

Pray

Close your eyes...

Let us imagine together... it is the earth, we are seeing it from afar, from space... like an astronaut would, or like God could.

We know it is the earth. But it looks different. It is cloud covered, entirely.

We get closer. We enter the atmosphere. We begin to pass through the clouds... layer upon layer, wind, lightning.

The sound and the tempest is astounding. Howling, sheets of rain... no more than sheets. We have never seen anything like it... ever.

It is dark as it would be in a great storm, but something is below, through the rain we can barely see it, is it the ground?

No, it rises to meet us... a wave. It is the sea tossed by tremendous waves, bigger than we've ever seen before.

Huge, rolling, with the wind ripping sheets of water off of the tops. They are dark waves, terrible, like mountains rolling by.

It seems there is water everywhere, and only water. The world has become water. The world has become a place of death.

But something is coming on the waves. We can see it through a break in the rain. Is it a log? A piece of driftwood?

No it must be bigger than that... though it does not look big against the waves.

It comes closer, and now we see it is big, it is huge, though for all its bigness it is lost in this world of angry water.

It would be entirely unnoticeable on this vast unending sea... alone and lonely between the waters below and the waters coming down.

Now this thing is right next to us and it is gigantic. Is it a boat or a barge? It is a long box built of wood riding the waves.

It is hundreds of feet long and as wide as the biggest boat we've ever seen, taller than a big house... but smaller than the waves.

Now we are standing on the top of the great wooden box riding the stormy seas.

The storms begin to subside, the clouds move away and after some time the sun peaks out. It has been 40 days of the great storm.

The sun is now shining, but still the waves crash against the vessel. We go down deep into a valley between the waves...

The waves, now blue under the sun, tower over us... we start to go up again... up, up...

Now we are atop the wave and we look out. we can see for miles and miles... as far as we can see... water, waves...

The whole world is a world of water, except for this wooden box we are on... and the people and animals safe within...

But, how have they lived? How can they survive? Can this box keep floating and not be swamped?

How has it stayed seaworthy thus far? And, for how long must they survive? Will they have enough food?

They do not know how long the flood will last, how long they must endure the tossing of the waves...

It is, without a doubt, the most difficult time in the lives of all aboard. How can they, will they, get through it?

And, then we have our answer... from Gen. 8:1,

"But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the Ark."

I. God remembered Noah.

This is maybe the most important and the most powerful message of this entire chapter. God remembered Noah.

And, take care how you read it. It is not as if God had ever forgotten.

This is a statement of fact, in contrast to the destruction we are told of in **Gen. 7:17-24**.

vs. 23 There is Noah, his family, and the animals with him. We might think that they are alone,

left to fend for themselves amidst all the terrible destruction.

There has never been a disaster like this one in all the history of the earth!

But, no... God is thinking of them. God remembers them. God is thinking of them. God is watching them. God cares.

And, if God has you on His mind... well, you'll be fine.

Do you know, that this one truth is as important and powerful for you today as it was in Noah's day?

How does the Ark stay afloat? God makes sure it does.

How does it not leak after all the storms and waves? God can protect it.

How will they have enough food? God can make food.

How will they stay sane? Endure the tossing? Stay healthy in cramped quarters? God will get them through.

How will they make it to a new world? God will get them there.

God remembered Noah. This might remind you of similar words that were near and dear to the people of Israel.

Don't forget that this story of Noah and the flood is history written originally for a people living in the wilderness of Sinai.

They had been in bondage in Egypt, slaves there for generations... and they thought that God had forgotten them.

Ex. 2:23-25 God remembered His people... literally (vs. 25) "God saw the Sons of Israel and God knew them."

This is God and how He works. There are times when we may feel forgotten, but we are not. God knows right where you are.

God is always up to something. You might think God has forgotten, but God remembers you.

God remembered Noah... He never forgot him. God remembers you.

And, we find that God has a plan and a purpose. He knows what He is going to do.

And, as bad as things look... it is all part of His plan. Things do look bad. They've never looked worse!

And, so, they can only get better.

Noah was trusting in God and His grace that made him righteous. God remembered Noah, and all who were with him.

So, what is the result of this? Is it immediate rescue? An instant blessing?

We find that the answer to what happened comes in three parts:

The waters receded. vss. 1-5

It is 150 days of water everywhere before there is any sign of anything else.

The first 40 days were rainstorm... but even after that Noah would not have known that the water was receding...

He would have had no idea how long it would be, what was going to happen...

No doubt there were great currents in the seas, channels being cut in the land underneath, as the water was flowing back.

But, Noah could not have known any of this. All he could do was trust God. That's it. Sometimes that is all there is to do.

After 5 months the Ark came to rest... that would have been a great relief...

but even then it was 3 more months until it was apparent that the waters were actually going down.

Then they could actually see tops of mountains all around.

The dove found a resting place. vss. 6-12

Another 40 days go by and Noah opens the top of the Ark... a window or a hatch... and sends out a raven, and then a dove.

She returns because there is no place to nest.

He sends her out again 7 days later. She brings a sign that the waters are abating... an olive branch.

Now Noah knows that the water is really going down... and that the Lord is miraculously restoring the land.

He send her out again after another 7 days, and she finds a nesting place.

Noah left the Ark. vss. 13-19

Finally the water seems to be dried up from the earth... back in the rivers, lakes and seas where the waters are still today.

It has been 11 months... and Noah takes the entire roof off of the Ark.

And then, a month and a half later the ground is dry enough and the Lord sends them all out.

Noah and His family leave the Ark with all the animals who leave according to their kinds, not two-by-two apparently.

Well, there have been some babies born... maybe three tigers, four deer, and 50 rabbits.

A recreation is taking place. It has already begun.

The waters separated, dry land has appeared, and now the creatures fill it once again.

Salvation always involves a recreation of some sort.

They have been on the Ark for 1 year and 10 days.

That is a long time to be being remembered by God, to be being saved through a great disaster...

A long time to be hoping for what you do not see, to be trusting and not knowing, entirely dependent on the Lord.

That is God's way. He never forgets. He is committed to saving those who trust in Him.

But in His time, which often is longer than we might like.

God remembered Noah. And now we see Noah's response to God. It is the right response.

II. Noah remembered God. vs. 20

This verse is important. Why? Because it is in our sinful nature to forget...

We are prone to take God for granted, to think that somehow He is obligated to save us because...

He just has to... we're mostly good... if He doesn't we're going to be upset at Him... we'll refuse to believe in Him...?

No, God is never obligated to save anyone. He has just demonstrated this fact as clearly as it could be demonstrated.

He has just destroyed the world in a terrible flood.

Noah is grateful and he is right to be grateful to God... so he worships by offering sacrifices.

We know that the offering of sacrifices in worship to God is a tradition that goes back to righteous Abel.

He offers from the clean animals. This is at least one reason that they were put on the Ark in sevens. **Gen. 7:2**

And, he offers from what God has given to him. It is not really his. The offering came from God in the first place.

But, God provided it so that Noah could give it back in worship.

And this is how worship, offering, and giving always is. There is nothing we have that has not first been given to us by God.

Even that which we have worked for... God has given us ability and motivation and resources... and much more...

We give what God has given us... so that we can give it back to Him.

And, God responds to Noah's thanksgiving and worship.

III. God makes a promise. vss. 21-22

Now, we have been prepared for this. It is probably no surprise to Noah. **Gen. 6:18**

In these two verses we get to see into God's heart... for God here is speaking to Himself.

Because the intent (= inclination) of man's heart is evil from his youth, God has cursed the ground.

Gen. 3:17-18 Gen. 4:10-12 Gen. 5:29

And, because of man's sin, God has just destroyed every living thing in the flood.

Because we are sinful from our youth. There is never a time when we are not sinful. David said it. **Ps. 51:5**

Thus David's prayer to be cleansed from sin. **Ps. 51:6-13**

So, God says to Himself that He's not going to do the cleansing of sin this way again... not by wholesale destruction.

While the earth remains... there will not be another year like this year. That was a wet year. It's never again going to be this wet.

Noah doesn't yet know how... but God is going to make another way for the sin of sinners who sin from their youth to be cleansed.

God Himself will come. Jesus will be our means of salvation.

He will take our sins on Himself and will take us into Himself and bring us safely to our forever home.