

## **CHAOS TO ORDER**

### **Noah Leaves the Ark**

#### **Genesis 8**

#### **Introduction**

In Genesis Chapter 8, the Ark lands, and Noah plans to leave the Ark. After the destruction and devastation of the flood is over, God begins to dry out the earth. The waters recede, and Noah, his family, and the animals finally can leave the Ark after a year of waiting for the land to dry out.

The first thing Noah does when they leave the Ark is offer a sacrifice of worship to God. And God commits to never again strike down all life on earth with a flood. Verse 1 tells us God focuses on Noah's future and remembers and blesses Noah.

"Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that *were* with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided." (Genesis 8:1 NKJV)

Of course, God never forgot about Noah. He sustained him every day on the Ark. But at this point, God again turned His active attention towards Noah. For many days, the focus was the flood and God's judgment. But now, God's full attention shifts to Noah and the future of mankind through his family. Have you ever felt that God is focusing His attention elsewhere just when you need Him? Never forget God always has His eye on you and knows just what you need. And just at the right time, He will always come through.

For Noah, God made a wind to pass over the earth and caused the waters to subside. Impossible situations for us are never a big problem to God. A God who created the heavens and the earth can always come up with creative solutions.

#### **I. The Storm is Over**

In verse 2, the storm is over, the waters begin to recede, and the Ark rests in the Ararat mountains.

"The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days, the waters decreased. Then the Ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth *month*, on the first *day* of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen." (Genesis 8:2-5 NKJV)

It's a great day when the storm is finally over, and the crisis has ended. But now you've got to begin the long and tedious task of charting a new path going forward.

God causes a wind to blow as soon as the rains cease, affecting the course of the Ark and the waters. He also puts an end to the rain, the fountains of the deep, and the windows of heaven that have raged for 40 days and nights.

The mountains of Ararat may seem to be a questionable place for the Ark to land. A high altitude and mountainous terrain would make it difficult for Noah's family and the animals to debark. However, if God's purpose was to put the Ark where it could be preserved for thousands of years, He chose an excellent place for it. When the waters begin to recede, the first thing Noah sees is the tops of the mountains, which is another indication this was a worldwide flood.

## **II. Testing the Waters**

In verse 6, Noah uses two birds to test the condition of the earth.

"So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the Ark which he had made. Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the Ark to him, for the waters *were* on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the Ark to himself. And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the Ark. Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf *was* in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore."

(Genesis 8:6-12 NKJV)

The forty days of the flood were counted from when the rain and other water sources began (Genesis 7:11-12). God told Noah when to go into the Ark, but he did not tell him when he should come out again. God reveals things to us that are necessary for us to know, but there are some things He leaves us to figure out.

Noah opened the window of the Ark, which he had made in the upper portion of the Ark. The window had some kind of covering that could be closed and opened. Because of his faith in God, when Noah removed the covering of the Ark and looked out, he probably expected to see the tops of the mountains and maybe even a dry and green earth. Spurgeon says, "True faith often goes to the window. If your faith turns her face to the wall and expects nothing, I do not think it is genuine faith."

In verse 7, Noah sends out a raven to investigate the condition of the land. A raven is a bird that is strong in flight and easily tamed. Since Noah retained its mate, he was confident that the raven would return to the Ark from going forth to and fro. The raven would return to the Ark and probably to its old perch near the female each night. The raven is a scavenger bird and could rest on floating debris and feed upon dead, floating carcasses.

Since the raven didn't bring back any usable information, Noah sends out a dove a week later. Doves don't fly far from their home and feed on vegetable products from the ground. Noah probably hoped to find out if the ground had dried out yet. But the dove quickly returned to the Ark. It's been forty-seven days since Noah first saw the mountain heights all around the Ark.

Finally, seven days later, the dove returns to the Ark with a freshly plucked olive leaf. The dove returned with evidence that the terrible season of judgment was over, and God had begun to renew plant life on the earth. Ever since a dove with an olive leaf has been a symbol of peace and goodness.

Thank God the times of judgment in this life eventually come to an end. But eternal judgment will never end. Maybe you've experienced God's chastisement or judgment before! 1 Peter 5:6 says, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:6-7 NKJV)

Seven days later, when Noah sent out the dove, it did not return to him again. Finally, the earth was inhabitable again. After you experience a crisis and devastating chaos, you can finally begin to put the past behind you.

### **III. Beginning Anew**

In verse 13, Noah, his family, and all the animals can now leave the Ark.

"And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first *month*, the first *day* of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the Ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried. Then God spoke to Noah, saying, "Go out of the Ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that *is* with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, *and* whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the Ark." (Genesis 8:13-19 NKJV)

Genesis 7 says that Noah entered the Ark on the seventeenth day of the second month of the six hundredth year of his life. And in the second month of his six hundred and first year, Noah left the Ark. So, Noah was in the Ark a full calendar year.

In the same way, Noah loaded the Ark with animals before the flood; he unloaded them. And we don't read of any animals that died in the year on the Ark. Noah, his family, and all the animals belong to the New World. As they leave the Ark, God gives them the same command he gave Adam and Eve. They are "to be fruitful and multiply upon the face of the earth.

It was time to leave the past behind and embrace a whole new future of promise and blessing. Living things from the Ark would once again repopulate the earth. Noah leaves the Ark behind. So many times, we want to hang on to the safety of the Ark that rescues us, and we worship the Ark instead of worshipping the God who saved us. Noah leaves the Ark behind and walks into the new world with its freedom and opportunities. Spurgeon says, "Is this not that a picture of the freedom of the believer who has been 'buried with Christ,' and enjoys the possession of God's free Spirit?"

In verse 20, Noah builds an altar and offers a sacrifice to God.

"Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar." (Genesis 8:20 NKJV)

Noah's first act after leaving the Ark was to worship God through sacrifice. His gratitude and admiration of God's greatness led him to build an altar to the Lord. The nature of true sacrifice always requires a costly offering unto God. With only seven of each clean animal on the Ark, Noah risked extinction by sacrificing some of these animals.

Costly sacrifice is pleasing to God. The sacrifices of thanksgiving we feel called to offer to God should also cost us something. Costly sacrifice pleases God, not because He is greedy and wants to get as much from us as He can but because He sacrificed himself at great cost (Ephesians 5:2 and Hebrews 9:26, 10:12). Costly sacrifice shows our deep commitment and love we have for God.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:2 that we should be like Jesus: "And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us we an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma." Like David, who said he would never offer to God that which costs him nothing (2 Samuel 24:24), we, too, must be willing to show our appreciation and thanksgiving for what God has done for us.

## **Conclusion**

In verse 21, God makes a promise to Noah and all mankind.

And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart *is* evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done. "While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease." (Genesis 8:21-22 NKJV)

The LORD smelled a soothing aroma! Noah's costly sacrifice pleased God. God makes a wonderful promise to Noah and man when he smells the great aroma. Of course, even more pleasing to God than the smell of the sacrifice was the *heart* of Noah in his sacrifice.

God promised to never again curse the earth with judgment by a flood on a scale that destroys every living thing. This was a promise full of mercy. Even though God said that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, He promises to never again curse the ground for man's sake.

It would seem that man's evil would invite God's curse, not put it away. But Noah's altar and sacrifice pleases God, and His pleasure in the sacrifice is the turning point. One writer says, "Without a sacrifice, sin clamors for vengeance, and so God sends a destroying flood; but the sacrifice presented by Noah was a type of the coming sacrifice of God's only begotten Son, and of the effectual atonement provided for human sin." (Spurgeon)

Noah's story illustrates several things relevant to the life of the believer:

- Noah showed the believer's freedom by trusting in God.
- Noah demonstrated the believer's faith by making a costly sacrifice.
- Noah displayed a believer's heart by obeying God's word.
- Noah experienced the believer's covenant of mercy by embracing the future and honoring God.

God reveals that after the flood, the earth would have established seasons. The earth underwent profound climatic and ecological changes when the earth's canopy broke apart, and the fountains of the deep reconfigured the surface of the land. Now, there would be seasonal and temperature variations. There would never again be a general deluge or universal flood. From now on, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night, will succeed each other in their perpetually unchanging course so long as the present reign of forbearance shall last.

The result of this change caused the rapidly decreasing lifespans. There will never be 900-year-old persons after the flood. Before the flood, death was indefinitely postponed, and people lived hundreds of years. Unfortunately, this led to unrestrained imaginations of sinfulness, constant violence, and corruption.

Noah was a true believer and follower of God but was not perfect or sinless. But God is merciful as we strive against sin and offers us healing and grace when we ask Him to deliver us from our sinful ways. Whenever we leave the past behind and begin a renewed life of obedience to God, we start to see into the future with anticipation and hope.

God sees our struggle to be holy and remembers His pledge of saving grace. God does not want to destroy us; he wants to save us. Since lifespans decreased dramatically after the flood, it would take a long time before sin, and corruption would again dominate the whole earth. And even then, God promised never again to destroy the earth with a flood.

The sign of God's pledge is the rainbow. God's rainbow pledge protects us all from destruction by a flood but not from judgment for a sinful life. We are not free to live any way we want without facing the consequences of our choices.

Sin, by its very nature, is destructive and corrupting. Just as Noah preached a life of righteousness for 120 years, we are called upon to preach the good news of how Christ sacrificed His righteous life on the Cross for our salvation. God faithfully fulfills his covenant with all of mankind by sending Jesus as the ultimate Ark of Salvation! With faith in Christ, we can experience God's salvation and be rescued from the sin and corruption that destroys the world.

As we begin our new life in Christ, the Holy Spirit helps and guides us so we can experience all of God's promises and blessings as we walk in faith. "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones. Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine. My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction; For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son *in whom* he delights." (Proverbs 3:5-12 NKJV)