

# Truth for Today

The Bible teaching radio programme

For reply: Email: [truthfortoday@aol.com](mailto:truthfortoday@aol.com)

**Broadcast Date:** 7 December 2014

**No.** T0862

**Speaker:** Mr. George Stevens

## Back to the Beginning: The Aftermath of the Flood (Genesis 8:1-22)

We have seen previously how God looked upon the earth and saw that the wickedness of man was great - that the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart were continually evil. He pleaded with them to repent through the preaching of Noah for many years. The flood that followed was God's judgment against the world as it then was. Only Noah, his wife, his sons and their wives found salvation in the ark. They were sheltered from the judgment of God.

In Genesis 8:1-22 we see Noah emerge from the ark into a cleansed world in order to make a new beginning. While these events were historical, they also have a spiritual application. Such is the power of the Bible as we compare in it spiritual things with spiritual. The whole event has its parallel in our salvation today. God must judge sin. As all have sinned (see Romans 3:23), all come under this judgment. However, just as God provided an ark for the salvation of Noah, so He has provided a means of salvation for us, namely, His own Son. It was the Lord Jesus Christ who bore the judgment of God against our sin at the cross. The ark suffered the pressure of the waters from above and below. In a similar fashion the waves and billows of God's judgment poured over the Lord Jesus Christ. He exhausted God's judgment yet, like the ark, survived. So the ark serves as a picture of both His death and resurrection. Those who entered the ark did so by faith. So those who trust in the Son of God are saved through faith and His work at the cross. We might say, Christians are seen as being "in Christ". The judgment for sin that fell upon Him can never touch them personally because He has already taken the punishment they deserved.

Those who trust in the Son of God in this age of grace are born again. We read in John 1:12-13 *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* These people have a new nature that makes them children of God. So they begin a completely new life. We see this in 2 Corinthians 5:17 which states: *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* This is symbolised by the end of the flood in the physically new creation of Noah's day.

In Genesis 8 we will see the ways in which God acts and the ways in which Noah reacts in the aftermath of the flood.

In Genesis 8:1 we read: *"And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged..."* So the passage begins with "God". This is the name "Elohim" that emphasises the strength of God. When used of the true God, it is a Hebrew plural which is a way of expressing majesty; but, at the same time it hints at the tri-unity of God. It is also used in relation to God's sovereignty and creative work as well as His relationship with Israel. For example, in Isaiah 54:5 we read: *"For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God [Elohim] of the whole earth shall he be called."*

The word "remembered" shows that God once again gave Noah His full attention. The act of remembering is a conscious act that reminds us that our God is a God who cares. Peter tells us to cast all our care upon Him because He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7).

The name "Noah" means "rest". It reminds us that there is a future rest for the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 4:9). Notice all the people who entered the ark were saved. So all who trust in Christ shall be saved. As the Apostle Paul said to the Philippian jailor: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved..."* (Acts 16:31).

In our starting verse, we find a wind that passes over or "covers" the earth and the waters. This has a parallel in John 3:8 where Jesus reveals that the Spirit of God is likened to the wind as He acts in a sovereign manner to bring about new birth in a soul. New birth is the work of God. We had nothing to do with our physical birth, so we have nothing to do with our new birth. However, here the wind seems to cause the waters to subside. If we apply this to the Spirit of God, then it emphasises His power in controlling the removal of this judgment. It reminds us of His present work as spoken by Jesus in John 16:8-11: *"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."*

God saves the world for the sake of his people. People have ever-living souls. Although animals have souls, they are not ever-living ones. This separates human life from animal life on the earth. God preserved the animals in the ark for the sake of Noah and his family. Following the flood, humans were allowed by God to eat meat. Initially, mankind and the animals had been vegetarians. We leave Genesis 8:1 with the waters subsiding.

Genesis 8:2 states: *“The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained...”* The fountains of the deep refer to the gaps in the earth through which water sprang upwards. The windows or “sluices” of heaven refer to the sources of water above. Both were stopped or closed and the rain was held back. Hence, as the wind blew, the forces which produced the flood were reversed. Remember what was written in Genesis 7:1: *“In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.”*

The judgment in real terms was over. It reminds us of the words of the Lord Jesus Christ following the judgment that God poured upon Him on the cross, namely, “It is finished!” (John 19:30). The work of salvation was completed.

Genesis 8:3 tells us *“the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.* So the waters gradually retreated over one hundred and fifty days. The word “continually” shows the manner in which they did so. The word means “going and coming”. This tells us the remaining waters were tidal at this point. The number 150 is significant because the number five speaks of grace, that is, the favour of God towards man especially those who have trusted in Him.

It is then that we read in Genesis 8:4: *“And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.”*

In Exodus 12:1 the seventh month listed in Genesis became the first month of the year. This is significant because the Passover was slain on the fourteenth day of that month. In the New Testament we read that it was at the time of Passover that Christ died. He was the true Paschal Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7b). It was three days after the fourteenth that the ark settled. This would signify the day of Christ’s resurrection. We may well say that our new life is based on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is also confirmed by the number seventeen itself being ten and seven. The ten speaks of divine order. The seven speaks of completion. So it speaks of complete order in spiritual life. We are indeed born again.

Note that the ark came to rest on the **mountains** of Ararat - not Mount Ararat. It settled in the region of Ararat which was later identified as being a kingdom in Jeremiah 51:27. One of the meanings of the word “Ararat” is “the curse reversed” which is not only significant to the retreating waters of judgment in Genesis; but also the curse of death found in the New Testament. We read in Romans 6:23: *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* Because Christ was made a curse for us at Calvary’s cross, the judgment is passed and He is free to bless us instead.

In Genesis 8:5 we find: *“And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.”* Once the ark had settled there was a wait for almost three months before the heads of the other mountains in the region were seen. This suggests that the ark came to rest upon one of the highest mountains in the range. If the displacement of the ark was a third of its height of approximately 14 metres then the waters would have dropped by about 4½ metres during that time.

It is likely that people who lived in the area years later would have used the timbers and bitumen of the ark for other building projects. If, by some miracle, the ark were still in existence today, then God would probably keep it hidden. Why? Because He seeks people to live by faith in Him and not by sight (see 2 Corinthians 5:7). Besides, He has already provided His word for us in the Bible. This is a far greater miracle than the ark.

### **Noah’s reactions**

Noah’s reactions to these circumstances are listed in next few verses. For example, we read the following: *“And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: and he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.”* You may well say that God had not instructed Noah to open this perforated window; nor had he told him to send forth a raven. However, Noah was a man of faith (see Hebrews 11:7). I think there is little doubt that Noah prayed about these things before doing them. Sometimes faith will have us stand and wait. Sometimes faith will have us act. There was no certain way that Noah could have known the waters were going down. As far as he knew, the ark may have settled on a very high mountain. Hence, he decided to send out a raven and a dove in order to see if the waters were subsiding.

The raven was classed as an unclean bird (Leviticus 11:15). It managed to survive in a world where judgment still prevailed. It is figurative of the old, sinful nature which takes its delight in the pleasures of a world condemned by God. The raven flew to and fro continuously in the vicinity of the ark until the waters dried up completely.

We then read: *“Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark”* (Genesis 8:8-9). The dove is a clean bird and is symbolic of the character of the Spirit of God. It is pure and harmless. Through this Spirit we are given a new nature. This God-given nature cannot rest in a world corrupted by sin and under God’s judgment. Hence, the dove returned to the ark depicting that the Christian clings to Christ.

We then read: *“And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; and the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth”* (Genesis 8:10-11) Noah recognised the olive leaf had been freshly plucked from the tree by the dove. The rate at which the waters were subsiding had greatly increased because the olive tree normally grows up to a height of about ten metres. The olive tree is known especially for its oil (Judges 9:9). The latter is a symbol of the witness of the Spirit. How happily we can read words like those in Romans 8:16-17: *“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”* Noah was assured that the remnants of God’s judgment were disappearing rapidly, the Christian can have the assurance that she or he is not only a child of God, but an heir of God as well.

Next we read: *“And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more”* (Genesis 8:12). The dove was able to find a suitable habitat. The suitable habitat for Christians is composed of all the spiritual blessings that they own as part of their new creation. They are in the world, but not of the world.

In Genesis 8:13-14 we find: *“And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.”* Noah removed the covering of the ark to see that the surface of the earth was dry; but notice how faith works. This time, Noah waited for God to command him to leave the ark. We have to remember that God’s timing is always the best. The hymn writer, William Lloyd, wrote:

*“Our times are in Thy hand,  
Father, we wish them there;  
Our life, our soul, our all, we leave  
Entirely to Thy care.”*

We then read: *“And God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons’ wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth”* (Genesis 8:15-17). Specific instructions are given to Noah. First, he is to go out from the ark and is to take his family with him and then he was to bring out the living creatures. The purpose of their preservation was given, namely, that they should bear fruit and increase throughout (or repopulate) the earth. Today, this requires Christians to be faithful in their witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. If Christians are to go forth and multiply we have to remember that great commission given by Christ Himself: *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen”* (Matthew 28:19-20).

Noah was obedient because we then read: *“And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives with him: every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark”* (Genesis 8:18-19). So the ark was left empty. How wise it is for us to obey the Lord. He always seeks the best for us and knows exactly what is needed and when it is needed.

We again see Noah using his spiritual initiative in Genesis 8:20: *“And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.”* This would have been hard and time-consuming work; but Noah puts God first. Christians are to have Christ as their “first” or “chief” love (see Revelation 2:4). If this is the case then they must put the things of the Lord before everything else. In 1 Peter 2:5 Christians are told: *“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”* How fitting it is to give praise to the Lord for His goodness. Hebrews 13:15 states: *“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.”*

Today, we know that the burnt offerings of Noah prefigured the death of the Lord Jesus Christ as giving God pleasure. They emphasised the perfection of His offering and, also, the acceptance of the one who offered them. In Ephesians 5:2 we read: *“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”* Christ is the Beloved of God. Christians are accepted in Him as the Beloved.

The pleasure that Noah’s offerings gave to God resulted in three very welcome promises. We read: *“And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”* So God will not curse the ground again. In fact, He would ensure that the environment of the earth would be maintained. Furthermore, He promised not to slay everything living as He had done in the flood because the nature of man could not be changed by a global catastrophe. His love would provide another way. It is expressed in John 3:16: *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

In conclusion, Noah went forth to live a new life. Our challenge to live as Christians today is outlined in 2 Corinthians 5:

- 2 Corinthians 5:1-6 give us a new assurance as to our future blessing;
- In 2 Corinthians 5:7 we have a new activity - to walk with Him;
- Our new aim is to serve the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:9);
- We also have a new unity listed in 2 Corinthians 5:14, namely, oneness with Christ;
- In 2 Corinthians 5:15 we find a new attitude, which is to live for Him who loved us; and
- We find a new duty - to preach the message of reconciliation - in 2 Corinthians 5:20.

Oh, may the Lord Jesus help each of us as we endeavour to live out our new lives for God.

---

**Please Note:**

We encourage you to use this transcript for your personal or group Bible studies. This material should not, however, be used in any publications without the express permission from Truth for Today, whose contact details can be found on page 1. Large Print copies of this document are also available upon request.