

Genesis 7 – The Cleansing

“Then the Lord said to Noah, “Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation.”

Where was the Lord here? He was in the ark. He invited Noah into His presence. Notice, Noah didn't enter until God said, “It's time.”

Sinful man (Adam) was 'shown the door', so to speak, out of the paradise of Eden and wasn't allowed to reenter in order to protect him from an eternal sin-filled existence should he eat of the tree of life. At this point however, the sinful man (Noah) who was righteous in God's eyes is shown another door, but this one is into the paradise of the presence and protection of the Lord Himself. And again for his protection; in fact, the Lord insures that he cannot exit.

The first situation demonstrated God's mercy and the second, His grace. It's by His mercy that we don't get what we deserve, and it's by His grace that we get what we don't deserve.

“Noah did not go into the ark till God bade him; though he knew it was designed for his place of refuge, yet he waited for a renewed command, and had it. It is very comfortable to follow the calls of Providence, and to see God going before us in every step we take. God does not bid him go into the ark, but come into it, implying that God would go with him, would lead him into it, accompany him in it, and in due time bring him safely out of it.” (Matthew Henry)

“You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female; also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth. For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made. And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him.”

Interesting that here, long before the Mosaic Law, God specified animals as clean and unclean. In other words, He didn't decide at the time of Moses to declare which

animals were clean; it was something established long before, probably from the fall of creation. But this leads us to another insight...

Noah had been working on the ark for as much as hundred and twenty years (see Gen 6:3). I suggest that there is a symbolic linkage here because the only other time a hundred and twenty years is used in the Bible is with Moses - he lived 120 years (Deut 31). What's the relationship? Noah was dedicated to the ark for 120 years and in it he found safety in the presence of the Lord. Moses is most remembered for one thing - the Law of God which you could say he completed during his 120 years. Let me suggest that as Noah found refuge by entering the ark so the people of God will find refuge by 'entering' the Word of God who we know from scripture to be Jesus Christ.

The Jewish people have long honored God's Law but have never as a nation entered into it - that is, they have never comprehended the spiritual nature of it and Who is revealed within it.

David, prophesying concerning the Messiah said, *“Behold, I come in*

the scroll of the book; it is written of Me I delight to do your will, O my God, and Your Law is within My heart.” (Psa 40:7,8) All of us need to recognize Who is in the ark, that is, Who is in the Law - it's our triune Lord. For as the ark had three decks, we find that as we truly enter in to the Law, we recognize the three incredibly beautiful persons of the Godhead - the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Historically, the Jewish people have revered the Father and acknowledged His Spirit, but they have been blinded to the character and identity of the Son.

And, this is the ultimate tragedy for the Son is the only way to relationship with God. Jesus said, *“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”* (Mat 5:17) As the Lord said to Noah after more than a century of labor, *“Come into the ark.”* Jesus said, *“Come unto Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”* (Mat 11:28)

The written Word reveals the heart of our God just as the Living Word, Jesus Christ revealed the heart of the Father.

Literally hundreds of people groups have their own accounts and legends of the flood, one of the most remarkable of which is the Babylonian account, which is similar to the Genesis account in many ways and is clearly drawn from it.

“Since all mankind came from Noah's sons, all mankind remembers the flood; the Samo-Kubo tribe of New Guinea, the Athapascan Indians of America, the Papago Indians of Arizona, Brazilian tribes, Peruvian Indians, African Hottentots, natives of Greenland, native Hawaiian islanders, Hindus, Chinese, Egyptians, Greeks, Persians, Australian natives, the Welsh, Celts, Druids, Siberians, and Lithuanians.”

“In the more than 200 cultures that have their own account of the flood, in 88%, there is a favored family. In 70%, survival is due to a boat. In 95%, the sole cause of the catastrophe is a flood. In 66%, the disaster is due to man's wickedness. In 67%, animals are also saved. In 57%, the survivors end up on a mountain. Many of the accounts also specifically mention birds being sent out, a rainbow, and eight persons being saved.” (David Guzik)

Noah and his family had to wait seven days in the ark before the catastrophe came. They were undoubtedly the focus of much ridicule and persecution. But just as Noah and his clan had one more week to wait for the promise of God, so the Jewish people of today have one more ‘week’. Of course, this is the prophetic week of seven years indicated in Daniel's prophecy of Daniel chapter 9 – the forthcoming tribulation period – the time of “Jacob's trouble”.

“Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth. So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. Of clean animals, of animals that are unclean, of birds, and of everything that creeps on the earth, two by two they went into the ark to Noah, male and female, as God had commanded Noah. And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth.”

Everyone from the Adamic line was dead, even Noah's father, so Noah was the last of the godly men on earth (save his family). In a parallel fashion, the world will be a godless place indeed when the church is

raptured away. Leaving behind only the ‘remnant’ of anointed Jewish believers to be God's witness.

“In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights. On the very same day Noah and Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark - they and every beast after its kind, all cattle after their kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort. And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life. So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in.”

It's important to note that the Lord shut them in. Noah didn't shut the door - it wasn't his responsibility to deny anyone salvation. And thus it is so today. We are told to preach the gospel to everyone. Nothing should hinder that.

The story is told of a senior pastor in the evangelical movement who when the move of the Spirit was just beginning and many young hippies were starting to come in to the church, one of the church's elders complained that these young people were ruining the new carpet with their dirty feet. The pastor retorted that if the carpet was getting in the way of these young hippies coming to the Lord and to church then the carpet had to go, not the sheep!

And the Lord knows when it will be time for the church to ascend. He knows when the last of His sheep is in the fold so to speak. It is not our job to shut the door on anyone!!

“Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved on the earth; birds and cattle and beasts and

every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. So He 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. And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.”

“The same waters that destroyed life on the earth bore up the ark in which Noah and all his family were carried safely. The same judgment that swept down from God upon the Lord Jesus Christ brings death to those who refuse and life to those who believe. In the ark Noah was surrounded by judgment which showed God’s hatred of sin, but he himself was safe. In Christ we are surrounded by the judgment of God against sin, and we are safe.”
(Barnhouse)

Salvation in the midst of judgment? Yes. It reminds me of something that happened some years back. One day, we heard a knock at the front door and I went to answer it. The man standing there was

obviously a little timid but said, “I’ve come here three times to tell you something and,...well, can I come in and talk with you for a few minutes? Oh,... I’m your neighbor from down the street.”

At that, we welcomed him in and sat down to hear the most fascinating true story. He explained, “About six months ago, my wife found out she had cancer and in just a couple of months, she died. We’d been married a long time and it left me and our two daughters devastated. My daughters are 16 and 10 years old. The older one is adopted.”

“I guess the grief left us taking it out on each other. The girls started having real problems at school and I was depressed too. The older girl started getting into drugs and hanging around a real bad crowd. One day she told me bluntly that she was going to marry this fellow who was a major drug dealer and who was nearly twice her age.”

“I begged her not to consider that, but she got violently mad and rushed out of the house. As I watched, this same guy was waiting for her on his motorcycle, and they just took off. Of course, I was

terribly worried and when she didn’t show up for several hours, I called the police but got nowhere.”

“About a week later, she was still gone and I was frantic but then the police contacted me and told me that she had filed a charge against me as having sexually mistreated her. I was arrested and then freed on bail, but my younger daughter was taken away by the social services people “for her protection.””

“Then, somehow, the local newspaper got the story and they wrote some articles that frankly characterized me as guilty,... and I was absolutely innocent.”

“I remember those articles,” I said.

“Anyway, when the people at work read them, the management was concerned that the company’s name was associated with me and they fired me after more than ten years of working there.”

“I hired a lawyer, but he ended up taking all my savings and got nowhere. Meanwhile, the bank wound up foreclosing on my mortgage and was about to repossess my car. I came home

that same evening feeling like I was in a living nightmare. My wife dead, my kids abducted and in to drugs, my life ruined, job gone, house and car about to go. I was really, really down.”

“When I entered the house, I discovered that drug dealer who had taken my older daughter. He had an ax in his hands and as I looked around I saw that the whole house had been demolished inside - - the walls, the furniture, even the photo albums of the family. Everything was destroyed! He laughed wildly, then threatened me and ran out the door.”

“I just fell down weeping and weeping. I can’t describe how much it hurt deep in my stomach. I couldn’t take it anymore, and no one would listen or care. I took the last bit of cash I had and ran to the pawn shop where I bought a pistol. Then I jumped in my car and headed out of town to simply end it all. I parked on the side of the road and put the gun to my head, cocked the trigger and was about to shoot when a mental image flashed in my mind just as clear as a photo.”

“It was a picture of your daughter, Star. Her face was smiling at me,

and I remembered what I had heard her sharing with my youngest girl about Jesus. I remembered thinking how silly it seemed at the time, and how I had cynically written it off. But I couldn't deny the light in her eyes and the genuine loving friendship she extended to my daughter."

"At that moment, something made me decide that I had to know if what she had said was true, if it was real. I put the gun down and returned to town, looking for a church. You know that church there on the north edge of town? Well, I pulled in and fortunately the pastor was there. We talked for long time and you know what? I gave my life to the Lord; I asked Jesus to come into my heart and forgive my sins."

"Then I had a peace I'd never known before. But that was just the beginning. A few days later, my older daughter went to the police and confessed that she lied about my crimes. She came home and we reconciled. My younger daughter was returned to me. Then the newspaper printed an apology, the bank reinstated my mortgage and car loan, and my old employer

called me back and offered me a job and a promotion!"

"And so I came here to say...well, I guess to say, "Please thank your daughter." God is so good! And I never would have known Him if it weren't for the tragedies He allowed. I'm sure my wife is happy now too - she was a Christian."

Dear friends, all that God does and all that He allows is in love. Many of you may be facing tragedies as well - difficulties that are overwhelming. Like a flood, the trials and storms of life seem inundating.

Go into the ark. Go into the arms of a loving God Who can handle it all. You'll find His own hands scarred as He holds you, scars that we all put there. Let Him close the door behind you and you'll find that the very floods which threatened to destroy you will now buoy you up into His awesome presence. His name is Jesus.