

Scripture Reading: Genesis 7:1-16

“1 Then Jehovah 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. 2 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; 3 also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth. 4 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." 5 And Noah did according to all that Jehovah commanded him. 6 Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth. 7 So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. 8 Of clean animals, of animals that are unclean, of birds, and of everything that creeps on the earth, 9 two by two they went into the ark to Noah, male and female, as God had commanded Noah. 10 And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth. 11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the 17th day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. 12 And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights. 13 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-- 14 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. 15 And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life. 16 So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and Jehovah shut him in. 17 Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth.”

'Noah Enters the Ark'

Before we move through our text verse by verse this morning I want to set the table if you will with a couple of thoughts: These verses in chapter seven have caused no end of controversy because they seem to be very repetitive and at times in conflict with other things said in chapter six. Those who look to higher criticism of the Bible [that is where ‘smart’ people think they know better than God!] suggest that there were several authors of these Genesis accounts and that here we see several merged together in a clumsy way!

Well if we think about it these types of skeptics do the same with the four Gospel accounts that we have in the New Testament [remember the Easter challenge we discussed last year?] Multiple witnesses are required in a court proceeding because while it might cause some confusion, in the end you have a fuller and richer account of what happened.

Here in the flood account we have only one witness giving the account, but since it is God Himself I think we can rest assured that He is reliable. And just as we were given greater detail about the sixth day of Creation in Genesis chapter two to emphasis what was important...

- We have here more details given about what was predicated in chapter six regarding the events of chapter eight giving us a focus on what was important!

And just what is that focus:

- The entrance into the Ark!

Now think about this for a moment from a human standpoint. Noah has been told that judgment was coming and thus he must build an Ark and go into it with all the animals God will bring to him. Which was the tougher part? What would we like more details about?

- Entering would seem like a pretty simple task compared to building the Ark!

We would like to know how long it took and how many people did or did not help. Where did Noah get all the wood and pitch and even more details on how the Ark was constructed. We would like more information on his preaching and interaction with those who refused to believe what he was saying about the coming judgment or even some of the discussions with his own family!

- We get none of that, but a whole lot of details about entering the Ark!

This is something that God wants us to focus on and that is what we will do this morning. The first six verses summarize what we have learned in the latter half of chapter six with more details, and a very interesting addition:

“1 Then Jehovah 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. 2 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; 3 also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth. 4 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." 5 And Noah did according to all that Jehovah commanded him. 6 Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth.”

We saw in chapter six how Noah was a recipient of God’s grace, the fact the world was going to be judged and that Noah was to enter the Ark with his family and the animals.

- The surprising addition is the discussion of clean and unclean animals!

Now is it easy to just read over this because we know that clean and unclean animals are discussed at great length later in the Bible and even carry over into the New Testament with the dream that Peter is given three times as God prepares to bring in the Gentiles.

So just what did these antediluvians know about clean and unclean animals and when did they know it?

- Was this a surprise to Noah?
- Did he just wait until he saw which ones showed up by sevens?
- Did God give Him other details that were not recorded here?
- Did such knowledge go further back in the Godly line?

The writer of the Hebrews goes to great lengths to show us how the types and shadows of the Old Testament find their fulfilment in the work of Jesus and we rightly see most of that in the Tabernacle and Temple settings.

However, all of that did not just appear when Moses gave the Law and the Commandments to build the Tabernacle. We saw a bloody sacrifice and coverings back in the Garden & a faithful sacrifice with Abel bringing a lamb. We are going to see seven days on either side of the flood reminding us of the seven days of Creation which Moses will use to explain the 4th Commandment in great detail.

Now we have clean & unclean animals. The clean animals come in greater numbers because we will see sacrifices after the flood which would have wiped out a kind if there was only one pair! I would argue that just as we saw evidence of great technologies and skills in the early years of history, so I think they understood much more about God’s Covenant of Grace than we often give them credit for. And these clean and unclean animals are a good example if we understand their distinction. Remember they were still vegetarians until after the flood so this has nothing to do with dietary health!

I won’t have time to expound in great detail this morning but it is important for us to remember that these classifications are related to the fall of man into sin as Jim Jordan has explained at length in *Through New Eyes* and other writings. [mention blog article www.thestoos.com]

If you consider the greater details we come to here in this text along with the discussion of clean and unclean animals in Leviticus and Deuteronomy you see how the groups match up with the creation account with flying creatures, land animals and swarming things.

In each case they are divided into clean and unclean based on their nearness to the dust of the earth that was cursed, their similarity to the Serpent who deceived Eve or closeness to death like vultures.

- Rather than passing over this quickly or seeing it as a point of confusion, this should be where we see Jesus in our text!

Before the fall of man everything in God's creation was very good: There were no unclean animals!

Here and in the later writings of Moses we see the impact of the fall with many animals considered unclean. When Jesus comes as the Messiah He ushers in the New Creation and once again we have no unclean animals.

When God shows Peter in a dream that the work of Jesus has made all things new he stubbornly rejects that good news and needs to see it three times, but in the end he understands that God has made all things new and all the animals are now considered clean.

As the Apostle Paul declares in Romans 14, "I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself! The world outside the Ark is going to be judged: Man and the animals because of the sin and wickedness of man..."

- But even inside the Ark we still have children of Adam who will go on to sin and die along with animals that are divided between the clean and the unclean.
- But when Jesus comes He will make all things new and clean!
- That is the Good News!

With verse seven we begin to see more and more repetition and detail:

- Noah & the animals entering the Ark are a BIG deal in this account!

7 "So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. 8 Of clean animals, of animals that are unclean, of birds, and of everything that creeps on the earth, 9 two by two they went into the ark to Noah, male and female, as God had commanded Noah."

Notice the same classifications of land animals, birds and creeping things we saw in the creation account.

10 "And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth."

- God established the seven day week in His work of Creation and now Noah waits for a seven day period of time for God to undo the work He had done on the earth!

11 "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the 17th day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened."

Here we are given more details about the date of the great flood and the means that God would use.

[speak to the children about how fairy tales begin with 'once upon a time' or the Star Wars, 'long, long ago in a galaxy far far away.']

- God is giving us an eye witness account of real history and grounds it with a specific date in that history!

The reference to the fountains of the deep is interesting for two reasons:

The first relates to something I often heard from my own father who had become very skeptical under the influence of liberalism: "Where did all the water come from?"

We will see in a few weeks that the water will rise to fifteen feet or so above the highest mountains...

- So that is not an unreasonable question if it is asked honestly.

The answer is that in addition to forty days and nights of rain, we also have God opening up the fountains of the deep. The Bible has many references to the waters under the earth and just recently there have been discoveries that have confirmed a truth proclaimed by the Bible long before science could catch up, which is usually the case! This from an article in Live Science this past February: “Scientists scanning the deep interior of Earth have found evidence of a vast water reservoir beneath eastern Asia that is at least the volume of the Arctic Ocean.”

God continues to give greater and greater detail in our text:

12 “And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights. 13 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-- 14 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.”

Now we are given the names of Noah's sons and again the types of animals that we see in the Creation account!

15 “And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life.”

- All flesh is to be destroyed by the great flood, but on the Ark all flesh is to be preserved!
- And just so we don't miss the point it is repeated in verse 16!

16 “So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him;”

Two by two, male and female, the clean and the unclean; that is what God brought to Noah who had been faithful in building their sanctuary, the Ark!

Noah again obeys and enters the Ark as he was told along with his wife, his family and all the animals God would preserve! At the end of verse sixteen we come to comforting words that are easy to overlook:

- “and Jehovah shut him in.”

I think we need to put ourselves in Noah's shoes for a moment to fully understand the significance of what is being said here... A few weeks ago we saw how Noah was saved by grace as are all of God's Saints are down through history... As a righteous man who walked with God he would have not been hard hearted as Hollywood presented him in the recent movie “Noah.”

Peter said that Noah was a preacher of righteousness: By word and deed he was calling others to repentance! Just as we have compassion on those who are lost, even when they are very caustic in their treatment of us... So Noah would have been grieved by the loss of life in the coming judgment, just as God was.

Yes, he would have been frustrated at a human level with the lack of response even though he knew from the very start that it would only be he and his family that were saved on that Ark.

However, on that final day, as the destruction was about to begin, God had great mercy on Noah by not asking him to close the door that final time, shutting out all those on the outside!

- Rather, the account clearly says that God shut them in!

Our New King James says ‘God shut them in,’ other versions say God shut the door’ others God shut the door behind them or from the outside.

- God would now deal with those on the outside after He closed the door behind Noah!

When we return to the Book of Beginnings after celebrating Palm Sunday and the Resurrection of Jesus we will see the details of the great flood that followed!

Our lessons for this morning are at least two-fold... We must see that just as the Lord closed the door behind Noah, He is our rock and protector today. God expects us to do many mighty works, but He knows our limits and will not push us past what we are able to bear...

Paul reminds us that we are to learn from these Saints of old in I Corinthians 10: “11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

And we should see the same principle at work in how Jesus calls us to Himself in Mathew 11: “27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. 28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Noah had to labor building the Ark knowing what it was for, the task of explaining it all to his family and finally in entering the Ark...

- **But in the end it was God who closed the door!**

God may well give us challenges that push us to the very limit of our faith and obedience, but in the end He will be faithful and not expect more from us than we can bear!

We see this on a corporate level at various places in the Bible:

Not only here with Noah, but when God remembered his people in Egypt, or the exiles in Babylon. Even with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70 Jesus gave specific instructions to flee to safety that were followed by all the Saints living there at that time.

- **And when it comes to our daily lives, we must again see the basic lesson that faithful Noah was obedient Noah.**
- **In verse five of our text we read, “And Noah did according to all that Jehovah commanded him!**

God gave Noah some huge tasks, but at the same time they were simple tasks...

- **He simply had to do what God had commanded him to do!**

Was he frustrated at times?

Was he overwhelmed at times?

Were there times that he simply did not understand?

- **I am sure that there were such times and yet Noah obeyed!**

As parents when we go to correct a disobedient child and they look up at us with those sad eyes saying ‘no daddy’ that simple obedience suddenly feels very difficult...

- **But still we must obey what God has said to do!**

Husbands when your wives are being in your mind very unlovable, it makes the command to love them difficult...

- **But also ALL the more important.**

And wives when your husbands are acting like a jerk it becomes very difficult for you to glorify them as your head...

- **Again it is all the more important that you do so.**

When our civil magistrates do exactly the opposite of what God commands them to do it makes it very difficult for us to be subject to them and to even pray for them as we are commanded...

- **Still it is important for us to do what God commands!**

I could go on with other examples from our culture or in our vocations...

But the bottom line is to remember that we have Noah here given as a faithful example of a simple truth that Jesus shared with His Disciples...

A simple truth which leads us into the abundant life that Jesus gave His life to provide for us...

- **If you love me, keep my commandments!**