah's faith. He believed God's word that there would be a Flood and God's promise to save him in the ark and to give him a new creation. So he built the ark by faith. This is the great test of a man's faith: will he believe God though the whole world condemns him and all men forsake him, hate him, and ridicule his work? By his obedience to God, he showed that his faith was true faith in God's promise.

Third, the ark shows what works are pleasing to God. The ark is not the calling of the church simply to be busy, but the calling of the church is to obey the word of God in everything. The ark is the condemnation of all man's invented religious works by which he supposes that he is very spiritual and pleasing to God and upon which he expends a great deal of time and energy. Good works which demonstrate our faith are obedience to what God commands in his word.

Fourth, the ark was an expression of Noah's hope. In all his life Noah labored for the end of the world and the coming of a new one. Every ounce of his energy was pressed into that calling all the while he was harassed by the wicked.

In seeking the world to come, the ark is the condemnation of all world-flight. Noah lived and built

in the middle of the world. Noah used the world. If Noah lived today, the world would sue him for damaging the environment because he cut down so many trees. But he used the world for the only legitimate purpose for which it can be used, and that is labor in God's kingdom, covenant, and church and for the world to come.

The friend of God must seek the world to come and not the world that now is. God calls us to perseverance against terrible opposition. He calls us to

live holily and separately from the ungodly world. He calls us to confess his name and love his truth. He calls us to be sorry daily for our sins. He calls us to labor for the things of God's covenant, God's kingdom, and God's church, and God's truth. These are the things that belong to the world to come.

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**Convention Speech** Rev. Andy Lanning

## LIVING IN HOPE OF A NEW CREATION

The flood is a powerful promise that Jesus Christ is coming to earth again. This might surprise us at first. What does the flood have to do with the return of Christ? After all, the flood is recorded way at the beginning of the Bible, while our Lord's return will be the very last thing that happens in the history of this earth. The flood resulted in the utter destruction of all flesh, except Noah and his family, while our Lord will make a new heaven and earth when he returns. What does the flood have to do with the return of Christ?

And yet our Lord and his apostles repeatedly connected the flood with Jesus' return. Our Lord, in Matthew 24:37–39 says: "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." And Peter, writing about "the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished," writes that "the heavens and earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men," which will occur on "the day of the Lord" (2 Pet. 3:6, 7, 10).

The connection between the flood and the return of our Lord is that the flood was a precursor of the second coming. The flood foreshadowed and foretold the return of our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven. The flood stands as a powerful promise of God to

his church that Jesus Christ is coming indeed! For as it was in the days of Noah, so also shall the coming of the Son of man be. This promise of God encourages the hearts of God's people as we wait for our Lord to appear. Especially when it seems to us that we have been waiting long for him, knowledge of the flood assures us that God's word is true and that Christ's return is sure. The child of God, believing God's word concerning the flood, lives in the hope of the new creation.

There are especially three things to note about living in the hope of the new heavens and earth. First, the Lord Jesus Christ shall return to the earth personally. He will come visibly and bodily in such a way that every eye will see him. The flood foreshadows this personal return of Christ to the earth, because when God sent the flood, he himself came to the earth. God did not sit at a distance from the earth and send the flood waters, but he himself visited the earth and brought the flood waters with him. Notice the language that God uses in Genesis 6:17: "And, behold, I, even I, do *bring* a flood of waters upon the earth...." If God were far away, he would only *send* a flood of waters. But God himself came to earth and *brought* a flood of waters upon the earth.

This was also the prophecy of Enoch about the flood, recorded in Jude 14–15: "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all..." Even though the ultimate fulfillment of Enoch's prophecy awaits the second coming of Christ, Enoch was definitely speaking