

"THE ARK OF SAFETY: IT IS CHRIST!" I PETER 3:18-22

Are you absolutely sure that you are headed to Heaven when you die?

If you believe that you are Heaven bound, have you checked to make sure that your faith is genuine saving faith? The best way to be absolutely sure is to line up what you believe with God's Word. Noah's ark is a beautiful picture of the secure salvation we can have by faith in Jesus.

Absolutely Sure

Is it presumptuous to think that you can know for certain that you are saved securely forever? I think not. The reason for such a conviction is rooted solidly in God's Word. One of the clearest places is in I Peter 3, where we open in God's Word today.

Peter reminds us that those in Noah's Ark and everyone else on Earth went through the Flood, which pictured God's wrath against sin. But only those sheltered in the Ark survived the Flood of God's wrath.

Peter tells us that (2 Peter 3:9), "God was not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God's nature does not change. His will in Peter's time was the same as in Noah's time. Those who perished in the flood were only those who rejected God's way of salvation. The only people who will awaken one day in Hell are those who rejected God's offer of salvation in Christ.

Noah and his family went into the Ark, which pictured that salvation is only in Christ.

The ark was big enough to hold all who wanted to be saved, but amazingly only eight people wanted to be saved. Everyone alive in Noah's day went through the Flood, which pictured God's wrath against sin. But only those sheltered in the Ark survived God's wrath.

Peter tells us that God used Noah's Ark to illustrate salvation; and that picture, tucked away in the Old Testament, loudly declares the security of being in Christ. But salvation only comes to those who are really:

In Christ Alone

Peter introduces us to the Ark of Noah's Flood as a picture of Christ in I Peter 3:18-22:

18 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 (NKJV).

The warning Peter gives in these verses is that mere baptism by water, without prior entry into Christ, doesn't save; just like the Flood destroyed everyone but those in the Ark. Peter was saying even back then—don't trust in the waters of baptism, trust in Christ alone¹.

Noah and his family went into the Ark, as a beautiful picture of salvation that is only in Christ. As Natalie Grant wrote in the moving stanzas of the chorus "In Christ Alone":

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath.
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

It's Christ that we are in and He is the ark. The water of Baptism just portrays the fact that we have identified with His death, His burial and His resurrection. It was the ark that saved Noah from judgment like Christ saves us.

Now, turn with me to Genesis 6-7. These verses clearly and powerfully speak of the Security we have in the perfect sacrifice of Jesus. This morning, are you safely in His Ark of Salvation? First, we need to:

Remember the Flood

¹ People that believe in baptismal regeneration have the wrong idea. All the people on the planet that got baptized by the flood, died. It's the people that didn't get into the flood that stayed alive. So all those people that believe that baptism saves are like those outside the ark; because it was the ark that could save from destruction. Just like today it's not the water that saves us.

God had a vivid purpose for the flood that He stated in Genesis 6:5-13. Man had become corrupt, the earth was filled with violence, and God had to destroy mankind.

There must always be judgment and death before there can be a new beginning.

Perhaps the reason that there are not millions of human fossils, like there are of animal and plant fossils is that God's target was the annihilation of the human race. Almost no trace of the Lost World before the Flood exists on the face of the Earth!

When the Door was shut and the waters began to rise, the lost Earth dwellers, with ashen faces shouted to one another, "Is this the FLOOD old Noah was talking about so long?" Then a blinding flash of fire from the sky lit up the countryside like noonday. A deafening boom followed and with terror filled steps they all turned and ran to the huge building Noah had built.

Climbing up the scaffolding they pounded frantically on the place the door used to be. The thick sawed gopher wood absorbed the blows and the gooey black pitch stuck to their hands. In the alternating blackness and blinding flashes and booming explosions they crawled home. Soon the ground began to be covered with water and all their deepest fears were confirmed the FLOOD arrived and they were wrong.

The Ark they had mocked and scoffed had been their only hope and that hope was gone forever.

The Ark Pictures Our salvation in Christ

First, Salvation is Divine

*Genesis 6:13-14a And God said to Noah, "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.** 14 **Make yourself an ark** of gopher [Cypress] wood.*

The Ark, like salvation², was planned by God, not invented by man. The ark not only saved mankind, but also the creatures within it; just as Christ's death will one day deliver creation from the bondage of sin.

The Ark reminds us of the great faith of Noah and his family—the Ark had no sails, no oars, no motor or engine, no rudder, and no pilot house.

² Pink, Gleanings in Genesis, pp. 103-109.

When they entered the Ark they were testifying that only God Himself could and would direct the course of that great floating barge of a ship. We always must remember that God initiated salvation because of His Divine love for the entire world.

*Jonah 2:9 But I will sacrifice to You, with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. **Salvation is of the LORD.**"*

*John 3:16 For **God so loved the world** that He gave His only begotten Son, **that whoever believes in Him** should not perish but have everlasting life.*

Second, **Salvation Gives Perfect Rest in Jesus**

*Genesis 6:14b **make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch.***

God's plan said to construct many resting places in the ark, so Jesus calls all who come to Him in their weariness to find rest for their souls.

Matthew 11:28-30 "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."

Also in His Father's House are many resting places!

John 14:1-2 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.² "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Third, **Salvation Deals with sin Protecting us From God's wrath**

*Genesis 6:14c make rooms in the ark, **and cover it inside and outside with pitch.***

The word for "pitch" in 6:14 is the same as the word "atonement" used later in the Old Testament. That word pitch was **kaphar** this is the first of 70 times this word is in the Old Testament and every other time it is translated atonement.

God told Noah to make an ark of wood and atone it. Cover it. Coat it with pitch. That was the message of the Old Testament. All those blood sacrifices offered never got rid of sin. They just covered them over. They were atoned or covered; but

they're still there until Christ came and bore them away. The ark is a picture of our salvation because Jesus Christ took our covered sins and bore them away.

So there is no other place in the entire Universe to hide from the penetrating wrath of God than under the covering of Christ's blood.

Matthew 1:21 "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." (NKJV);

So³ Jesus Christ is our only place of safety, as death threatened all in Noah's day, so we are all guilty. The Ark was the only place of safety from the coming wrath, so Jesus is the only Savior.

Fourth, **Salvation Changes our view of life**

*Genesis 6:15-17 And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits [with a 24" cubit: 600' x 100' x 60'; or with an 18" cubit: 450' x 75' x 45']. **You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above;** and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks. 17 And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die.*

Every detail of the Ark was planned by God for a purpose. He said to Noah, make a window above! God wanted them to look up, toward Him as their deliverer and not downward at the wrath and judgment! So we are to look up to our Deliverer and Savior and not spend our lives looking down at our declining days in a decaying world. Paul says this most clearly.

*Colossians 3:1-2 If then you were raised with Christ, **seek those things which are above**, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

Fifth, **Salvation is By Invitation**

*Genesis 7:1 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.*

³ The ark saved them from judgment; Christ saves us from the wrath to come.

As we saw in First Peter 3:18-22, the ark also reflects the resurrection of Christ; as the waters buried the old world but raised Noah to a new life. *1 Thessalonians 1:10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, [even] Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come; 1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, (NKJV)*

God invited Noah and his family into the ark. This is the very first time "come" is found in God's Word, although it appears over 500x in the rest of God's Word. It was "come" which was an invitation; and not "go", which would have been a command.

Did you know that if you're truly born again that God invited you into Christ and God shuts the door so you won't fall out?

We don't deserve the invitation or the security God gives. We don't deserve either one. The ark is such a beautiful picture of salvation of our security because God invites us to Christ and God seals us and holds us in Christ.

This invitation also implies coming to be in the place where the Lord already was! The Ark⁴ was a place of security because the Designer and Architect of Salvation was Himself present in the Ark with its occupants.

*John 6:37 "All that the Father gives Me **will come to Me**, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*

Remember those pitiful words of Christ's disciples when they cried out, "Lord, save us: we perish" (Matthew 8:25)? They had not yet learned the lesson that when Jesus is in your ship, you cannot sink. When God invited Noah and his family into the ark they were safe; and once they were in, God shut them in so that they were secure as well.

Sixth, **Salvation is Exclusive**

*Genesis 7:13-15 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.***

There was only one way of salvation; there was only one ark and only one door in the ark.

There was one door not many. The Ark's occupants did not have multiple entry points. There was only one pathway to safety.

As the Old Testament Tabernacle in Exodus would later be constructed at God's direction with only one door, so the Ark shows there is but one way to God. So, there was only one way of salvation; there was only one ark and only one door in the ark.

⁴ M.R. DeHaan M.D., Portraits of Christ in Genesis, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1966, pp. 92 - 95.
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*John 10:9 Jesus said, "**I am the door**: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.*

*John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through Me.** (NKJV)*

Could it even be that the door in the side of the ark reminds us of the pierced side of Jesus? We boldly come to the very heart of God no matter how guilty and ruined we are by sin, because of Christ's sacrifice.

You know there are two parallel tracks that are going through our world. One is religion. The other is God's revelation. Religion is man's invention on how to get to heaven. Revelation is God's revealed plan. Religion says you can never do enough. Just keep trying and trying and trying. God says Jesus did it all. He paid the price. I stand in Him complete. God invented the ark, man didn't.

There was only one Ark. God did not provide a fleet of ships and say, "You may have your choice". The Ark was the only ship available. There are religions without number, but here is only one way of salvation. There was only one way of salvation; there was only one door in the ark.

Seventh, **Salvation is Eternal**

*Genesis 7:16 So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; **and the LORD shut him in.***

Once they were in, God shut them in so that they were secure. While the door was open, anyone and all who believed God's word could come in. but once the door was shut, no one else could come in.

God saves eternally because He shut them in. Remember the inner and outer covering (Genesis 6:14b)? As they were hidden in the watertight walls of the ark so are we in Christ.

Colossians 3:3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God..

However, there is one little truth in this account which is often overlooked. It is the truth that when the door was shut, not only could no one outside get in—but also no one inside could get out again; and once they were in, God shut them in so that they were secure.

Noah didn't have to protect himself, he rested in the Protector.

1 Peter 1:5 says, "who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

*Hebrews 7:24-25 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore **He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him**, since He always lives to make intercession for them. (NKJV)*

*Jude 24-25 Now to **Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present [you] faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy**, 25 To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, [Be] glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen. (NKJV)*

Finally all who went in came out safely. Genesis 8:18-19 notes clearly and specifically that not one animal or human was lost!

Genesis 8:18-19 So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. 19 Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, and whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark.

So all who entered survived; none were lost, none perished. God preserved them all and perfectly; and this portrays our Lord Jesus.

Are you in Christ the Ark of salvation today?

In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

There in the ground His body lay
Light of the world by darkness slain:
Then bursting forth in glorious Day
Up from the grave he rose again!
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine -
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

In Christ alone! who took on flesh
Fulness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones he came to save:
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied -
For every sin on Him was laid;
Here in the death of Christ I live.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath.
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

Salvation Liberates the cosmos

Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. (NKJV)

The ark not only saved mankind, but also the creatures within it; just as Christ's death will one day deliver creation from the bondage of sin.

All of creation is going to be delivered from the bondage of sin. Right now this universe is groaning. There's a dissonance and there's a just an out-of-jointedness in our universe, as entropy and the entire universe is winding down and it's just decaying. It's groaning. But God's going to deliver it from that groaning. Christ not only came to save us, he came to set the universe free from the bondage of sin.

THE MESSAGE OF THE FLOOD

CONSIDERED TYPICALLY the ark is a wonderful picture of our salvation in Christ.

- It was planned by God, not invented by man.
- There was only one way of salvation; there was only one door in the ark.
- The ark was made of wood, speaking of the humanity of Christ: He had to be born as man in order to save us.
- The word for "pitch" in 6:14 is the same as the word "atonement" used later in the OT.
- God invited Noah and his family into the ark (7:2); and once they were in, God shut them in so that they were secure (7:16).
- The ark not only saved mankind, but also the creatures within it; just as Christ's death will one day deliver creation from the bondage of sin.
- The ark saved them from judgment; Christ saves us from the wrath to come. First Peter 3:18-22 connects the ark with the resurrection of Christ; the waters buried the old world but raised Noah to a new life.