

TEXT: Genesis 6:9-22

TITLE: "Build the ark"

THEME: Because the Lord has graciously guaranteed your salvation with a covenantal promise, you can respond with obedience through faith.

INTRODUCTION

Beloved in the Lord, what if I tell you today that God will destroy Toronto with a flood? God is destroying Toronto because He could no longer tolerate the sins of the people. And what if I tell you that the only way to avoid judgement is to build a large ship, and you will need to start today. What would you do? How would you respond? Are you going to build it?

Well, this is what happened to Noah in Genesis 6, after the Lord has pronounced judgement upon the earth, the Lord has decided to preserve Noah and his family. For that reason, the Lord commanded Noah to build an ark in order to keep himself alive. How did Noah respond? Why could Noah respond to God the way he did?

Today, we are going to consider the text in three sections:

I. The preparation for deliverance (vv.9-17)

II. The promise of deliverance (vv.18-21)

III. The response to deliverance (vv.22)

I. The preparation for deliverance (vv.9-17)

Even though vv.1-8 has already foreshadowed the flood, the flood narrative actually begins here in vv.9. Moses begins the narrative by telling us that Noah was a just man, perfect in his generation, and he was a man who walked with God like his father Enoch. But right after this brief description about Noah, Moses very quickly shifts our attention to the dialogue between the Lord and Noah, and in it, we see that the Lord has made known to Noah about the plan to execute His righteous judgement upon the earth, He said, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth." However, this is a problem for us as readers, it is because if you have been following the flow of the text, you would know that the Lord had previously promised a remedy from sin through the seed of the woman. Genesis 3:15 says, "*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*" So, the problem we have here is this: what will happen to the seed of the woman if God had decided to destroy the whole world?

But Moses here right away gives us the answer, because right after the Lord had made known His plan to Noah, He immediately commanded Noah to make an ark. But first of all, we must consider what an ark is? An ark is a ship, square and deep in design, history books tell us that arks were originated in Egypt. But here, we know that they were not originated from Egypt! In fact, they were originated here in Genesis, designed by the Almighty God! The Lord has not only told Noah what material to use to build it, but He has also given Noah the specific measurement of the ark! It is about three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. This is equal to the size of one-half football field, about a couple times wider than our sanctuary here, and as tall as our ceiling times 3. In other words, this is an extremely big ark!

But why would the Lord command Noah to build an ark? It is because vv.17, Moses tells us that the Lord had intended to send floodwaters to wipe out all flesh in which is the breath of life. And the ark would be the means by which Noah and his family would be delivered from the coming judgment! It is also interesting to note that the language used here resembles the language in Genesis 2:7, how the Lord created man, it reads, "then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature." So what the Lord was saying here seems to be the exact opposite of what happened in Genesis 2:7! Instead of breathing life into man, the Lord was taking away the breath of life! You see, the Lord was going to take away what He has given to man. This was also fulfilling what God has previously said in vv.3 that He would withdraw His Spirit from mankind. In other words, the 120 years of grace has passed, and the Lord had decided to destroy the world with floodwaters!

But have you thought about why the Lord would give specific commands regarding the ark? is there any significance? Let us now consider some of the specific instructions: First of all, the Lord commanded Noah to make rooms in the ark! Have you thought about why? If we look into the word, the word "room" in Hebrew literally means "nest." This is interesting! It is because this is telling us that the Lord has not only intended to save, but also intended to make the ark into a comfortable place for the elect and the representatives of animals. The ark was to be made to feel like a place in which rest and comfort would be found. This reflects the reality of how the Lord would take care and give rest to those who are his in the midst of judgement. And our Lord Jesus actually has He told the disciples that there would be many rooms in His Father's house. And He was going to the Father's house to prepare a place of them? Jesus was talking about the paradise, the new garden of Eden, in which the people of God may have communion with God forever. So, this temporary ark gives the elect people of God a taste of the place better than the original Eden, the new heavenly Eden, the permanent place in which they shall find eternal rest and comfort!

More than that, we see that the Lord also told Noah to cover the ark with pitch inside and out, to seal the frame of the ship to make it waterproof. You know, this word "cover" used here was used elsewhere in the Old Testament for the atoning sacrifice. So, this is indirectly telling us to the fact that deliverance ultimately requires a covering of our sins. And we can find this in the ark as well! When the elect people of God dwell in the ark, the ark not only provides them with comfort and rest, but it also provides the covering of their iniquities. Although this does not directly give us the clear picture of the redemptive work of Jesus, yet, it gives us a hint of what would be coming! A covering for sins! And we know that all the sacrifices in the OT served the purpose of point the OT saints to the coming sacrifice of Messiah! And we know that the ultimate sacrifice was the death of our Lord Jesus Christ at the Cross.

Finally, the Lord has also commanded Noah to make a door in its side. Only one door! Through which all must enter and leave by this one door. This is pointing us to the fact that Noah and his family, and all the animals can only enter the ark through that one door. There was no other way of entrance but that one door! This is telling us that there is only one way to be rescued from the judgement of God, which was through that one door! And the door foreshadows the work of our Lord Jesus, who is the only way to the Father, as He Himself said in John 10:9 *“I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”* Beloved, isn’t the ark significant?! It is because it is not only telling us about the temporary deliverance of the elect people of God and the animal representatives, but it beautifully points us to the greater deliverance that we have in our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom all our sins were forgiven and through whom we may enter into the Father’s presence.

II. The Promise of deliverance (vv.18-21)

So, after we see that the Lord has commanded Noah to preparing an ark for the purpose of deliverance, we see that the grace of God reaches even further, it is because in the next few verses, we see that the Lord has also promised deliverance to Noah. That leads us to our second point.

Vv.18 tells us that the Lord said to Noah, *“I will establish my covenant with you.”* First of all, what is a covenant? Basically speaking, a covenant was a binding agreement between two parties that includes obligations and sanctions. It is like a contract, but it is different in a sense that while contracts are made between two equal parties, covenants in the Bible are usually not made between the equals. In the days of Israel, the kings would make a covenant with his people, telling them that if they wanted to live, they must do something, may be pay taxes or to serve him. But when the Lord our God makes a covenant with us, He doesn’t tell us to do pay our taxes in order to live. When the Lord makes a covenant with us, it is out of His great love and mercy, it is an act to draw us closer to Himself, giving us life and communion with Him. So, this is what we see here! The Lord established a covenant with Noah, promising life to Noah that he and his family would definitely go into the ark!

But essentially, we want to ask why? Why would the Lord make such a covenant with Noah? Is it because Noah was worthy? Was it because Noah was more righteous than any others on earth? What is actually happening here in vv.18 really was a confirmation of the covenant, it is because the term *“to establish”* means *“to confirm”*. So here, the Lord was confirming a covenant with Noah that has already been established prior to this event. The covenant being confirmed here was the covenantal promise of Genesis 3:15, *“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”* This covenant in our tradition is called *“the covenant of grace.”* The covenant of grace was the promise made to Adam and Eve after they had eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was a promise that there would one day come the seed of the woman, who would crush the head of the Serpent. So, what we see here was not a brand-new covenant, but a confirmation of the covenant of grace, serving the greater purpose of what God has already promised in Genesis 3:15! Even though God have had enough with the wickedness of the world, so much that He wanted to uncreate everything by the flood, nevertheless, for the sake of the promised seed of the woman in chapter 3, God must preserve the promised seed until the promise is fulfilled.

So, what is going on here is that God has graciously chosen Noah and his family line as the means to fulfill this very promise! And as Biblical history progresses, we see that the seed will carry on through Noah, to his son Shem, to Abraham, to Isaac, Jacob, and Judah. And the trail continues beyond Genesis to the nation of Israel, to King David, and finally fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ, whom Luke confirms as *“the Son of Noah”* (3:36), as the Seed of the woman! In whom and through whom all the nations would be blessed. You see, for the sake of promise of the Lord Jesus, the Lord had made a covenant with Noah, promising him that He would preserve him, in order that one day He might be able to bring the promise to complete fruition through the blood of the New Covenant of Jesus Christ! What a faithful God! And what a sweet promise for Noah! If you think about it logically, God could have said, *“Noah, go into the ark when the waters come, do it, because I am God. Don’t say anything, just do it.”* But this is not what we see here, because the Lord said to Noah, *“Noah, I promise you, you and your family are surely going into the ark! And you guys will be kept alive!”* You see, what a gracious act of grace on God’s part! Noah was a wicked sinner, just like anybody else, but because of God’s faithfulness, the Lord has confirmed with Noah that He would keep Noah and his family alive because of the covenant of grace! What a gracious God!

And more than that, we also see that the Lord commanded Noah to bring two of every sorts of the animals into the ark! This is significant! It is because earlier, we see that the Lord wanted to destroy all the animals because of the man’s sin, but He has now wanted to save some animals because of Noah! This is as if the Lord was making Noah the new Adam here, to bring them into the floating garden of Eden in order to rule over them, to take care of them! Just as the animals shared in the curse upon man, they were also made to share in man’s salvation. What a gracious God!

But what does that mean to us? Beloved, do you know that you and I are saved by the same promise as Noah? While Noah looked forward to the promised seed and was saved, but for us, we are looking backward and are saved too by the fulfilled promise in Jesus Christ. We know that just as the Lord has graciously guaranteed Noah’s salvation with a covenantal promise, He has also graciously guaranteed our salvation with a sign and seal. The Apostle Peter says in 1 Peter 3:18-22, *“for Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, ¹⁹ by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. ²¹ There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.”* You see, the water for the wicked was judgement, but for the believers was a type of the sign and seal of the New Covenant, which is baptism, by which we are being assured of the future hope that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. So, are you baptized? If you know that you are a believer, but has not yet been baptized, talk to your elders or your pastor today! Don’t rob yourself of the sign and seal that the Lord has graciously given to you in the covenant of grace!

III. The Response to deliverance (vv.22)

So, having received the gracious promise of salvation, how should we respond? Let us look at what the text is telling us. Vv.22 tells us, “Noah did everything just as God commanded him.” That leads us to our third point. The literal translation of the Hebrew says, “and Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.” The text emphasizes for us that Noah simply did what the Lord has called him. The Lord told him to build a massive ark, so Noah did. The Lord told him to bring the animals into the ark and gather food for them, so he did. You see here, Noah did not question nor tried to reason with God by asking why, or grumble with the workload, but he simply did it. Noah simply did it! And we know that this is not an easy response, it is because we know that the building of this massive ark was an uneasy task! This was a ridiculous task in the eyes of man! People likely thought that Noah was crazy and foolish! More than that, we also know that he was living in a crooked generation, in which there were likely people planning evil against him, making fun of him, calling him foolish as he was building the ark. So how? How could Noah respond like this? It is because Noah has committed his life to the Lord and he also believed in the Lord! He believed in the truthfulness of what God has told him, that God would be remain faithful to His covenant promise and would bring him and his family to safety. So, this is why Noah could respond with obedience. No matter how difficult or discouraging it might seem, he was content with what the Lord has commanded, and he delighted to do it. What a response! What a response of faith! Hebrews 11:7 tells us, “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.”

However, we must also recognize that Noah could respond that way only because the Lord has given him the gift of faith! The faith that Noah had was not intrinsic to him, but it was a gift of God, just as Ephesians 2 tells us! We know that it was the Spirit of God who moved in Noah’s heart to assure him that the Lord would be faithful to His promise, so that Noah could respond with obedience! You see, this is how we should respond to God’s command: when He acts in grace, we respond with obedience, willingly and cheerfully. And this response with cheerful obedience is the evidence of our faith in the Lord, who has graciously offered us deliverance from our sin and condemnation and death.

Application:

1. Beloved in the Lord, how are you responding to the Lord when the Lord is calling you to live a holy and blameless life in the midst of our generation? Maybe that means that for some of you high school or college students, you may have to decline invitations to some of your friends’ parties? Or if you a parent, perhaps that means that you may need to constantly warn your children to live holy and pure lives? Or even you may need to say no to numerous potential spouses until your child find a suitable, Godly spouse?
2. More than that, as the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, how are you responding to the challenges and persecutions that you are facing? At work or at school? Are you holding fast to the promise of God and showing the evidence of your faith through obedience? You must remember that you are saved by the electing grace of God! You are His child now! You respond with obedience not because you want to gain anything from God, but because you know that God has shown you an act of grace by giving you His Son, so, out of gratitude and love for Him, you are called to walk a life of trust and obedience! Romans 12:1-2, “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*”

CONCLUSION

In closing, we see here in this text that in the midst of judgment, the Lord has prepared the deliverance of Noah and his family by commanding Noah to build an ark. More than that, we also see that while the destiny of the wicked was death by floodwaters, the Lord has graciously guaranteed Noah’s deliverance by confirming the covenant with him. And in response to the Lord’s command, we also see that Noah responded with trust and obedience.

Beloved in the Lord, remember that just as the Lord has graciously guaranteed Noah’s deliverance with a covenant, assuring him of His faithfulness and that He would carry out His ultimate promise. Brothers and sisters in the Lord, you, may also rest in the promise of God and live a life of trust and obedience because you know that you have been saved by the electing grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, how are you living your life? Are you living a life of trust and obedience? In light of the covenant of grace – when God comes to call you to a task of obedience, will you live a life of trust?

Let us therefore, live with an eye of faith, even when we face trials or uncertainties in our journey, press on and put our wholehearted trust in the Lord until the day when the Lord takes us into His eternal abode. Amen.

Let us pray.