

Scripture Reading: Genesis 6:8-17

“5 Then Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And Jehovah was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 So Jehovah said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of Jehovah. 9 This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. 13 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 gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. 15 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. 16 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.”

"Make Yourself an Ark"

As we now begin our study of the Great Flood we will see this morning some true history, some sure comfort & a little about ships! It is often said that to properly present the Good News of salvation we must first present the bad news that someone is lost... Well, here in Genesis, the world has been given very bad news, but Noah has found grace so there is Good news for He and his family! The world is going to be destroyed but Noah will be given shelter!

I have included an outline in the order of worship this morning I hope will be helpful here and in the weeks ahead.

The Chiastic Structure of the Genesis Flood

Compiled by B. W. Anderson in 1978

Transitional introduction [6:9-10]

- A. Violence in Creation [6:11-12]**
- B. First Divine Speech: resolve to destroy [6:13-22]**
- C. Second Divine Speech: ‘enter ark’ [7:1-10]**
- D. Beginning of flood [7:11-16]**
- E. The rising flood [7:17-24]**
- God Remembers Noah!**
- E. The receding flood [8:1-5]**
- D. Drying of the earth [8:6-14]**
- C. Third Divine Speech: ‘leave ark’ [8:15-19]**
- B. God’s resolve to preserve order [8:20-22]**
- A. Fourth Divine Speech: Covenant [9:1-17]**

Transitional conclusion [9:18-19]

In previous messages we considered the bad news: The sinfulness of sin and the resolve of God to destroy all things living save Noah and his family. When we conclude our study of the flood we will come to God's resolve to preserve order and His new covenant with man and the animals! In between we see the focus is on the Good News: God remembered Noah!

- **I think it is also good to remember in our modern age that the focus is clearly on God & His glory!**

If Hollywood were writing the script, as I suspect they have in the upcoming movie, the focus would be on the damage that Man has done to the earth! But here in the Biblical account it is not only man who suffers under the penalty of his sin, but all things living and the earth itself!

- **The very creation that man was given to have dominion over is now going to be ruined because of man's sin.**

Yes, we are to be good stewards of all that God has made, but honoring His name and avoiding the many violent sins seen here in the days of Noah should not be forgotten!

This is why giving our children a proper understanding of this account is so important as well as learning how it can be an effective evangelistic tool today as we strive to expose modern man's worship of 'mother earth' just as Paul did in Athens for the Greeks who bowed down before the 'unknown god.'

So this morning we are going to look at the instructions God gave for building the Ark, the sanctuary that would save Noah and His family...

- **I want us to consider the imagery that it presents and the details that are given!**

[speak about the richness of God's Word and the two ditches of systematics and allegory]

The early church fathers talked much about the rich pictures we are given here with Noah's Ark.

They talked about how the dimensions are those of a human body so we would see that Noah's salvation was ultimately the Lord Jesus who would truly propitiate the Father's wrath!

- **Noah is saved in a wooden ship just as we are all saved by Jesus being nailed to a wooden cross.**

It is not wrong to discover and ponder such richness in the Word of God!

It can be carried to extremes and we should never build doctrines on such allegories unless the Scriptures specifically does like in the case of seeing Jesus as the Lamb of God.

Sometimes we may notice something that might be significant and just not be sure of its meaning: Mike asked me last week if there was significance to the fact that Noah was the first in the line of Jesus to be born after the death of Adam?

Well, that is certainly true and it seems to be significant, but I could find no one who had any insight, so that may come with later generations!

With that said, I want to turn to the some of the details in our text...

As we go through this account of the flood we will be remembering that it is real history: There was a real person Noah who we consider last week!

The genealogies given before and after this account clearly ground this event in history some 1,600 years after the Creation.

- **This week we will consider the details of the Ark and next week the details of the great flood itself.**
- **ALL are given as real history!**

Now as we do this it is good to remember some of the modern debates that swirl around these early chapters of Genesis.

As the so-called modern experts have made more and more attacks on the Bible saying that the Ark could not have survived or how a worldwide flood was impossible, many Christians have shrunk back acting as if the gates of hell could prevail against God's church!

Think of the example from the recent debate between Ken Ham and the 'science guy' Bill Nye. Mr. Nye insisted that a wooden ship the size of the ark could not have been seaworthy pointing to some failed wooden ships that were not even as large.

Wooden ships do have unique problems with leaks and shifting timbers that twist as the ship moves about, but what Mr. Nye conveniently left out were the recent discoveries of Greek ships that were almost as large as the Ark built by men who had solved those problems!

- Just where do you think the Greeks might have learned such a craft?

But rather than confront these doubts as Mr. Ham consistently does, many in the Church have decided to avoid the controversy by saying things like,

'well the Bible is not a ship-building book' or 'the Bible is not a geology book,' and thus it is no big deal if some of the details are wrong. Of course once you begin down that path as many have, you soon end up making the whole account just an allegory and lose ALL the real history that God has given.

- That is not a path we want to trod!

Now some of what they say about the Bible is true: It is NOT a ship-building manual & it is NOT a geology textbook.

- However, with that said, we must affirm that when the Bible does speak of ship-building or geology... What it says IS certainly true!

There are not enough details given here for you boys to go out and build an Ark in the back-yard...

- But there are enough details to see just how God saved Noah & all the animals and birds with a very sea-worthy craft.

Looking at verse fourteen we read this: "Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch." So in this verse we learn that it would be a wooden vessel, that it would have rooms [which would certainly be needed!] and it would be sea worthy.

What is translated gopher wood in our English Bible is a Hebrew word that might well speak about the shape of the wood rather than the species of tree. This speaks to the perceived problem that I spoke about a moment ago, because if God is telling Noah to use wood finished in a particular way [perhaps squared wood as the Septuagint translates gopher wood] it could well be the technology that led to the later Greek ships.

- The pitch was important because the ship must be water-tight for almost a year as we shall see in the coming weeks.

God goes on to give more details in verse 15: "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."

This speaks to the size and shape of the Ark. *[explain what a cubit was]*

So we have a ship that is about 500 feet long, about 75 feet wide and 45 feet in height.

Yes, as the early church fathers observed those are roughly the proportions of a human body...

- But they are also the right dimensions for a very sea-worthy vessel!

[talk about Pictures and tools we have now to compare with modern container ships].

The bottom of the ship would have been relatively flat because there would be no dock for it to land on at the end of the great flood.

- It came to rest on the ground!

In verse 16 we are given a few more details about the ship: “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.”

Our English translations are all over the place with the word that the New King James calls a window: You will find roof or light commonly used instead, so it appears that there would be a window or space on the roof to let in light and air which would have been essential for a year’s journey. As we discussed a few weeks ago, we don’t know much about the early technology before the flood...

But if Tubal-Cain was instructing men in the craftsmanship of brass and iron it is not a stretch to think they could have actually used glass or some other clear material for windows.

- Obviously the Ark needed a door for entrance and exit and we are told that the rooms would be distributed on three decks.
- As we shall see next week, this craft had plenty of room for the task for which it was intended!

Next week we will consider God’s commands regarding the animals and then in verse 22 it says, “Thus did Noah according to all that God commanded him.” We do not know how long Noah worked on this Ark, but he could have had up to 120 years! What we do know for sure is what the writer of the Book of Hebrews tells us which we considered at the Table last week: “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.”

So before I turn to some obvious applications for us today, let me anticipate a likely question at lunch...

- Do I think we will ever find any remains of Noah’s Ark?

In a word my answer would be NO. Let me explain why I think this is so, by asking another question:

- If the Ark was found what would be the world’s likely reaction?

It would quickly become an object of idolatrous false worship... I think this is the very same reason that we do not have any of the original writings that make up our Bible, what are called the autographs.

And let me use that as an example of why finding the Ark would be a problem:

- Imagine if someone unearthed the ACTUAL letter that Paul wrote to the Church at Rome?

It would be an amazing find to be sure, but what would follow? It would be studied and fought over for years and eventually put on display somewhere with people making pilgrimages to SEE the actual letter that Paul wrote! You would have a lot of attention on seeing the letter and little concern for actually reading what Paul wrote! Now some would argue that finding the Ark, or one of Paul’s letters could be a great evangelistic event!

- It could prove the Bible is true!
- What a great witness to our unbelieving friends & neighbors!

Well, I think it is very important that we remember one of the most sobering accounts that Jesus shared about a certain rich man *[explain the story]*

So the rich man tells Abraham that he has five brothers and asks that Lazarus be sent to them as a witness so they would not end up in hell where he was being tormented: Turning to Luke 16 we read about their exchange...

“29 Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' 30 And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31 But [Abraham] said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' ”

The hardness of man’s heart is hard indeed and we must not look to miracles or discoveries to soften them:

- **We must keep them before the Throne of Grace in our prayers & be faithful in sharing the Good News as Jesus commanded.**

So we don’t need to find Noah’s ark: Rather we need to be faithful witnesses of what God has done!

The Hebrew word used in these chapters to describe the flood is only used in two other places in the Old Testament and both where God is explaining how He is gracious to His people, just as He remembered Noah! Time will not allow me to cover them in detail this morning, but I will commend them to your further study! The first is found in Isaiah chapter 54 where we find a Scripture that is often used by our foreign missionary Blake Purcell who has often felt as lonely on the field as Noah must have in those final days before the flood... It encourages God’s people to expand their tents as they remember our faithful God who controlled the waters of the great flood. We see that theme of God remembering His people even more clearly in Psalm 29 where you will find the only other use of this word: *Remember, Isaiah chapter 54 & Psalm 29...* See if your children can find the word!

Yes, God remembered Noah and God has remembered His people down through history through His power! Whenever life is getting to us, and we think all is lost in this world, we need to remember that we are His people! I could remind us about the easy applications where we should be making sure we are in the boat and not in the world... But even when we are in the right place we don’t often see what God is doing!

So, I don’t think Mike will mind if I piggy back on an application that he made in his series on Jonah...

- **We find several boats in the Gospel accounts and I don’t think that is a coincidence!**

I want to close with that passage from Mark chapter 4 where Jesus takes His disciples on a boat, much as Noah was put in the Ark: And the context is very interesting because it follows His instructions about the mystery and majesty of His Kingdom!

Mark 4: “26 And [Jesus] said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, 27 and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. 28 For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. 29 But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." 30 Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? 31 It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; 32 but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade." On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. 37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. 38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" 39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

The disciples entered the boat with Jesus ‘as He was’ and came away understanding a bit more about His control of the entire Creation!

- **May it always be so with us!**