

# Lifeboat of Grace in a Sinking World

By E. A. Johnston

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## **Ambassadors For Christ Intl-USA**

1335 Terrell Mill Road  
Bldg 1462, Suite 100  
Marietta, GA 30067

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/9225](http://www.sermonaudio.com/9225)

I want you today to picture in your mind the planet earth. Think of it now. Think of the earth and its physical matter and the present world system in which we live. We are born into this world through the pain of labor; it's a struggle to survive. Life itself is full of pain and suffering, disappointments and grief. This earth is little more than a planet filled with sorrow and tears.

Let me describe what this world really is: this world is a wrecked vessel breaking up on the rocks and quickly sinking, all aboard will perish. But there is a lifeboat nearby ready to lift the perishing to safety but they ignore this lifeboat as if it did not exist at all or they treat it with contempt and indifference, thinking their condition is not as perilous as it appears. But the ship they are on is sinking fast, worse than the Titanic, and soon it will go down pulling everyone on board down to the lower depths as these passengers descend to a region they never intended on entering and that region is hell.

There is a lifeboat of grace in a sinking world but few wish to board it. The lifeboat is the gospel of the Son of God and it gives life to all who enter in. For to be without Christ in this sinking world is to be like someone in the days of Noah without an ark.

Listen friends, my message today is entitled "Lifeboat of Grace in a Sinking World." Our passage is found in 2 Peter 3:3-9. Allow me to read that passage to you as we begin,

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Now let me say this, dear friends, it's later than you think both for this generation and your life. These, indeed, are the last days where scoffers are all around us, mocking God as in the days of Noah as he built the ark. They laughed at Noah and mocked such an old, foolish man who preached righteousness and warned them to flee from the wrath to come. They ridiculed him and his boat for it was obvious to anyone with any sense that there was no need for it. It had never rained like that before. The old man was just an old fool. Don't pay him any mind. And then we read in Genesis 7:10 the following five striking words, "And it came to pass." The text reads, "And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were upon the earth." In other words, the flood came suddenly and without warning, destruction to that generation of people came suddenly and without warning. They perished quickly as their homes and buildings began to float and then sink. The perishing scrambled to grab hold of any piece of driftwood that would float and sustain them but the torrents came down in such intensity that they were utterly and finally consumed and drowned.

God judged the former world by flood for its wickedness and sin for God is a holy God who must punish sin. But many today don't believe in that kind of God. They just don't believe that God is a God who must punish sin, but indeed he is and indeed he will. To ignore this fact is to be like those spoken of here in this passage of Scripture, "For this they are willingly ignorant." It says and then reads, "Whereby the world that then was being overflowed with water perished." You see, friend, to ignore how God deals with sin and sinful man is to be willingly ignorant for we have the Scripture record.

The Apostle Peter knew Christ personally and intimately. The Apostle Peter had heard the voice of God speak audibly and with authority upon the Mount of Transfiguration. The Apostle Peter knew his Bible and he knew his God and he says that in the last days, in other words, in the end times right before the Second Coming of Christ, there shall be scoffers walking about mocking God and shaking their fists in his face and declaring, "Where is the promise of his coming?"

The very same kind of man who scoffed as they impudently passed Calvary, the gospel of Mark describes their talk on that day and the condition of their wicked hearts. Mark 15 reads, "And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross." Scoffers, mockers as in the days of Noah, as in the days of Christ and in the world right now. Right now. Men marrying men and women marrying women and judges legislating laws and enforcing them against the very laws of God and shaking their angry fists in the face of God and declaring, "Where is the promise of his coming?"

But the Apostle Peter solemnly gives a warning that to ignore how God has moved in former days in his dealings with judging sin is to be willingly ignorant. In other words, willingly against the very nature of God and the promises of God. Then the Apostle Peter issues a very solemn warning with the following words, "But the heavens and the earth which are now by the same word are kept in store reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." Peter states that as the old world was consumed by floods and that generation utterly destroyed, so too the world will once again pass

under the judgment of an angry God who will destroy it by fire. He even graphically describes this terrible scene for us in verse 10, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

To Peter’s hearers in his day, this seemed quite incomprehensible but to us today who live in a nuclear world where any madman can get his hands on a nuclear weapon and start WWII and set off a series of nuclear explosions which would quickly and quite suddenly fulfill the promise of the Scripture in which “the heaven shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” And may I add, burned up immediately and finally and utterly. To live in this day and age in a nuclear world and still ignore how the God of the Bible must punish sin is to be willfully ignorant, indeed.

Now, allow me to read the verse which describes the title of my message and is our focus today, verse 10. The title of my message is “Lifeboat of Grace in a Sinking World.” Listen to this verse as I read it to you now,

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

A lifeboat of grace in a sinking world. The gospel speaks of a Savior who is a lifeboat to the perishing. The gospel speaks of a day of grace and the duty of repentance. The gospel speaks of a longsuffering God who is holy and who must punish sin as he has promised in his written Word. He is not slack concerning that promise but he is a gracious and merciful, longsuffering God who loves sinful man so deeply and so greatly that he gave his only begotten Son to come and suffer and die for sinful man.

Listen, God so loved the world that he built a cross out of the wood of the trees that he made and allowed his Son to hang on that cross and bleed and die for sinful man. God so loved the world that he provided a lifeboat in the days of Noah before the floods came and warned that generation of wicked men to flee to the safety of that lifeboat which was the ark but they laughed and scoffed and drowned.

Then a gracious and merciful God sent his only dear Son into this wicked world and allowed him to be taken by wicked men who scourged him and spat on him and nailed him to a bloody tree with cruel mockings, contempt and ridicule. The very ark of safety was hanging on that bloody tree but they refused that offer and crucified the Lord of glory.

Now today, the world is perishing and dying and it mocks God as it grows in wickedness. All the while, God has the offer of grace in the person of his dear Son and the invitations of the gospel and the world mocks and holds a longsuffering God in contempt and it tramples the blood of his dear Son who hung there and died for sinful man. And soon,

quite soon, sooner than any of us realize, the God of creation will roll up this world as a fiery garment and destroy it and all who die apart from a saving faith in Jesus Christ will die in their sins and be cast into hell and its everlasting burnings.

The Word of God declares, "The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God." The world will be burned up by fire and all in it shall perish and then God will declare, "Let that seize upon them and let them go down quick into hell for wickedness is in their dwellings and among them."

And some of you casually listen to this message and act like Felix, who the Scriptures say, "Felix trembled and answered, Go thy way for this time when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." You foolishly believe you have all the time in the world when in reality the Bible declares against you, "For man also knoweth not his time as the fishes that are taken in an evil net and as the birds that are caught in the snare so are the sons of men snared in an evil time when it falleth suddenly upon them."

We live in an evil day where you can be gunned down as you stand in line in a public place. You can be murdered and removed from this planet quite suddenly. Sudden death is all around you. You may be killed in an accident or your heart may just suddenly stop, sending you into an eternity that you are quite unprepared for.

Listen friends, there are no second chances in hell. When you die in your sins and awake in hell, you will no longer be under the longsuffering hand of God who extended a lifeboat of grace in a sinking world and you not only ignored it but you held it with complete contempt. God will then hold you in contempt for all eternity as you suffer and burn under his Almighty wrath as it is poured out on you as a mighty oven does its consuming flames.

You foolishly ignore the storm warnings all around you, that you are living in a ruined and wrecked world that is breaking up upon the rocks and there is only one place of safety and that is in the person of Jesus Christ and his blood. A sudden death could suddenly remove you and where would you be? To be reprov'd and not to bow and submit to the King of glory is to defy him. "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

You listening to this message may be quite suddenly destroyed and you will die without remedy. The remedy for sin is Jesus Christ. Your duty of repentance is a command from a holy God. Jesus declared, "Unless you repent, ye shall all likewise perish." The invitations of the gospel of the Son of God are many. Here, they cry out to you now. Will you heed and submit to the claims of Christ on your life and surrender your all to him through repentance and faith?

God lovingly declares, "Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth for I am God and there is none else. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him and to our God for he

will abundantly pardon. Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Then 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.”

Dear friend, are you hungry for God? He is the bread of life. Are you tired of your sins? Jesus is the remedy for sin. Are you thirsty for Christ? Listen to what Jesus declares, “If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” Do you want the living water?

Listen, dear friend, the gospel of the Son of God is for the hungry, the weary and the thirsty. Listen friend, there is a lifeboat of grace in this sinking world. “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness but is longsuffering to usward not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

I will close this message with this promise to you from God, the living God, the God of the Bible, the God who must punish sin: Jesus declares, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”