Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ,

Someone recently told me about the first time he read through the Bible. He had grown up in a Roman Catholic environment, but it was only when a charismatic pastor arrived in town and handed out Bibles that he began to read it. And the charismatic pastor did not stay around long, so this brother didn’t really have anyone to teach him how to read and understand the Bible. And so, for example, he thought he had to obey the Old Testament food laws. But one good thing that his Bible reading produced was a deep conviction of sin. He would come home from work and read more of the Bible, and weep over his sins. But it wasn’t until some years later that he learned how to read and understand the Bible. And just to be clear here, anyone can read the Bible and understand about salvation in Jesus Christ. The Bible is very plain about the need to repent and believe in Jesus to receive the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. We heard this earlier, for example, in Acts 10. **But how does the Bible teach Jesus Christ in Genesis 7 or 2 Chronicles 12 or Nahum 2**? That is what I mean by reading and understanding the Bible. You see, we know that the Old Testament is about Jesus because He said so. On the day of His resurrection, He appeared to two very sad and confused people who were travelling from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They thought that Jesus was the promised Messiah. But now He was dead. So, as they saw it, He could not be the Messiah then! And in one of the most important passages in the Bible, in terms of how to read and understand it, Jesus rebuked them for failing to believe that what had happened to Him was foretold in the Old Testament. We read: “*beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, [Jesus] interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself*.” In other words, the whole Old Testament is about Jesus Christ. Wherever we are in the Old Testament, a key question we should be asking is: What does this passage reveal about Jesus Christ? And when I say ‘Jesus Christ’ I mean the fulness of God’s plan of salvation in Jesus Christ.

And that is going to be our major focus today. As we consider the historical account of Noah and his family entering the Ark, we want to see that it is **a call to Escape the Coming Judgment by Entering into union with Jesus by Faith**. And this will get deeply personal for each one of us: Will this passage serve as an encouragement or a warning?

1. And in the first of the two main parts of this passage, verses 1-4, **God’s command to Noah and his family to enter the ark is** **a preview of God’s command to enter into union with Jesus by faith**.
   1. We have seen in recent weeks that the post-Fall world had become increasingly wicked. In fact, there was only one man left in the line of promise – Noah. And this is reinforced again in verse 1, where God said to Noah, “*I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation*.” And we have spoken previously about this being a reference to Noah’s personal godliness, but more foundationally than that, to his being one of God’s elect ones. Noah was one that God chose to save *by grace* alone *through faith* alone *in Christ* alone.

* 1. And we saw last time that best calculations from the biblical data suggest that God commanded Noah to begin building the ark 55-75 years before the flood came. And as chapter 7 opens, **the ark was finished**. And working back from the information we are given in verse 11, which is that the flood began “*in the second month on the seventeenth day of the month*” when Noah was 600 years old, and the information in verse 4, which is that God told Noah that He would begin to send rain seven days on from when He told Noah to enter the Ark, then it was on the 10th day of the second month that God said to Noah, “*Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation*.”
  2. And we will come back to that command of God in a moment, but before we do, just a few comments about some of the details in this section:
     1. One is that we don’t know for sure **which calendar Moses was using** when he wrote Genesis. There are a variety of theories, including a lunar calendar, a calendar from the non-biblical book of Jubilees, or even just that he meant the second month of Noah’s 600th year. What we do know from the Bible chronologies is that the flood came 1656 years after creation. And another point worth noting is that the references here to seven days, and forty days and nights, and months and days, and years, so close to Genesis 1, further reinforces the fact that the seven days of Genesis 1 were ordinary days.
     2. Another part of this section worth commenting on is the command in verses 2-3 to take **seven pairs of all clean animals and birds**, and a pair of the unclean animals into the ark. Everywhere else in the flood account it is just “two of” each animal and bird and creeping thing.
        1. And you may have a note to the side or at the bottom of the page of your Bible that explains that the Hebrew here can also be translated as seven of each kind. So, we are not entirely sure whether it was seven pairs of each kind or just seven of each kind. We will learn in chapter 9 that these extra clean animals were because Noah had to sacrifice each kind of clean animal and bird as a burnt offering after the flood. So, extra ones allowed Noah to sacrifice one or some and still have a breeding pair left over.
        2. And on this matter, you might be wondering how Noah knew which animals were clean and unclean when the laws about clean and unclean were given to Israel around 900 years *after* the flood? Well, to give you a full explanation of this would potentially distract us from our major focus today. And we did spend quite a bit of time on this in a sermon in our Leviticus series a couple of years ago. And I can get you a copy of that sermon if you like. But in short, it has to do with the impact of the Fall on the animal kingdom. Because of the Fall, some animals had become meat eaters, others were part of the process of composting, some lived in the water and on land, rather than just in one realm, some scurried about in the dust of the earth, and others had human-like features. And these various features had only come about after the Fall. So, they were visible reminders of sin’s effect on creation. And that is why those animals were viewed as unclean, even before God had Moses write it down in Leviticus 11. So, perhaps God made this known to Adam by direct revelation, and he then passed it down the generations.
     3. But one other point worth considering here is that **as the 55-75 years came to an end**, the ark superstructure would have been finished. And Noah had been told to “*cover it with pitch, inside and out*,” and that work would have been completed. Noah also had to gather and store all the food that was necessary, which he must have been busy with in the weeks and days prior to the flood. And knowing our own wives, Mrs Noah probably wanted to decorate their cabin, right? And we also know from chapter 6:20 that God said that He would bring all the animals and birds and creeping things to the ark. And so, perhaps the animals had already begun to arrive. In addition, we know from the chronologies of chapters 5-7 that Lamech, Noah’s father, died five years before the flood, and that Methuselah, Noah’s grandfather, died in the year that the flood came. And we cannot be 100% certain about this but Methusaleh’s name most probably means – “When he dies it comes.” So, the only other believers had died. Thus, there were probably many ‘signs’ that pointed to the fact the time for the long-promised flood must be very near. But now, with the command of God, Noah knew for certain that he had seven days to finish everything and go into the ark.
  3. But coming back to our major focus here: **God commanded Noah and his household to enter the ark**. And in the context of the Old Testament being about Jesus Christ, this is a picture or a preview of the command of God to enter into union with Jesus by faith. You see, that is what salvation is – union with Jesus Christ. We are joined to Him. **Galatians 2:20** puts it best: “*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me*.” And we enter into union with Jesus **by faith** – we believe in Him and in His work for us. And this is previewed in our text in a number of ways:
     1. One is that Noah is **a type of Christ**. For as Noah built the ark to be the one vessel of salvation, so Jesus Christ is building His church. And as Noah had to pilot the ark across the stormy seas, so the Lord Jesus pilots His church through the tempestuous sea of this world. And just as Noah had to provision the ark with all the food that was necessary for the journey, so the Lord Jesus is the provider of all good things for the church, and the one who feeds His people, and the one who will preserve the life of all in His church, meaning all true believers. So, Noah is a type of Christ.
     2. And we noted last time that there was **only one door into the ark** – the vessel of salvation. And in **John 10:9**, Jesus said, “*I am the door. If anyone enters by me, He will be saved … I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand*.” The Bible tells us that Judgment Day is coming. And the **only way** to escape being condemned to an eternity in hell is to repent of your sins and believe in Jesus Christ. You must believe that He is the Son of God and that He died on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.
     3. And the best New Testament equivalent for God’s command to Noah and his household to enter the ark is **Matthew 11:28-30**. That is where Jesus said, “*Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*.” And what you must understand today is that this is the ***command*** of God. Your Creator is standing before you today and commanding you to enter into union with His Son through faith. It is not a take it or leave it invitation. It is not a Facebook all welcome event. It is the *command* of God. And I must tell you today that if you refuse to obey Him, when you stand before Him on Judgment Day, you will remember this moment. But it will be too late then.

1. So, God’s command to Noah and his family to enter the ark is a preview of God’s command to enter into union with Jesus by faith. And in verses 5-16, **Noah obediently entering the ark is a preview of how we enter into union with Jesus, which is by faith**.
   1. Verse 5 tells us that “*Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him*.” And we see in verses 6-9 that this involved going into the ark together with his wife and their sons and their wives, and the animals and birds and creeping things. And again, at the end of verse 9, the emphasis is on their obedience to what God had commanded them to do. And we will come back to verses 10-12 next time, in association with the flood and the global devastation that it brought. But as we come to verse 13, the obedience of Noah is restated, but with a bit more detail – he “*and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah’s wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark*,” along with the beasts and livestock and creeping things and birds and winged creatures, according to their kinds. And again, in verse 16, we see the same emphasis: They “*went in as God commanded them*.”
   2. And we will finish with Noah’s obedience in a moment, but before that, there is one element of this passage that is worth our consideration. And it could easily be a sermon in its own right, but we can only be brief today. In verse 1, the Lord said to Noah, “*Go into the ark, you* ***and all your******household***.” And we see in verse 13 that that is what happened. And we noted last time that the focus of this entire section is Noah and his righteousness. In 6:18, God made covenant with Noah. But the covenant and its benefits included his wife, and their sons and wives. And as we said last time, this is not to say that Noah’s wife and their sons and their wives were all elect and saved in the ultimate sense. That is God’s business. But they were in the covenant. They did escape the flood. And this is how it always is with God’s dealings with His people in Scripture – you *and your household*, or you *and your children*. And so, unsurprisingly, in the New Testament, we read about household baptisms. Whether it is the Roman centurion or Lydia or the Philippian jailer or Crispus or Stephanus, we read about each of them believing and then being baptized *together with their household*. And **1 Peter 3:20-22** links Noah and his household surviving the flood with baptism. Listen to Peter’s words: “*When God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this* (meaning Noah and his household surviving the flood)*, now saves you*.” And this is part of why we believe we ought to baptize the children of believers. And again, this is not saying that our children are elect and saved in the ultimate sense. Salvation is only by faith in Christ. But they are in the covenant and should receive the sign of the covenant.
   3. But coming back to our major focus here: The obedience of Noah and his household is a picture or a preview of how we enter into union with Jesus Christ, which is by faith.
      1. God said to Noah and his household that a flood of judgment was coming in seven days, and that their only hope of salvation was to go into the ark. And they believed God and entered.
      2. And there are many passages in the New Testament that speak about a coming Day of Judgment. In **Matthew 25**, Jesus said, “*When the Son of Man comes in His glory … then He will sit on his glorious throne. Before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats*.” And **2 Corinthians 5:10** says, “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil*.”
      3. And the only way to escape this coming Judgment and eternal condemnation is to enter into Jesus by faith. In **John 5:24**, Jesus said, “*Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life*.”
      4. So, today, the door into the ark of salvation is wide open. Go in! Enter into union with Jesus Christ by faith.
   4. But I must warn you to do so ***today***. Look at the last words of verse 16: “*And the Lord shut him in*.” And this was good news for Noah and his household. They were safe within. The Lord would now preserve them from destruction. But this was bad news for everyone still outside, for now it was too late to escape judgment. And this has a New Testament parallel also.
      1. If you are a believer, if you have entered into union with Jesus, then listen to His words of comfort from **John 6:39**: “*And this is the will of Him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day*.” And He said the same thing in **John 10:27-28**: “I give [those who believe in me] eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.” Your salvation is secure in Jesus. Your eternal life is secure in Jesus. He will bring you through the flood of life to your eternal home!
      2. But if you are not a believer and death comes or Jesus returns, it will be too late for you. The parable we read earlier is about 10 virgins waiting for a bridegroom to appear. The virgins represent people who profess faith, and the bridegroom is Jesus. And because the bridegroom took longer to arrive than was expected, five of the virgins left to buy oil for their lamps. And what Jesus meant by this was that their profession of faith was not true; they were pretend Christians, they had not truly entered into union with Jesus. And while they were away, the bridegroom came. And here is how the parable ends: “*And those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.'*” So, if you are not a believer, or you are a pretend believer, go to Jesus *today* in faith. Humble yourself and receive Him as your Saviour and Lord. Decide, from this day on, to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Him.

And this, congregation, is how the first part of Genesis 7 reveals God’s plan of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Let us pray: