

Genesis 6: 14- 7: 15; “Spiritual Animals”, Sermon # 27 in the series- “Beginnings”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on May 15th, 2005, in the Morning Worship Service. (Also preached on July 25th, 2010, the week before we conducted our Vacation Bible School with the theme of Noah and the Ark.)

I hope that each of us this morning loves God and praises God for His creation of the animals. They are a part of “His wonderful works which are to be remembered.” “They are great, and they are to be studied by all who have pleasure in them,” as it says in Psalm 111: 2. The study of even one creature in depth requires a great amount of time, and a great deal of observation. Jonathan Edwards, I am told, spent a great deal of time in studying spiders when he was a young man. He wrote a treatise on them and wanted to have it published. In writing to the man who he wanted to have publish it, he said, “Although everything pertaining to this insect is admirable, yet there are some phenomena relating to them more particularly wonderful.” And this is how it is with us this morning when we consider Noah and the animals with him. Everything related to what God did for them was wonderful, but some things are particularly wonderful. When we think of what it really must have been like for Noah, riding on the high seas in this big ark for a year’s period of time, with every species of birds, and beasts, and every creeping thing of the earth, we stand amazed. What must have it been like to live with Elephants and bears and crocodiles and beavers? When you woke up in the morning, what kind of creatures would you have staring you in the face? But there is also a wonderful spiritual significance to these animals that entered the ark that applies to us here today. It applies to those who would understand the gospel, and to us who would know our Lord and ourselves better. The animals entering the ark, picture for us 3 aspects of the great way of salvation which has been worked out for us by God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let’s think about them together.

1st- God’s making a covenant with Noah included the saving of all these species of animals which went with him in the ark. (Chapter 6: 18-22)

When God undertook to save Noah from the judgment that He was bringing on all flesh, he also sought to preserve everything good that He had created before, to be of use to him. Animals were, and are, an important part of our existence. They are a source of pleasure and profit and joy to man. They are God’s good gift to man. All animals and birds faced being entirely destroyed in the flood, along with the sinfully perverse race of humanity, if God did not do something about it. Verse 18 of Chapter 6 says, “But I will establish My covenant with you and you shall go into the ark- you, your sons, your wife, and your sons wives with you. And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you.” In the covenant which God established with Noah, we have seen that God promised to keep Noah and his household alive physically, when he brought the judgment of the flood. And in preserving Noah’s physical

life, God was also declaring, that He really would be saving Noah from sin. He would give eternal life to everyone on that ark who believed in His promise of a Savior, the One who Noah knew as “the seed of the woman” from the promise in Genesis 3: 15. This covenant which God made with Noah, was meant to be a covenant of life in both senses; to preserve his physical life, and to show forth His election of Noah unto eternal life. His election of Noah, and others of His choosing, on the ark, was His sovereign free choice of them as persons to be spared, not only from His temporal, earthly wrath poured out in the flood, but also His eternal punishment in the lake of fire. God intended in this judgment to picture the last judgment, the final judgment upon all the ungodly from all ages. This covenant with Noah pictures God’s covenant with all of His elect people. God would show mercy to them based upon what Jesus Christ would do to bear in His body, on the tree, all the sins of all His people. He would live the perfect life of obedience so that they could be righteous. He would die the sacrifice for their sins. His person and work would become an ark of refuge from the wrath of God, in which they would be raised to eternal life. Benjamin Keach says in his book *Preaching on the types and metaphors of the Bible*, “Noah built an ark according to the commandment of God: so Christ in building his church, did everything according to the commandment received from His Father.”

But you will notice that the preservation of the life of these animals, two of every sort, male and female, was entrusted **to Noah** to keep them alive. Why was this? Well I believe that, beyond the obvious fact that someone had to take care of them, that we have in Noah a picture of what Christ is, in covenant to His church. These animals would come to Noah, be fed by Noah, be sustained by his care, preserved alive and delivered from the wrath of God in the judgment of this flood; all because Noah was righteous and cared for them. Noah was an earthly savior to them. Christ is the true and real and actual Savior of all men and especially those who believe. Sinners come to Jesus, are fed and nourished by His good Word, sustained by His loving care, and are given of His righteousness and strength to live the Christian life. All this is based on the Covenant of grace between the Father and the Son. Spiritual truth, in pictures and types, goes far beyond the obvious physical literal sense of things. It was given to us in plentiful abundance in the Old Testament so that Christ would be understood in a better sense by the people who lived before the coming of Christ. They were given for us, as well, in New Testament times in God’s Word, to illustrate for us, the gospel of Christ, so that we might believe. And we should not be afraid to set forth the reasonable spiritual reasons for why animals of all kinds should be brought into the ark.

Let’s understand 2ndly- that God has given us a picture, in these animals which entered the ark, of the kinds of sinners that He saves and brings into the Church. (Chapter 7: 1-3)

Verse 2 says, “You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female; also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face

of the earth. The ark is a type of Christ, and every one in Him is saved. But His church, which is saved by being in Him, is composed of men from every tribe, tongue, people and language. It is composed of all kinds and “species” of men. High born, low born, intellectual, barbarian, male and female, and all these are pictured for us so well in the animals of the ark. “How can this be proved,” you say to me? Turn with me to Acts 10. When the gospel first came to the Gentiles, it came through Peter’s seeing a vision. In Acts 10: 11 he saw “heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to himself, let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things and birds of the air. A voice came to him, ‘Rise, Peter kill and eat.’ But Peter said Not so Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean. And a voice spoke to him again the second time, ‘What God has cleansed, you must not call common.’” We see here, that the same kind of animals that entered the ark, are also being represented in Peter’s vision, as all kinds of Gentile peoples, those who were going to be taken in the gospel net and saved. The church is to be composed of sinners of all kinds. Clean and unclean shall come into the ark, and clean and unclean shall come to Christ for salvation. The unclean animal is the picture of a great and gross sinner against the Lord. His nature is wild and seemingly untamable. He is the kind of person that many people think is the only kind of sinner that needs to be saved. He is a snake in his subtlety, he is wild and uncontrollable as a bull, he is stubborn as a mule, and he is cunning as a fox. In this world of men and women, there are as many varieties of sinners as there are species of animals. Each one has their own peculiar temperament and vice. Listen to Jeremiah 46: 20, 21, “Egypt is a very pretty heifer, but destruction comes, it comes from the north. Also her mercenaries are in her midst like fat bulls, for they also are turned back.” You hear David speaking prophetically, not only of himself, but of Christ when he says in Psalm 22: 12, “Many bulls have surrounded Me; strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me. They gape at Me with their mouths, like a raging and roaring lion.” And verse 16, “For dogs have surrounded Me.” And verses 20 and 21, “Deliver Me from the sword, My precious life from the power of the dog. Save Me from the lion’s mouth and from the horns of the wild oxen!” Now, let us ask ourselves, “Were there lions and dogs, wild oxen and bulls at the crucifixion?” No, not literally, but there were men that day that were acting out their sinfulness in ways that made the psalmist think of those animals. This is why Jesus Christ had to be made, by God, to be the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” We must remember, as well, that there are many people who have a swinish nature, people who we would not choose to associate with, and whose hearts and lives are an abomination to the Lord. We are told not to give what is holy to the dogs or to cast our pearls before swine lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear us in pieces.” (Matthew 7: 6) But the great commission at the end of Mark’s gospel says, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe shall be damned.” Therefore we can conclude that the ark of

Christ's salvation will have animals come into it, many great and awful sinners.

God also had Noah bring into the ark clean animals as well as unclean. He is saying by this, that there are many people who are quite culturally refined and moral people in their natural bent; people who love order, and decency, and morality, who will only be brought into the ark of Christ by grace. These are often the children of parents who have taught them right from wrong, and they love to please their parents by being compliant most of the time. For, as it says in Proverbs 30: 24, "There are four things which are little on the earth, but they are exceedingly wise: The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their food in the summer; the rock badgers are a feeble folk, yet they make their homes in the crags; the locusts have no king, yet they all advance in ranks; the spider skillfully grasps with its hands, and it is in king's palaces." You see here that Solomon is trying to point out, from the qualities of these creatures, what people should be like. They should be wise, even though they are little; frugal, even though they are weak; prudent, even though they are feeble; skillful to obtain the great privilege of being in king's palaces. The locusts are clean creatures, it says in Leviticus 11: 22, and here it says that they all advance in ranks even though they have no king. But see how much even fine skillful people need King Jesus, see how much they still need the grace of Christ to find the change of nature that they need to please God and submit to His laws. They must come through the door into the ark. They must come and take refuge in the blood and righteousness of Christ because their self-righteousness is not enough. Christ's merits alone will save them from wrath and make them pure. That is why they must come into the ark.

3rdly- God shows us how He brings sinners to Himself. (Chapter 7: 13-16)

How do you suppose it was that all these animals, clean and unclean, came to find themselves going up the gangplank and through the big door, and into the ark? They were all drawn there by God's Holy Spirit in spite of what they were by nature. They all appear to have come into the ark in the last 7 days before the flood. None of the great men of renown came in, none of the beautiful women came, none of culturally correct children of the "giants" came. Perhaps they were all laughing and amazed by what was going into the ark.....animals. All the species of animals came that God directed to come. They were drawn to the ark. The animals were probably amazed themselves, that they, a creature of the air or forest, was entering the ark. Here they come marching two by two, Hurrah, Hurrah! There are three which are majestic in their pace, it says in Proverbs 30: 29, "Yes, four which are stately in walk: A lion which is mighty among beasts and does not turn away from any; the strutting cock, the male goat also, and a king whose troops are with him." All these except the last came marching majestically into the ark, because God drew them there. He sovereignly overrode their instincts to be afraid, their instincts to proudly resist; to stay in the woods, or up in the sky, or in the marsh. He drew them with His Spirit's mighty power. He caused them to desire to come into that great door of the ark. They never would have come into that ark unless God had changed their perception of what they naturally

would have wanted or done. And the same is true of any person who comes to Christ. If you ever come to Christ, it must be because He has shown you that by nature, you really do not want to come. By nature, you will not come into the ark of salvation which is Christ. But by the wooing of the Spirit in God's effectual call, you will come. You may be a very nice and moral person, and may have been that way for many years, but only by God's grace will you come through the door into the ark of Christ. You may have attained to the greatest heights of culture and refinement, and still, every bird outside the ark has no place to rest, no place to land. Will you not come to Christ, come through the door, come into the ark today? I pray that God will lead you in this blessed way that every true Christian has found and every seeking sinner will most certainly find when his eyes have been opened to see the door and move toward it!

A few years ago now, when we became interested in feeding and watching birds, I put out a feeder for humming birds. It has in it a mixture of sugar and water. It is red and brightly colored. To my astonishment there was a little female ruby-throated hummingbird feeding at it, within half an hour after I had put it up. Jenni was busy reading a little booklet on hummingbirds when this little bird flew up. I said, "Is that a hummingbird?" She kept reading, as if to say, "Don't bother me, I am reading this." I said, "Is that a hummingbird?" She looked over, and sure enough, it was. Sometimes a preacher focuses all his attention on the book and doesn't look for the bird that is feeding. I pray that some young person here this morning would come to Christ, be attracted by the blood of his cross and feed on the sweet nectar of the gospel and be saved. May each of us here, even animals in our sin, come into the ark and be saved.