

**Scripture Reading: Genesis 8:5-19**

**“1 Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. 2 The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. 3 And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased. 4 Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. 5 And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen. 6 So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. 7 Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. 8 He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. 9 But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself. 10 And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. 11 Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf was in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. 12 So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore. 13 And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry.”**

## **''The Patience of Noah''**

**Well I know that I am on dangerous ground this morning tackling a message on patience! We sometimes think that a discussion of patience is dangerous because the Scriptures often link it with trials and persecutions!**

➤ **And this is true...**

**Brother James puts it right up front in his Epistle to the twelve tribes... James 1: “2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”**

**And again at verse 12: “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”**

**Now of course we all want to be perfect, lacking nothing and to receive the crown of life...**

➤ **But we are not sure we like what James presents as the journey!**

**Well, I believe that Noah is put forward in the Scriptures as an example of a patient person and I hope we can learn some important lessons and move toward those admirable goals of perfection and crowns in our lives today as we consider the patience of Noah!**

**We saw last week how God remembering Noah is the literary and doctrinal center of the flood account:**

➤ **God is keeping His promise of salvation given in the Garden.**

**Over the next two weeks we will see more details about God’s covenant with nature and his covenant with Noah and all mankind.**

**This morning I want to spend a bit of time considering the person of Noah as we look at the final details of the flood.**

As we look at these texts, we have 150 days of the waters prevailing and now about 150 days of the waters receding. As we review a few of these details, I want us to keep Noah in mind. Now this can be difficult and a bit speculative because we have NO dialog from Noah at ALL in this account of the flood until he curses his grandson Canaan & blesses his sons Shem and Japheth late in chapter nine...

- So, I want to suggest that we are to see Noah as a man of great patience!

This not only has me preaching about that topic, but also a bit at odds with our stalwart of the faith, John Calvin. In his commentary on Genesis Pastor Calvin argues that these long periods would have ‘suffered his servant to be anxiously and miserably tortured’ as he was ‘so long held in suspense’ and ‘agitated by various feelings.’ Calvin argues that God’s judgment could have been much swifter and thus he suggests that God extended the time in the Ark to teach Noah patience.

Though we seem to end up in the same place, I would differ regarding how Noah acted... And I would do so not only based on an example James gives later in his Epistle but also looking at an obscure reference to Noah in the prophecies of Ezekiel that is easy to overlook.

But before I look at those passages and discuss the lessons for us...

- We need to look at why we have all this waiting in the Ark; which caused John Calvin to think Noah was ‘grievously assailed by various temptations.’

I hope you have spent some time in your own devotions in this portion of Genesis considering the chiasmic outline that we reviewed briefly last week. Not only do we see God’s remembrance of Noah as the center of the story but it helps us to see the rising and falling of these waters of judgment. We see seven day periods at both ends reminding us of the creation account.

- We see references to 40 days in both the prevailing and receding of the waters of judgment!

As we saw a few weeks ago this introduces us to forty as a number of testing or judgment in the Scriptures. In the end we see the flood running just over a year from the time that God shut them in until Noah sees that the land is dry: From the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the second month of the 600<sup>th</sup> year of Noah’s life until the 27<sup>th</sup> day of the second month of the 601<sup>st</sup> year of his life.

Because we do not know which type of calendar these antediluvians were using we cannot be dogmatic about the number of days... But if they were using a solar calendar similar to ours it can be argued that this period was likely 365 days meaning the ancients understood the calendar year the way we do today.

Or if they were using a lunar system for their months as the later Jewish calendar did, it is likely that both the beginning and ending days would have been Wednesdays, the 4<sup>th</sup> Day of the week, the day in the creation account when the sun, moon and stars were placed in the heavens.

Several commentators also pointed to the significance of the third specific date being given as the dry land reappears, which of course also takes us back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Day of Creation where the dry land first appeared. For our purposes today, it is important for us to see that Noah and his family would have been in the Ark for 40 days while the rains came down and the fountains of the deep were opened and then they would spend over 300 days riding upon those prevailing waters and waiting for them to recede.

Even after the Ark had rested in the mountains of Ararat it is months before Noah begins to determine if it is safe to depart the Ark.

As a quick aside, the details about his release of the birds should remind us of the major impact this account has had on human culture, when you consider how the raven and the dove are seen even down to our day.

- The dove with an olive branch in its mouth is universally seen as the symbol of peace!

And the raven...Well the poor raven does not get such good reviews: Consider the powerful poetry of Edgar Allen Poe: "But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid butts, spoke only that one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour. Nothing farther then he uttered – not a feather then he fluttered – Till I scarely more than mutter "other friends have flown before – On the morrow he will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before." Then the bird said, 'nevermore.'

Even after the third release, when the dove went off and did not return, it is another couple of months before Noah removes the cover to exit the Ark. For me this demonstrates to us a man of great patience: Noah was called a righteous man, a man perfect in all his ways. John Calvin argues that he learned patience through this trial and there is certainly some truth in that as I am sure Noah had some bad days as we all do while striving to serve God wherever He has placed us!

So let's consider those two portions of the Scriptures which I mentioned that I think argue for a patient Noah... The first is found in the Epistle of James who began with the importance of patience, a theme we see throughout this short book. In chapter five James gives us an illustration that should bring Noah's life to our minds...

5:7 "Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain."

➤ Do farmers ever worry over the weather or pests or whatever else might threaten their crops?

Of course they do, but James uses them as an example of proper patience and we tend to see them in the same way. They keep their hand to the plow if you will, working hard day by day as they wait patiently for the harvest.

As we have considered several times, the writer of Hebrews makes it clear that Noah was a man of faith who understood the task he had been given: Hebrews 11: "By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith."

I would also argue that Noah is to be seen as a man of great patience based on how he is mentioned in Ezekiel's prophesy when the prophet is talking about the coming judgment of Jerusalem.

Noah is mentioned twice as part of an interesting trio of Godly men...

Ezekiel 14: "12 The word of Jehovah came again to me, saying: 13 "Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. 14 Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness," says Jehovah God.

*The Lord goes on to discuss judgments of beasts and the sword and then in verse 19 we read:*

"Or if I send a pestilence into that land and pour out My fury on it in blood, and cut off from it man and beast, 20 even though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live," says Jehovah God, "they would deliver neither son nor daughter; they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness." 21 For thus says Jehovah God: "How much more it shall be when I send My four severe judgments on Jerusalem--the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence--to cut off man and beast from it? 22 Yet behold, there shall be left in it a remnant who will be brought out, both sons and daughters; surely they will come out to you, and you will see their ways and their doings. Then you will be comforted concerning the disaster that I have brought upon Jerusalem, all that I have brought upon it."

➤ So why are Noah, Daniel & Job used here by God as examples of righteous men?

All three of these men were called upon to be VERY patient in some very difficult circumstances and in each case they were facing difficulties NOT of their own making!

- These men were not suffering as a result of their sin, like the consequences that King David faced in his life as a result of his own sin.

Noah was not doing some sort of penance on the Ark because of any sin in his life: He was waiting patiently as God carried out a judgment against the wickedness of that day.

Daniel lived almost his entire life under a captivity that was not caused by his own sin, but was the result of the sins of his nation and his forefathers.

- With both of these men their trials were obviously not of their own making because they knew why God was carrying out the judgments they had to endure with patience!

In Job's case he was facing hardships that were caused by a cosmic conflict into which he had no insights and so we can understand how he was impatient at times & had to be rebuked by God in the end...

- And yet we encourage people to have the patience of Job!
- Noah, Daniel & Job are a powerful trio of Saints for us to consider!

As we move forward in God's revelation we see more and more about the importance of patience.

When we come to the Table this morning we will consider how Jesus had both patience and confidence as He faced His trials & crucifixion.

In Luke 21 we see Jesus telling the disciples that they will be tested as the time for Jerusalem to be destroyed approached in AD 70...

Luke 21: "14 Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; 15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. 16 You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. 17 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. 18 But not a hair of your head shall be lost. 19 By your patience possess your souls. 20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. 21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. 22 For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled."

- There are many places, including the passages that I have already quoted from the Epistle of James, to teach us about the importance of patience.

Let us turn to some of the Apostle Paul's final words to the Romans where we see the practical results of such Godly patience...

Romans 15:1 "We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. 3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me." 4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, *[including the examples of Noah, Daniel and Job!]* 4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. 5 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 "Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God."

- We serve 'the God of patience' and look to His son as our example:

Paul goes on to show how Christ ministered to the Jews so the Gospel could go to the Gentiles and then he concludes in verse 13:

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

**We are a patient people because we are a people with great hope! We could think of William Wilberforce who labored for an entire lifetime to bring an end to the English slave trade and to reform the manners of England. Along the way he had bitter disappointments and many set-backs, but serving his Sovereign God, he had great hope and in the end saw a great victory!**

- **And finally it comes down to each one of us living faithfully and patiently in whatever circumstances we find ourselves today:**

**If they are circumstances that are the direct result of sin in our lives, then we need to repent and be renewed for service as King David was in Psalm 51. If we are suffering as a result of sin in others, then we need to be ready to forgive and to serve God faithfully as Daniel did for all those 70 years in Babylon or as Noah did on that Ark. And even if we are facing difficulties that seem to make no sense, we still put our trust in God knowing that He works all things together for the good of those called according to His good purpose as we saw last week!**

**In closing as we prepare to sing one of the great hymns of the Church: Trust and Obey, I want to turn to one final passage from the Book of Hebrews which ironically follows right on the heels of a portion that is often troubling to some...**

**In chapter six the writer first talks elementary things and then of apostasy, warning the Saints about those who tasted of heavenly things only for time before they turned back to the world... Then he turns to us who know that we have a better hope...**

**Hebrews 6: “9 But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. 10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. 13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”**

**We serve Jesus as the anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast so that we can truly be a patient people as we join with tens of thousands of other Saints in singing...**

**“Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,**

**But his smile quickly drives it away; not a doubt or a fear,  
not a sign nor a tear, can abide while we trust and obey.**

- **Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey!**

**Communion Meditation: John 13**

**“1 Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. 2 And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, 4 rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself.”**