

## Genesis 7:1-24

### Riding the storm out

It's always amazing to me that as hurricanes or other severe storms approach the news media can always be found at the shore interviewing those who desire to defy the odds by staying put through the storm. Sometimes they make it through and do ride the storm out. More often than not, though, they find their fortitude is no match for mother nature.

In Noah's day the people didn't even believe the storm was coming. If they did believe it, they would have perhaps been like those at the shore; attempting to ride that storm out! In the end, though, there were only eight who did truly ride it out. Let's examine this account today to note the truth it teaches us.

We see first of all the Deliverance of the Godly in verses 1-9. These verses teach us about the mercy of God. 1 John 4:8 says simply that "God is love." It's a fact today that God loves you. This fact is seen in this account in one glorious word; COME! What a beautiful word all throughout Scripture. Isaiah cried, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1). Jesus Himself said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). At the very end of Scripture we read, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). God wants you to come to Him. For any who will there is deliverance. God said come, and Noah went.

We see here more details about the animals as well. Our tendency is to think that two of all sorts went on the ark. Scripture shows us here that there were seven of the clean animals. But how with seven can you have "a male and its mate?" And why were there these extras? I think it's partly in anticipation of the new rule after the Flood; man could now eat meat. I also think it was for purposes of sacrifice (see Genesis 8:20). Here was the odd one out so to speak. The seventh of the clean animals was sacrificed, leaving three pairs to replenish the earth.

What did it mean for Noah to be in the ark? The same thing it means today for us to be in Christ. Between Noah, his family, the animals and the storm were the judgment proof timbers of the ark. Between the believer and God's judgment on sin is Christ. He bore the storm for us. Now we're safe in Him.

Today, perhaps you're going through a trial. You don't go alone; Jesus has been to the cross for you, and He'll bring you through the trial too. Maybe there's some temptation constantly overtaking you. The message of the Cross (as seen in the Flood) is that you can be brought through that storm. But you'll only come safely through if you're on the ark. Perhaps you face discouragement over a situation. Certainly Noah and his family faced the same. Yet the day would come when the ark would rest and they would start anew. So too will you as you continue to look to Christ.

John Phillips says, "the animals went into the ark, Noah went in, his family went in, and the rest of mankind yawned in the face of God. Only eight persons were saved. The vast and costly work of salvation was all in vain so far as the majority went. Most

people simply did not believe that God intended to judge the world. Noah and his family alone took God at His word and dared all on the salvation provided for the race.” Because they believed, there was deliverance. Today, if you believe, there can be deliverance for you as well!

If you don’t believe, however, there’s a different fate, as seen in the Destruction of the Godless in verses 10-24. These verses teach us about the justice of God. In Exodus 34:7, God says, “I will by no means clear the guilty.” Habakkuk 1:13 declares that God is “of purer eyes than to behold evil.” God IS indeed a God of mercy who desires to forgive. But His deliverance is on the terms He states - the Cross. For those who reject this gracious offer for some man-centered effort there is no deliverance. Instead there’s destruction. Such was the case for those not on the ark.

Note the **timing of the destruction** (vv. 10-16). In these verse we see numerous notations of time. This teaches us several things. For one it shows that the Flood was a historical event. It was not an allegory or a myth containing religious teaching. God marks this event with amazing exactness. It also teaches that there’s a limit to God’s patience. The time limit had expired; the bell had tolled. Remember what God had said in Genesis 6:3: “My spirit shall not always strive with man.” It also teaches that God is sovereign over the affairs of the universe. He could have brought Flood years earlier or He could have delayed it for millennia. But He brought it at just the right time. In the selfsame way, He brought His Son into world perfectly. As Paul said, “when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son . . .” (Gal. 4:4). You may wonder why you’re faced with certain circumstances. Remember this message of God’s timing - it was perfect then, and it’s perfect today.

Notice something else about the timing. Noah and his family spent a full week in the ark with nothing happening! Why? I believe God was giving the people one final chance. This extra week of grace was intended to bring the people to repentance. Scripture indicates that during that week, the door was open. Any could have come by and gotten into the ark and found safety. Right now, the door is open. We live in an age of grace. The doors to heaven are open. This means two things. First, if you’ve not entered, you need to come in by the way of the cross. But second, if you have entered, you need to beckon to others to come.

Are you witnessing? Howard Hendricks says that “in the midst of a generation screaming for answers, Christians are stuttering.” Why? I believe because many times we don’t talk of Christ until we’re away from unbelievers. We can come to church and talk about Jesus in the comfort of these surroundings. But what about when we’re out in the community? By one count the gospels record 132 contacts Jesus had with people. Six were in the Temple, four in a synagogue and 122 were out with people in the mainstream of life. Friends, the door is open now. We must get where the fish are if we’re to catch any.

But at the end of that week of grace the door was closed. Notice verse 16; the Lord shut him in. I think that’s a significant statement. It was nothing that Noah did. It was all of what God did. Prior to sending judgment He secured Noah’s salvation. Oh how we need to remember that it is God who has placed us in Christ.

When the destruction came, it not only came with perfect timing but notice also the **totality of the destruction** (vv. 17-24). I wonder, what was the day like when the Flood began? Did people awaken to another sunny day? Or perhaps they were

awakened by loud thunder claps and they walked outside to dark skies and eventually stood in perplexity in the midst of a downpour. Could it be that the rain began gently with a slight drizzle but built and continued until the rivers burst their banks and torrents swept the people away? We're not told the details of the Flood; just that it came and with it came devastation. Verses 21-23 are pretty specific:

“And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.”

There are numerous theories about what caused the Flood. As interesting as they all are, we'll probably never know this side of heaven. Regardless of the specifics, however, the truth is the same - reject God's word and destruction is both certain and total!

It's interesting to note that flood stories exist in other cultures. Most notable is the Gilgamesh Epic, the Babylonian flood story. Liberal scholars point out the close similarities between this and the biblical account and argue that it influenced the story of Noah which we find in Genesis 6-8. But if you read Scripture literally, we find that after the Flood the earth was re-populated. People begin spreading out over the earth. Again they began rebelling (as seen in the account of the Tower of Babel). I would say that the remnants of the truth are contained in other accounts, yet it has been distorted by the sinfulness of man. There remains only one place to know the absolute truth - the inspired Word of God! Liberal scholars will deny it. Many preachers will allegorize it. Unbelievers laugh at it. But time will prove it true!

In his book, All the Miracles of the Bible, Herbert Lockyer tells of Sir Leonard Woolley and Dr. Langdon. Both discredited the Genesis record of the Flood until 1927 when they went to do excavations in the regions of Ur and Kish. There they found such unmistakable evidence of the Flood that in March of 1929, they wrote to the London Times, “we were loathe to believe that we had obtained confirmation of the Deluge of Genesis, but there is no doubt about it now.”

Friends, you can trust what the Bible has to say about this account. It's true historically, and because it's true historically the meaning it carries is much more significant. This inspired word tells us over and over that God is holy and righteous and He WILL punish sin. Yet in grace and mercy He does provide an ark - a way of escape!

Some 4500 years ago, trees were felled, nails were driven, and a covering of pitch was applied. Salvation was prepared. All it took was one step into the ark. Noah did and he was saved.

Two thousand years ago, THE tree was felled, nails were driven, and a covering of righteousness was applied. All because of the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross. Just as Noah was saved from God's wrath, so are we saved from God's wrath upon sin by trusting in Jesus Christ! All it takes is a step of faith on your part!