

PICTURES IN NOAH'S ARK

September 21, 2014

Genesis 8:1-22

The truth of Scripture is eternal: it has always been true and will be true forever. But that truth was revealed to man progressively. One generation received truth previously unknown, which built upon and expanded truths revealed to previous generations. Yet many truths revealed later were foreshadowed in earlier biblical history. The writer of Hebrews spoke of the Old Testament sacrificial system as “a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things” (Heb. 10:1). Although we do not build doctrines upon these Old Testament “shadows,” yet in them we observe pictures of truth revealed later in Scripture. Thus, today we notice “Pictures in Noah’s Ark.”

1. The Picture of Sins Judged in Christ

The ark “weathered the storm,” receiving the full brunt of rain, waves and flood. All inside the ark were delivered, all outside perished. Christ’s body suffered the full brunt of divine judgment when he bore our sins on the cross (I Pet. 2:24). All who were “chosen . . . in him before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4), passed through that judgment in him, just as those chosen to enter the ark passed through the flood and were delivered.

2. The Picture of the Resurrection

The whole human race disappeared in the flood. Not one living human remained on earth’s soil until the occupants of the ark emerged from its open door. That emergence of Noah and his family was a resurrection of humanity from the death that overtook it in the flood. Christ’s people are described as having been raised with him. In His resurrection from the tomb, they are “risen with Christ” (Col. 3:1, 2:12; Eph. 2:2, 5-6). The ark experience foreshadowed resurrection: Christ’s and His saints’.

3. The Picture of the New Birth

Noah and his family left the ark to enter a new world. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new” (II Cor. 5:17). When one has been born again, he gains an entirely new view of the world.

4. The Picture of the Atonement

The word translated “pitch” (6:14), designating the substance that Noah used to waterproof the ark, is the word translated “atonement” elsewhere in Scripture. As it covered the wood of the ark, thus enveloping those who were inside the ark, so God provided an atonement that covers sin, and shields the sinner from judgment.

5. The Picture of the Old and New Nature

As the floodwaters subsided, Noah released two birds from the ark: a raven and a dove. The raven did not return, for it could find plenty to eat among the refuse remaining from the flood. But the dove returned to the ark, for its nature differed sharply from the raven. The raven, an unclean animal, represents the defiled sinful nature that feeds upon the corruption of the world. The dove, a symbol of the Holy Spirit, represents the new nature that cannot be satisfied with the corruption of the world, but dwells with those who are in Christ, our ark.