Salvation Through Judgment — Delivery Transcript

Genesis 7–8 (ESV) · Wes Terry · Sunday, May 21, 2023 · *Living Right*

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In Genesis chapter 6, as we continue making our way through this book of the Bible. And I come up this morning with a little bit of fear and trepidation because we're talking about everybody's least favorite topic in our passage this morning. And so for those of you new, our church typically works through books of the Bible, and one of the reasons we do that is it forces preachers to preach on passages that they may not otherwise deal with and the topic that nobody likes to talk about is the judgment of God.

How many of you want a sermon on the love of God? That sounds more encouraging, but the judgment of God is a little less popular in our culture. And it's a little bit of a confusing dynamic because there are people in the world who believe in—generally speaking, they believe that a God exists. But what they don't like, what they push back against, is the idea that this God is a God of judgment, that he would somehow be displeased, that he's instead some kind of cosmic genie up there that answers all of our prayers or that he's there to support us when we're feeling sad.

But the reality is if God exists and that God has any notion of good, then there's no way to escape the idea of judgment, especially when you live in a world that is filled with brokenness and human evil. In other words, a good God in an evil world necessitates judgment. You can't escape it. If you're going to have evil in a world, that means the evil is the privation of the good, so there's got to be a standard by which that evil is determined. So that absolute standard is what a lot of us mean when we say God.

He is the ground or the source of all that is good in the world. We recognize that not everything in the world is good, so there's some kind of privation of it. So if a good God exists and he's any kind of just whatsoever, then he has to retaliate against or give an answer

to the evil that we see all around us. He wouldn't be God if he did not do that. And if he was God, he would not be a good one. Now we like to sometimes push back and say things like, "Well, that's not fair."

But for God to be good, he must also be just. For God to be just, he must also punish sin. For God to be right, he has to correct what's wrong. And for God to be good, he's got to rid the world of evil. And so we got a pickle. I call it the problem of evil. Now, if there were no God, there would be no problem with judgment, right? There would be no judgment if there were no God. And a lot of the early atheistic philosophers like Friedrich Nietzsche agreed with this.

In fact, Nietzsche is a German philosopher way back in the day—not way, way back, but back in the day. He famously or infamously said, "God is dead." Do you guys remember that *Time* headline from back in the day? "Is God Dead?"[1] And for Nietzsche that was not necessarily a wonderful thing. He was an atheist. He didn't believe in God. But what he saw is that Western society was getting rid of the very notion of God and that God was the source or the ground or the kind of the stability factor for all of Western values and morality.

And he says, if we kill God, we're going to kill the West. And sure enough, that's what you see happening in a lot of the world around us. Without God, if you'd like taking notes, we cannot ground our moral outrage. What I mean by that is you have no basis for getting mad at things that are wrong in the world if you don't believe that there's a God who is good and a source of that standard. You're just whining. You're just complaining and your opinion is just as valid as the other person who likes chocolate ice cream who thinks there isn't a problem.

If there is no God, you have no ground for your moral outrage, but we know deep down that that's wrong, that I do have a reason for my moral outrage, that this isn't the way the world is supposed to be. And we all have that moral intuition which means there must be a God, because without a God we can't make sense of that moral intuition. The problem is if that God does exist, we cannot escape our moral culpability. It's a problem. If there is no God, there's no ground for moral outrage.

We know there is a reason for moral outrage, so there must be a God, but that God looks at us and says, "It's not just that you have a problem with the world. I have a problem with you, because you're part of what's wrong with this world." And so we can't escape our moral culpability, and there must therefore be a righteous judge. There's got to be judgment. So if there must be judgment, how do we understand the judgment of God in a biblical sense? That's really what this morning's passage is all about.

If you're just joining us, we're in the book of Genesis. It's a story of beginnings. God didn't just create everything in the world, he created everything good. He created a man, woman,

Adam, Eve, garden, everything was wonderful. And then he says, "There's one thing I don't want you guys to do. Don't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." And temptation comes along through the serpent, and Satan tempts Adam and Eve to take and eat of what they should not eat. And as soon as they violated God's design and commands, they introduced sin into the world.

That sin introduced brokenness and death, alienation from God, separation and alienation from one another, and brokenness into the world. When you get into Genesis 4, you see the manifestations of sin with Cain's killing of his brother Abel. And from that point, it just grows worse and worse and worse. One of the things that's interesting in the book of Genesis is that people live forever. Well, not forever, forever, but 900, 600, 800 years. Imagine if you were an evil person and you had 900 years to live. Imagine how good you would get at being bad.

You know what I'm saying? Imagine if Adolf Hitler was not snuffed out and instead was able to live, what kind of world would we live in? We went to a Holocaust museum when we were in Israel last couple of weeks, and of all the things that impacted me on the trip, that was one of the most impactful to see the degree of human evil. When you take God out of the human heart and you take God out of the cultural consciousness of a group of people, the kinds of grotesque evils that are able to arise are mind-boggling, gut-wrenching, heartbreaking, and that's the world that they lived in, in Genesis chapters 5 and 6.

In fact, the passage says in chapter 6 that God looked at the world that he had made and he grieved or he regretted that he had made man because their only thought was ever evil or only evil continually. It says in Genesis chapter 6 verse 17, that God's going to destroy the world because of the degree of evil that had begun to surface and so he picks one man out from all of those people. It's a man named Noah and he tells Noah, "I want you to build an ark,[2] because I'm going to destroy everything in which is the breath of life under heaven.

Everything on the earth shall die. But I'm going to establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you." And so if you're taking notes, what we looked at the last couple of weeks is that Noah was chosen by God. I don't think Noah was necessarily a righteous dude. I think he was just as broken and sinful as the rest of the people in the world. But for whatever reason, God in his grace chose Noah, revealed his impending judgment to Noah, said, "You can turn or you can swim," you know, sink or swim.

And Noah began to turn to God, repent of his sins, and trusted him for salvation and that salvation was through this thing called the ark. So Noah builds an ark, he builds it for about 120 years. As he's building this ark, he's preaching this message of righteousness. As he's preaching this message that God is going to flood the earth because of our sins, people begin to laugh him off. No one listens to a word he has to say except for his wife, his three sons,

and their wives. And that's where we pick up our story this morning in Genesis chapter 7, verse 1: "Then the Lord 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.'" Got to remember Noah was building the ark for 120 years.

I think it's amazing that his wife and kids are still with him. A lot of people think it had not even rained up until this point in the whole world. So he's talking about something that they didn't even have a category for. And they stick with him for every 120 of those years. Then the Lord says in verse 2, "Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, and seven pairs of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth."

This is the first time we're introduced to this concept of clean and unclean. It gets filled out later on in the book of Leviticus. Remember, Moses wrote the book of Genesis as well as Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and so they are kind of hearing this story with all that context. And so Noah's taking clean animals and unclean animals into the ark, and it says in verse 4, "For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground."

And verse 5 says, "Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him." You might underline that phrase. At every point along the way, God speaks, Noah listens, Noah obeys. You don't really see any discourse from Noah in any of these chapters. It's just God speaks, Noah listens, Noah obeys, and then after that, verse 6 says, "Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth. And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood.

Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, two and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. And after seven days the waters of the flood came upon the earth." Notice that additional seven days, just an extra layer of God's grace. A people who were going to perish had every recourse in the world. They had every chance to see the faith of Noah, to hear the message of God, and to repent.

And at no point along the way does anyone do so except for Noah, his wife, his sons, and their wives. For those who weren't here last week, Noah was asked by God to build this ark, and the ark was very specific in its design. It was designed by God. It looked like a big gigantic battleship. Okay, it wasn't a sailboat. It wasn't something you'd put on a yacht. It wasn't for sailing, it wasn't for navigation, it was for surviving a worldwide flood. It would have been three stories tall, about two million cubic feet, you could fit 520 modern-day road cars into this boat.

It was a very big boat and it's probably why it took Noah 120 years to build it. And God tells Noah exactly what to do, exactly how long to wait, exactly what to build, and exactly how many days that the rains are going to fall. A lot of people point to the story of the flood and they say, "Well, this can't be a true story. It can't be historical. It's too outlandish. There's no such thing as a worldwide flood." And they make arguments for that point of view. One of the things that doesn't convince me about that argument is that you see a lot of specificity in this story, about 40 days[3] this and 600 years that, and other little very specific measurable timelines along the way that make it seem as though it is historical, not just a legend or some kind of moral point.

And the first key point that I want to take away from this story is that when it comes to judgment, God's word is reliable and his blessing is experienced through obedience. We're going to cover a lot of territory this morning, so a lot of our time will be spent kind of keeping up with the story, but I want to make some points along the way. And the thing that just strikes me as I was meditating on these two chapters is that God speaks, Noah listens, Noah does what God says, and then the Lord delivers him.

God's word is reliable. God says it's going to rain for 40 days and 40 nights, and it does exactly what God says it's going to do. God says, "I'm going to wait for seven days and then the rain's going to fall," and it happens exactly as God says it was going to happen. God says, "I want you to build it to these specifications. I want you to put these kind of animals in. I want males and I want females. And I want it this kind of way, and I want this many clean animals and this many unclean animals."

And Noah does everything that God tells him to do because he believes that God's word is reliable, and as he walks in obedience to the word, God blesses Noah in response. The blessing of God is located in obedience to his word. I think a lot of times we assume that God blesses people: "Well, why is he blessing that person? And why is he blessing this person? And why doesn't he bless me?" When the reality is, most of the time what God blesses is not necessarily people, but a place. He blesses people who place themselves in submission to his word and walk in obedience to his word.

And when you walk in that light and you walk in the truth, God blesses that place. And Noah is now experiencing God's blessing because of his obedience to his word. Those who don't walk in obedience to God's word experience the curse of God's judgment. So when you think about the judgment of God and how do we escape the judgment of God or how do we survive the judgment of God? Not necessarily just judgment and wrath like they're going to experience, but when God is disciplining you or you're going through a tough valley in your life and you're wondering, "How am I going to get through this?

What about this medical diagnosis? Why is God making my life so miserable? Why are we having to go through this pain and suffering? How do we persevere and endure?" You

remember that in judgment God's word is reliable, his promises are true, and that his blessing is on people who walk in obedience to his word. It doesn't mean all your problems are going to go away necessarily, but it does mean you'll be under that umbrella of his provision and his protection because he blesses that place. And Noah's walking in that, and it says in verse 11, "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth."

Notice again the specificity of the numbers and the timeline. You've got fountains from the deep that burst forth, so this is like water underneath the ground, and then you have the windows of the heavens that are open, so that's the water that's above the ground. And so rain coming up or water coming up, water coming down. Rain falls upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. On the very same day that the rain begins to fall, Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and then Noah's wife, and the three wives of the sons, entered with them into the ark.

Not a day later, not a day sooner, on the day of judgment, the day of salvation came. "They and every beast, according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth according to its kind, and every bird according to its kind, every winged creature. They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him.

And the Lord shut him in." Other people look at the story of the flood and they say, "Well, that can't be a true story because there's no way animals would willingly let you drag them into a huge boat and put them in a cage." And if you're paying attention reading the passage, Noah didn't have to force any animal into the ark. They willingly walked in there. And I don't know if you've ever seen animals the way that they act when they know disaster is about to strike, they do get a little bit of intuition, they get a little bit of a sense, and I'm sure in the Lord's providence he had it so that those animals knew, "The world is about to end, and that's the only boat big enough to keep me alive."

And so they willingly go in, exactly again as God commanded him. Noah's walking in obedience to the word, God's blessing is on his life as a result, and then the Lord shuts them in. Noah doesn't shut the door. The Lord shuts the door. The timing is precise and definite. And so it says in verse 17 that "the flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters."

I imagine Noah in this moment thinking to himself, "I can't believe it. It's really raining." You know, it's kind of like West Texas. You see moisture in the sky: "Oh, I can't believe it. It's really happening." And I don't know what about the other people that were living in the world, maybe the people who thought Noah was cuckoo for Cocoa Puffs, they're coming up

to the ark. They're wondering if they can get in. "Hey, knock knock, Noah, let me in." And he says, "I can't open the door. The Lord shut it.

It's too late." Tragic. Verse 19: "The waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep." You guys remember what I told you last week about a cubit? It's the length between the tip of your finger, middle finger to your elbow. It's two spans. The span is like your pinky and your thumb spread as far as they can go. And you do that twice. That should be your cubit. I just think that's so cool.

I don't know why anybody else doesn't think that's cool. Biblical measurements. Fifteen cubits deep. So we're talking probably about 22, 23 feet of water covering the mountaintops. And as a result, verse 21 says, "All flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind." It's a genocide. "Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens.

They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days." So how long does the rain fall? Does anyone remember? It's 40 days and 40 nights. It's an interesting number. I do believe that the story of the flood is historical. I believe it was worldwide, but I don't believe that there is not symbolic importance to some of the things that are in the story, such as the 40 days and 40 nights. Oftentimes in the scriptures, Old Testament and New Testament, the number 40 is symbolic.

Even the 120 years that Noah waited until the flood came, that's three sets—or I'm sorry, yeah—three sets of forty. And three and four, that combination you also see in the book of the Revelation, totaling up to seven, which is the perfect number of God. In the Old Testament, the Israelites who are reading this story on the other side of the wilderness wanderings. How many years did they wander in the wilderness? They wandered for forty years. Moses spent how many days up on Mount Sinai before receiving the Ten Commandments? Forty days and forty nights.

Jesus, when he fasted in the wilderness, fasted for 40 days and forty nights, and then Jesus when he resurrects from the grave he spends forty days and forty nights with his disciples after his resurrection. Sometimes the number 40 represents testing and provision. Sometimes the number 40 represents cleansing and renewal as it does here with the flood. And sometimes the number 40 represents transition and transformation. The thing that stands out to me from this passage is that when it comes to judgment, God is much more patient than we deserve, and that in judgment God is oftentimes much more grieved than we can even understand.

God waited 1,600-and-something years[4] before he flooded the earth in judgment. He waited until it was every thought of every person being only evil continually before he finally said, "Okay, I wish I wouldn't have made these people. Okay, I've finally got to do something. I will not contend with them forever." Well, you sure have waited a long time. And then on top of that, he waits an additional seven days: "Please, please repent. Please come." He's way more patient than we deserve. And he's much more grieved than we can know. If you go back to chapter 6 and verse 3, the Lord says, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, because he's flesh," and so his number shall be 120 years.

The Lord decides I am going to judge the earth. And then in verse 6 it says that "the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart." This word grieved, this Hebrew word translated grieved, is oftentimes elsewhere used to talk about being cut to the heart. "You broke my heart. It's not just that you disappointed me; it's actually that there's violence, there's brokenness, there's pain, and hurt in me because of what I see in you." That's the compassion of God. That's the heart of God for his people.

Even wicked people who are destroying the good creation that he made. He's much more patient than we deserve. He's much more grieved than we can know. But even so, God's mercy is not indefinite. There is a limit to his patience, and there is a day on which judgment will come. There will come a day that God shuts the door. Noah doesn't shut the door. We don't decide when that day is going to come. We don't say, "You can or cannot come to the Lord." Our invitation is always open until the day where God finally says the invitation is closed.

And the door is shut. And on that day, there's nothing we can do to try to save people who reject God's invitation, which means today, while there is an opportunity, we do everything we can do to plead with people to repent and be saved. There's a day coming where Jesus will return, the heavens will open up, and he will unleash judgment on this world, and on that day it will be too late for people to respond to that invitation. And it's easy to say, "Hey, that's not fair, and that's not right."

But many times those who are quick to point the finger at God and say, "That's not fair, that's not right," those are oftentimes the very same people who complain the loudest about what's not fair and not right in this world. And so they complain and they say to God, "Will you just fix this? How can you let this go on in the world? Why would you allow this injustice?" And God, I think, sometimes might just respond and turn to them and say, "You want me to fix the evil in this world?

I can't fix the evil without getting rid of you, because you're part of the problem. And either I respond to everything, everybody, all at once, or I just wait, because that's the just, righteous thing to do." So even God's judgment is shaped by his compassion and his love. He doesn't delight in sending judgment on the world. It grieves his heart. But it's what love demands. If

God loves us, if he loves this world, he has to bring an end to evil. He has to destroy the destroyers and the self-destroy. To do otherwise would be unloving and unkind, because if he doesn't destroy the evil, then the evil will eventually destroy us.

Either God destroys human evil or human evil destroys humankind. If he's a loving God whatsoever, he has to destroy the evil, but in destroying the evil, he has to destroy the world. That's the message of the flood. That's the message of God's judgment. It's not just salvation from judgment for Noah. It's actually salvation through judgment. Noah is saved through the judgment. The earth is saved through the judgment. It is through the judgment of God that his love is displayed, his mercy and compassion are demonstrated, and his salvation of the world is achieved.

Hebrews chapter 9, verse 27 says it's appointed unto man once to die, and after that comes the judgment. The question I think we all need to wrestle with, especially if you're not a Christian, you've never made Jesus Lord of your life, is, on this day, will you be ready? It's coming for every single person individually, the day that you die, and it's coming for the world in which we live when Jesus comes again. There is no escaping that day. There are no second chances after that day. And so today is the day of salvation.

Are you ready for that day that will inevitably come? Noah and his family were ready, but the rest of the world was not. And so God remembers Noah in chapter 8, verse 1: "God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed," and the rain from the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heaven were closed—I'm sorry, "the rain from the heavens was restrained, and the waters receded from the earth continually.

At the end of 150 days the waters had abated, and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month"—again notice the specificity—"the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen." I love that phrase that God remembered Noah. Noah hears from God, listens to God, obeys God, and then God remembers Noah. You see this phrase in the book of Exodus—in my quiet time the other day, we were studying this, also in our small group.

The Israelites were toiling in misery under slavery to Pharaoh in Egypt, and then God remembers his people. There's suffering, there's hardship, there's trial, and then God remembers. And as he remembers, he moves towards those to whom he made the promise, and so he makes the winds blow. If you keep reading in verses 6 down to 15, you see that almost an entire year goes by before Noah and his family can actually ever get off the boat. And so if you're taking notes, sometimes in judgment there's a big gap between God's promise and its fulfillment.

You see this in the New Testament with the coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. There was a big gap between God's promise of bringing a Messiah in all these Old Testament messianic passages and then the actual coming of that Messiah. 400, 600, sometimes 800 years after the fact. In your life, there's oftentimes a big gap between God's promise and its fulfillment in your life. I was speaking to a gentleman in our church who recently joined, just the other day, about struggles that he was having in his life. And he was absolutely convinced that God had asked him to do this thing, and it was as if in doing the thing that God had asked him to do, his life had become more difficult and less enjoyable, and he felt further from God than he did whenever he began.

And I just could not help but be reminded of the story of Noah that Noah had to have felt the exact same way. "Here I am, Lord. I did what you asked me to do. Thanks for saving me from the water. But when am I ever going to get off of this boat?" Forty days and forty nights, you thought it was going to be over, then it was another 150 days before the waters even began to abate, and then the 150 days stretched into almost a full year before Noah could ever get off the boat.

But he eventually gets off. Verse 15: God says to Noah, "Go out from the ark." He was never more happy to obey the Lord than in verse 16: "Go out from the ark, you and your family, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." And so Noah does it. He goes out, his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him.

"Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark."[7] The world was incredibly wicked before they go into the ark. Lots of polygamy, lots of brokenness. I'm sure lots of homosexuality and all the other types of deviations from God's design. But when God resets creation, starts over—new Adam, new Eve, new garden, new paradise—he does it through Noah and his wife. Monogamous marriage, and his sons and their wives, monogamy again, resetting, not perfect, not Adam and Eve, but a resetting of God's design in this new world.

And so the principle that we can take away is that in judgment, though God is always faithful, sometimes we have to wait for his perfect timing. Often there is a big gap between what God says will happen and when God brings it about. Noah had lots of time to learn that lesson during those 120 years when he was preaching this message of righteousness. He had to wait on the Lord: "Lord, you've given me this message. You said it's going to happen. I'm going to trust you in the meantime." And that's all we can ask ourselves to do.

In the meantime, when God has not delivered, and you know he's revealed what you're supposed to do, but he hasn't delivered on the goods, what do you do in that meantime as you wait on the Lord? You walk in the light that you have, you obey to the degree that you

can, and you just trust that the Lord is going to work it out. And I know that's where a lot of us find ourselves this morning. "God, yeah, I know what you want me to do. I know that eventually you're going to work things together for good.

I have a lot of questions, I have a lot of struggles, I have a lot of uncertainty." So what do you do in that moment? You obey. You walk in the light that you have, you obey to the degree that you can, and you trust God with the results, believing that he is faithful to his promises. And oftentimes he asks his people to wait. And so that's what happens with Noah. He gets out. It says that the ark lands on the mountains of Ararat. I don't have a lot of time to go into this, but these are the mountains of Ararat, and they just so happen in 1951[5] to have found a rock formation that looks exactly like a big boat that God instructed Noah to build.

These are in eastern Turkey,[6] and so you can imagine the Turkish government—good old Erdogan, or whatever his name is. He's not super keen on letting evangelical Christians go digging. But they have run some 3D scans and they have seen that it's three stories deep and they've even found some timber and some bolts that hold timber together in this little section and if you measure it across, it's exactly 300 cubits long, just like God tells Noah to build an ark that's 300 cubits long. Is this for sure Noah's ark? You know, who knows?

I can't say for sure. I do think it's interesting. Every time people go to start disproving the Bible, all the Christians say is, "Well, let the archaeologists go dig and see what's there." And every time the archaeologists go digging, they prove the Bible true, not the opposite. Archaeology is a great friend to Christianity. That's one big takeaway from Israel. They're digging up the whole world over there in Israel. And every time they dig up something, they confirm rather than contradict what God reveals in the Scripture. Sometimes you have to wait.

And so this last little section in verses 20 to 22, Noah was saved through the judgment, but he was saved through that judgment for God's glory. Noah was saved by God's grace, from God's wrath, and for God's glory. Verse 20 says, "Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma"—the Lord doesn't literally have nostrils; this is just a way of talking about God, that when God saw that offering—"the Lord said in his heart, 'I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth.

Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.'" And so God resets creation by delivering one man and his family. And the first act of Noah when he gets into this new creation is to what? It's to offer a sacrifice. It's worship. He was not just saved from God's wrath by God's mercy, but he was saved for God's glory, which means Noah's first act was a humble, voluntary act of worship before the Lord.

You notice the Lord doesn't ask Noah, "Okay, get down there and offer a sacrifice." Noah does this willingly and voluntarily, and we know from the book of Leviticus that a burnt offering is essentially the offerer's way of saying, "Lord, I know I deserve this death. I deserve the death of this animal because of my sin. But because of your great mercy and grace, you are not holding me accountable for that sin. And so in gratitude, I'm offering up this burnt offering to you." And ultimately that's the only thing we can give to the Lord when he delivers us through judgment.

In judgment, when God saves us through judgment, the only proper response on our behalf is an act of humility, worship, and love before the Lord. And in Noah's case, it was a worldwide flood. In our case, it's salvation from sin and death through the Lord Jesus Christ. I said last week that the flood is just a pointing sign to Jesus, that the ark is just a pointing sign to the cross. This sacrifice at the end of the flood is pointing to the sacrificial atoning death of Jesus on the cross, and that it is through faith in Jesus when we repent of our sin and we put our faith in him that we enter into that ark.

And then we're saved from the judgment not of water, but the judgment of God's wrath on sin that we rightly deserve. And that when we enter into Jesus Christ, we are redeemed and saved and spared from the wrath of God. And the only response that we can give in response to that grace is an act of gratitude, humility, worship, and love. And the amazing thing is, it's not just that we're invited into that salvation through Jesus Christ. It's that in entering into Jesus Christ, that we are delivered from the final judgment that is to come.

And we don't have time to talk about it, but when you read the epistles like 2 Peter—2 Peter talks about scoffers and people who joke about "When's the Lord going to come?" And he says it's just like the days of Noah. They never learn. The world was created by water through God's word, and the world was destroyed by that water, and he says there's another day coming when the world is not going to be destroyed by water, but it's going to be destroyed by fire. And that's the second coming of Jesus Christ.

And Jesus himself in Matthew 24 said, "When I come again, I'm not going to give you a date and a time, but I will give you a setting. There will be scoffers. It will be just like the days of Noah. They'll be eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage, just like they were the day Noah entered the ark."[8] Everything was normal until it wasn't. But the day it changed, it was too late, and they weren't able to get in. And so if you're here this morning and you're not a Christian, I would plead with you to enter into the ark.

Enter into the Lord Jesus Christ by repentance of sin and faith in his death on the cross for your sins and be saved from the judgment that is to come. You may not live to that day of judgment, but you will live to the day of your death. And on that day you'll stand before a holy God who should judge you rightly for your sin. And what will you do with your guilt?

Today the Lord offers you to have those sins atoned for through the blood of Jesus if you'll repent and be saved.

And so as Mary comes and leads us through a time of response, I want to invite you to make that decision right there where you're seated. If you're watching online, you can go to that website and make that decision right there from where you're seated. But this is the most important part of a service, so don't leave this place without responding to the grace of God. And if you're a Christian and you've been saved from sin and death—many of us are just like Noah, walking through flood waters, trying to persevere, and would you ask the Lord to help you to wait on his provision and timing until he finishes what he's accomplishing in your life.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time and your word, and we thank you for hard passages like Genesis chapter 7.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "that Time headline from back in the day, God is dead"; the famous *Time* cover (April 8, 1966) asked, "Is God Dead?" Source: TIME cover archive, April 8, 1966. ↩
2. Transcript note: spoken as "I want you to build a flood"; God tells Noah to make an ark and says he himself will bring the flood. Source: Genesis 6:14, 17–18 (ESV), BibleGateway. ↩
3. Transcript note: spoken as "40 years"; the rain falls for forty days and forty nights (Noah's age at the flood, 600 years, is correct). Source: Genesis 7:4, 6, 12 (ESV), BibleGateway. ↩
4. Transcript note: spoken as "1,670 something years"; adding the fathers' ages in Genesis 5 (130 + 105 + 90 + 70 + 65 + 162 + 65 + 187 + 182) to Noah's age at the flood (600) gives 1,656 years from creation to the flood in the Hebrew text's chronology. Source: Genesis 5:3–32; 7:6, 11 (ESV), BibleGateway. ↩
5. Transcript note: spoken as "in 1951"; the boat-shaped Durupınar formation was reportedly exposed in 1948 and identified from an aerial photograph in 1959. Source: "Durupınar site," Wikipedia. ↩
6. Transcript note: spoken as "These are right next to Turkey"; Mount Ararat and the Durupınar formation are in eastern Turkey (Ağrı Province), near the borders with Iran and Armenia. Source: "Durupınar site," Wikipedia. ↩
7. Transcript note: spoken as "went out by families from the earth"; the verse reads "went out by families from the ark." Source: Genesis 8:19 (ESV), BibleGateway. ↩
8. Transcript note: spoken as "the day Noah entered the flood"; Jesus says "until the day when Noah entered the ark." Source: Matthew 24:38 (ESV), BibleGateway. ↩