

## **SAVED FOR A PURPOSE GENESIS 8**

Salvation is of the Lord. The experience of Noah is an illustration of this eternal truth!

As you read the inspired account of Noah's deliverance from the flood it becomes obvious that his deliverance was a work of God. It was God who spoke to Noah. It was God who gave him the plan for the ark. It was God who sealed him in the ark and preserved him through the 150 day flood. It was God who gave him the word to come out of the ark. His preservation was wholly a work of the Lord. Noah's part was faith. When God spoke, Noah responded in faith. When God commanded, he obeyed. Noah did not save himself, but he did put himself in a position where God could save him.

The chapter before us tonight is an illustration of God's purpose in our salvation. God did not save Noah just to save Noah. He had a purpose for the life and the experience of Noah. God did not save you from a life of sin and hopelessness without purpose. God has purpose in rescuing you from the plight that your sin had created. If we can see clearly the purpose that God had in the salvation of Noah, we will be able to see God's purpose in our salvation. As Peter reminded us in his first letter, Noah's salvation is an illustration of our salvation. His was in the realm of the physical, but ours is in the realm of the spiritual. The physical realities of his salvation so beautifully represent spiritual realities in our salvation.

As you look carefully at the Hebrew text of Genesis 8, it becomes clear that Moses intended for the reader to see a relationship between what happened in the flood and after the flood with what had happened in the beginning. There is a parallel between Genesis 1 and Genesis 8. If Genesis 1 is the chapter of the beginning: Genesis 8 is the chapter of the new beginning. If Genesis 1 is the chapter of the creation, Genesis 8 is the chapter of the new creation. It is a reminder to us that we can look into this chapter for insights since we are “a new creation in Christ Jesus.” Let us explore the chapter together for our instruction.

## **I. WE ARE SAVED FOR ENJOYMENT.**

The opening verses of Genesis 8 details the receding of the waters. Moses makes it clear that the waters recede because of God’s activity. “But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark and He sent a wind over the earth and the waters receded.” The appearance of the dry ground that led to the exit of Noah from the ark was the result of God’s activity in the creation.

There is this interesting account of Noah sending out the two birds in trying to determine if the earth was ready for habitation again. He first sent out the raven and this unclean bird kept flying back and forth, back and forth until the waters had dried up from the earth. The raven is an unclean bird because it will eat dead flesh. Because of the devastation of the flood, this unclean bird found plenty to satisfy its appetite. It never returned to the ark.

But then Noah sent out a clean bird, the beautiful dove. The dove flew across the face of the waters but it could find no place to rest so it returned to the ark. Noah reached out his hand and took the dove back into the ark and unto himself. After waiting seven days he sent the dove out again, but this time when it returned it had a little twig broken off of an olive tree. The olive tree had already begun to bud and to give evidence of life, so the dove brought this back to Noah. Then when Noah sent the dove out the third time, it did not return. The earth had become dry to the extent that it was now possible for him to live in the creation.

Noah continued to wait until he had a word from the Lord. On the first day of the first month of Noah's 601<sup>st</sup> year, he removed the covering from the Ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry.

Then, God said to Noah, "Come out of the ark you and your wife and your sons and their wives."

The record is exact.

"So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives." Can't you feel the drama of this event?

When Noah lifted the covering from the ark, and looked out upon the earth freshly bathed in the waters of the flood, he saw a world that was waiting on him. It was a world that the Creator had provided for him. Then the Creator speaks to him and his family while they are still in the ark,

and says to them, “Come out of the ark.” And they did what God told them to do. It is a reminder to us that God had saved them so they could inhabit the earth that He had preserved from the flood. They were saved so they could enjoy God’s creation.

The Old Testament word for salvation is an interesting word. The word has in it the root meaning: “to be wide,” “to be spacious,” or “to have room.” The idea appears to have been developed from the thought that one who had been given room, and had been given victory. Is this not what Noah found? He moved from the confining quarters of the ark out into a wide place. He moved out into a spacious creation in which he had room to be or do whatever God wanted him to do. This is what God has given us in Christ Jesus. He has given us a wide place, a spacious room, plenty of room in which to be and do what He has purposed for us to be and do. An idea of salvation that is negative and confining is in conflict with the Biblical idea of salvation. God saves His people to bring them in to life, fullness, joy, freedom, hope, and fellowship with God and with one another!

God had in mind your enjoyment when He saved you just as he had in mind Noah’s enjoyment of the new creation when He saved him from the flood.

## **II. WE ARE SAVED FOR CELEBRATION.**

In Noah’s record of the exit from the ark, we have this beautiful account of worship. With a heart that was full of gratitude and humility before God, Noah felt compelled to offer unto God his gratitude in the celebration of worship. The record reads like this, “Then Noah built an altar

to the Lord and taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The Lord smelled the sweet aroma and said in His heart: ‘Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even through every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood and never again will I destroy all living creatures as I have done.’”

Interestingly this is the first account we have of man building an altar. While there was worship before the flood, there is no account of them building an altar so out of gratitude Noah builds the first altar.

He takes some of all the clean animals and clean birds for his burnt offerings. This must have been a rather sizable sacrifice that he offered to the Lord. He had on board the ark seven pairs of each species of clean animals and clean birds. He took at least two of each of these species and offered them to God as a sacrifice. We do not know how many different species there were on board the ark, but it must have been considerable.

They were offered to God by Noah as a “burnt offering.” This indicates that the entire animal or bird was burned on the altar. Noah did not save any part of the animal or bird for himself. The whole animal was offered to God. The burnt offering in the Old Testament usually expressed the consecration and dedication of a life to God. In some places it also had the element of atonement or propitiation. It may well have had both in this instance. I rather think though that the primary significance here was that of consecration to the Lord.

Noah is celebrating God's saving work. In his celebration through a sacrifice he is offering himself and his family to God. It is especially significant that God was pleased with what He saw. In contrast to His reaction to the family of man before the flood, we read, "The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in His heart." What He saw before the flood moved Him to announce the judgment. What He saw and experienced in the worship of Noah caused him to make a promise that He would never destroy the earth with water again. This is why God saved Noah. He saved him so he could build an altar and offer sacrifices in worship that would be a pleasure to his heart.

We can learn from this. Hear the word of admonition from the Apostle, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, wholly and pleasing to God - which is your spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1). God has saved us so that we can gladly in celebration of worship present ourselves to God in the same manner that Noah presented the clean animals and the clean birds on his newly formed altar. You were saved so that you could celebrate God's salvation in worship.

### **III. YOU WERE SAVED FOR MULTIPLICATION.**

As Noah brought the animals out of the ark he was told bring out every kind of living creature that is with you – "the birds, the animals, and all of the creatures that move along the ground so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it." The purpose of God in saving the animals and the birds was that they might multiply and fill up the earth.

But then God has a word for Noah and his sons. God placed a special blessing upon Noah and his sons and then said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.”

Multiplication was a basic part of God’s saving purpose. God had created the earth to be inhabited. He had provided everything that man would need for his habitation in the creation itself so that there would be a man and his family to fill up that creation and to enjoy what God had provided in their lives in the creation, He saved them. Then He gave them the charge to go forth and multiply. Multiplication was in God’s saving purpose both for those who made up the animal kingdom and for the man and his sons. So that they would be fruitful in their attempts to multiply, God blessed them.

Does this have any relationship to what we know of God’s saving purpose for us? Surely we are not straining the truth or twisting the text when we read those words of the Great Commission which Jesus gave to His disciples after the resurrection concerning making disciples! Dr. Ray Stedman makes an interesting observation in his studies on Genesis. He claims that the day that the ark settled on top of the mountain and the day Jesus Christ was raised from the dead was the same day on the Hebrew calendar. Whether this be true or not, and I suspect it is, it was resurrection ground on which Noah stood after the flood. He had been given a new life and a new opportunity. When the disciples stood on resurrection ground, Jesus said to them, “Go and make disciples.” It is a parallel to the word that He gave to Noah as he came out of the ark. Under the blessing of the Holy Spirit upon our lives, we, too, are to multiply. God saved us so that His house might be filled with new disciples. He saved us so He might have a people out of

every tribe and every nation and every language. God had in mind multiplication in both instant's.

When you consider these three obvious purposes in the salvation of Noah, and in our salvation, it raises a question. We know the outcome in Noah's case, but what is the outcome in our case? Are we enjoying the new creation in which old things have passed away and all things have become new to us as the people of God. Are we celebrating God's salvation in deeds of sacrifice and worship before Him. Are we multiplying? Are new disciples coming in to the family of God because we have been saved? Every time God saves someone, a door is opened to a new creation. And opportunity is given for additional worshippers. A possibility of multiplication has become a reality. This is what God had in mind when he saved you. Let me encourage you to go forth tonight and to take your stand on resurrection ground and see that God's saving purpose is fully accomplished in your life.