

A New Beginning

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Text: Genesis 8¹

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Series: Genesis (The Book of Beginnings)

Introduction: Open your Bible to **Genesis 8**. The title of our study tonight is “A New Beginning”. There is so much in Genesis 8 that points to our Christian life. The God of Noah is our God. Noah walked with God by faith, as do we. By faith he entered the ark and avoided judgment. May all we be safe in Christ, our Ark of Salvation tonight.

Around 4500 years ago, God says He destroyed the Earth's entire human population. All but eight humans were killed in the flood. No one could escape the Flood because God caused the earth's crust to break up at the start of the Flood. Huge eruptions under the oceans for thousands of miles literally boiled the ocean and released steam into the air along with volcanic ash. Immense tidal waves were also created. The devastation was unimaginable.

Genesis 7:20-24, “The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. 21 And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. 22 Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. 23 He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. 24 And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.”

No one escaped, the Lost World perished in the Genesis Flood engineered by God. This is the event we will read about in God's Word. And this event directly caused the death of every man woman, and child on Earth, except 8. It destroyed every human being. And it left its footprints globally. Noah and his family rode out the first global catastrophe in a wooden boat!

If I follow the dating correctly, Noah and his family stayed in the ark for one year and ten days.

- Christians are safe from condemnation. And though they were tossed in the water, they could not be harmed by the judgment. So it is with Christians, we are safe from condemnation. Rejoice!
- Yet we must always consider the coming judgment of God and warn others. The wages of sin is death. What a picture of the underworld. Man was said to be so depraved that “The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is from the *English Standard Version* of the Bible.

(Genesis 6:5).

As we look at the awesomeness and fear of the flood judgment, let us never forget that this will be the destiny of all outside of Jesus Christ. According to **Revelation 14:10**, those who know not Christ will have the same fate as the devil and his angels, “will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and ... will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.”

We must understand the sheer terror of this judgment, yet it will be insignificant compared to the eternal judgment of God against sinners without Christ.

Tonight with Noah, as with our salvation today, we see...

- (1) God’s wrath is **satisfied** (vs. 1-5).
- (2) Our dwelling place is **sanctified** (vs. 6-14).
- (3) God’s worship is **celebrated** (vs. 15-22).

I. God’s wrath is **satisfied** (vs. 1-5).

According to Peter, the ark is an illuminating picture of our salvation in Christ (see 1 Peter 3:18–22). The ark saved Noah and his family from judgment because they believed God’s promise (Heb. 11:7).

People are not born saved, they are born sinners. In order to be saved Noah had to get into the ark. So must we get “in Christ”. He must be our life, our all in all. Let’s consider how God delivered Noah from condemnation and judgment. It rained outside the ark, but Noah and his family were safe and warm inside the ark.

Verses 1-5, “But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. 2 The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, 3 and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated, 4 and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. 5 And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.”

So how did the Lord deliver the Noah family? Well the Bible tells us that to begin with God did something. In all the judgment God did not forget Noah. Noah was completely safe.

A. God **remembers**. (v.1)

“But God **remembered** Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark” (vs. 1). Now does that mean that for a while God forgot about Noah and his family and all those animals? Absolutely not! The

expression “remembered” (*zākar*) does not mean “calling to mind” here; it is covenant language, designating covenant fidelity (e.g., the Fourth Commandment, Exodus 20:8; cf. Luke 1:72).

When the Bible says that “God remembered Noah” God remembered His covenant faithfulness. Were it not for God through Christ, we would all perish. God would later give His only Son, that “whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (**John 3:16**).

You may be in a storm. It may be the biggest storm of your life, but God has not forgotten you! “He has loved you with an everlasting love”.

Romans 5:6, “For while we were still weak [KJV: yet without strength], at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.”

Jeremiah 29:11, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

J.C. Ryle said there is much benefit in affliction.

“By it He often teaches lessons which would be learned in no other way. By it He often draws souls away from sin and the world, which would otherwise have perished everlastingly. Health is a great blessing, but sanctified disease is a greater. Prosperity and worldly comfort, are what all naturally desire; but losses and crosses are far better for us, if they lead us to Christ. Thousands at the last day, will testify with David, and the nobleman before us, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted.” (Psalm. 119:71.)

God is no longer mad at you! You are safe in the ark. His hardships for you are only for your good and His glory.

Are you willing to pray a courageous prayer? “God, I want to submit to whatever it takes to make me like Jesus”.

Not only did God remember ...

B. God **reverses** the judgment (vs. 1b-3). “And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. 2 The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, 3 and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated”.

We see an allusion to the Spirit of God which is the same word as “wind”. We remember how the Spirit hovered over the face of the deep at the first creation. Here we have God sending a mighty wind over the earth to transform the condemned earth into a new place of blessing!

This is what God has done for us. He's reversed the judgment for you and I! It was the wind that opened the waters of the Red Sea! It was with the same wind that the Lord provided quail for His people in the desert. It was the rushing wind that filled the early believers with the Spirit of power at Pentecost.

God demonstrates His reversal of judgment of our lives by sealing us with that wind, with the Holy Spirit of God. That rushing wind of God's Spirit pushes back the crippling effects of sin, and gives us freedom to grow and be renewed in Jesus Christ!

So ... we read that God **remembered** ... the flood waters of God's judgment were **reversed**.

- C. The brings Noah and his family in the Ark to a place of **rest** (vs.4). Verse 4, "and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat."

The seventh month in the religious calendar of the Hebrews was Tishri, the most important month of the sacred convocations; it included the Day of Atonement as well as the Feasts of Trumpets, Tabernacles, and Sacred Assembly (Lev 23:23–36). It was appropriate, therefore, that the ark should find refuge in the cultic month celebrating atonement and God's provision.² This was a month which pointed to Jesus death and resurrection.

Remember that the Ark is a type of Christ, and so the Ark bore the wrath of God. God's wrath is restrained, and the Ark comes to REST, just as Jesus Christ rested. We read in **Hebrews 12:2**, "looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

Jesus work is done. We are accepted in Him. He's taken the wrath of God for us.

II. Our dwelling place is **sanctified** (vs. 6-14).

Three different times Noah attempted to find out how things were progressing on the earth. After the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat, Noah waited 40 days and he opened the window and released two birds.

Now I don't know if Noah was a bird-watcher before the flood, but I do know that he was after the flood! Here Noah is engaged in bird-watching and he's watching for two certain birds: a raven and a dove. I want you to notice a couple of things about those birds.

²Mathews, K. A. (2001, c1995). *Vol. 1A: Genesis 1-11:26* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (385). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

- A. The **search** by the birds (vs. 6-7). We have very distinctly two birds that oppose each other in their nature. One is the raven and the other is the dove.

Verses 6-7, “At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made 7 and sent forth a **raven**. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth.”

1. The **raven**. There is a shocking distinction between the dove and the raven. The raven in the Scriptures is an “unclean” bird, unfit for eating (Lev 11:15; Deut 14:14). According to rabbinic tradition, the raven was released first as expendable since it wasn’t good for food nor for sacrifice. There is no blessing in the raven. He’s a carnivore.

What happened to the raven? Why did he not return? You have to realize what a raven eats. Remember that there were thousands of dead animals and flesh floating around after the flood and that's what ravens eat! He didn't return because he was going to a feast. I mean .. that raven was having a wonderful time feasting on his favorite treats!

The raven’s departure from the ark signified that the impurities of the past had been removed and the creation of the new world had a fresh start.³

So it is in salvation. That raven fleshly nature of ours that devours the things of this is crucified with Christ. We are freed from it. We no longer have to obey it.

We see another bird in verse 8, the dove.

2. The **dove**. Noah releases the dove, and when God’s judgment has finished, the dove has a habitat to live.

Verses 8-12, “Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. 9 But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. 10 He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. 11 And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. 12 Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.”

³Mathews, K. A. (2001, c1995). *Vol. 1A: Genesis 1-11:26* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (387). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

This dove was a regular homing pigeon that brought back information. After its second trip, Noah knew that the waters of judgment were gone because the olive leaf revealed that the dry soil was appearing.

B. The **symbolism** of the birds.

The Bible teaches that every born-again Christian has a battle between the flesh and the spirit: the old nature and the new nature. "If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation." And when we are born again we receive a new nature, yet there is still the old that must daily be put to death. We have the clean with the unclean .. the new and the old. And those two natures are constantly warring against one another.

The raven went out into the remnants of the world that God judged and he found a feast in the dead carcasses because that is the kind of food he lived on. Your fleshly nature is like that. Your old nature loves the things of this world .. in fact .. it actually feeds on them. The old raven went out into the remnants of the old world and he loved it.

Now the dove went out into a judged world and she found no satisfaction ... no rest and returned to the ark.

Remember, we must mortify the things of the flesh.

- **Romans 8:13**, "For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."
- **Romans 13:14**, "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires."
- **Galatians 5:16**, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh."

III. God's worship is **celebrated** (vs. 13-22).

A. **Creation celebrates!** **Verses 13-18**, "In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. 14 In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out. 15 "Then God said to Noah, 16 "Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. 17 Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth. 18 So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him." Noah and his family went in that ark a minority, and they came out a majority! Before the flood the earth was teeming with God haters. After the flood, the entire population was godly.

And after one year and 17 days ... they disembarked from the ship. And look what happened!

B. God's **people** celebrate. (v.19-20)

Verses 19-20, "So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. 19 Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark. 20 ¶ Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar".

The first thing Noah did when he came out of that ship was to build an altar to the Lord. This is why God told him to bring on board those 7 pairs of clean animals. Not only for their provisions ... but for their praising! Not only for their sustenance .. but for their sacrificing!

C. God's worship is **accepted** and his promise is announced (v. 21-22).

Verses 21-22, "And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. 22 While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease."

God responded to Noah's praise by promising never to flood the earth again and to provide the various seasons of the year!

Conclusion: So in Genesis 8, we have a new beginning. And tonight you can have a new beginning if you are not in Christ.

Salvation was made available through that ark and only those in the ark were protected from God's judgment! The Noah family was sealed in and the judgment of God was sealed out! And that ark is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am in Christ just as Noah was in that ark! Christ took my judgment.