

Before the Door Closes, Part 1: Genesis 7:1-10

Main Idea: God calls His people to live according to His Word and speak His truth to their generation.

I. Faithful Witness | Genesis 7:1-10

Genesis 7 moves the flood narrative from future judgement to present judgement. When God tells Noah to enter the ark, He says, “I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation” (Gen. 7:1). This connects back to Genesis 6:8–9, where Noah first “found favor in the eyes of the LORD” and is then described as righteous, blameless, and one who walked with God. Noah can easily become little more than a moral example: be better than the people around you and maybe God will save you. This is why the words “before me” are important. **Noah lives among other people, but the only approval he needs is from God.** Scripture repeatedly reminds us that we live our entire lives in the presence of God. Hebrews 4:13 tells us that “no creature is hidden from his sight.” People only see what we allow them to see. God sees the whole person. Every Christian is imperfect, but spiritual maturity goes beyond your reputation with other people. People can appear mature and respectable while hiding areas of their lives that remain unrepentant. Jesus condemns this outward righteousness when he describes the Pharisees as those who only take care of “the outside of the cup” while remaining corrupt within (Matthew 23:25-28). **Living righteously before God isn’t about what other people know, but what God already sees.** David’s prayer provides a proper model for us, “Search me, O God, and know my heart” (Ps. 139:23–24).

Up to this point Genesis has emphasized Noah’s obedience a handful of times. Chapter 6 ends, “Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him” (Gen. 6:22), and Genesis 7:5 says it again. Noah is contrasted with a generation determined to live according to its own desires, but Noah receives God’s Word as having authority over him. James later tells believers to be “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22). **Faithfulness requires more than agreeing that the Bible is true. It means allowing what God has said to shape what we believe and how we live.** We see this in Noah’s acts of obedience. God tells him how to fill the ark, and this is what he does. This is how scripture defines obedience, doing what God tells his people to do. Jesus asks in Luke 6:46, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?” Calling Jesus Lord means that he has the authority to define obedience and call you to it. We don’t get to lean into acts of obedience that we think fit our personality. Biblical obedience pursues the question, “What has God said for me to do?” before asking “What do I like to do for God?”

That can be difficult because we have almost unlimited ability to find voices that agree with us. When a certain source challenges what we want to believe, we keep searching until we find what we already wanted. Paul warned that people would gather teachers “to suit their own passions” and would “turn away from listening to the truth” (2 Tim. 4:3–4). **The problem isn’t only that false teachers exist, but that people actually seek them out because they offer what the flesh wants to hear.** Scripture is supposed to do more than affirm us. Paul says it is useful for “teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16–17). This assumes there will be times when we are told we are wrong. Understanding the authority of scripture brings us to a place of submitting to God’s word in all areas of our lives. We should be willing to be changed by scripture, not wishing scripture could be changed. If God’s Word is only authoritative when it agrees with conclusions we already prefer, then we are not submitting to Scripture. We are asking Scripture to submit to us.

To Ponder:

1. How does the phrase *Coram Deo*, “before the face of God,” turn mundane daily tasks into opportunities for worship and pursuing righteousness?
2. Christians should only seek to live for the approval of God, but how can the idea of living for an “audience of one” be misused? How does scripture keep us from turning that idea into an excuse to dismiss legitimate criticism or wise counsel?
3. 2 Timothy 3:16 says Scripture is useful for “reproof” and “correction.” When was the last time God’s Word changed your mind about something you wanted to believe or do?

Peter adds another important detail about Noah when he calls him a “herald of righteousness” (2 Pet. 2:5). Genesis never records one of Noah's sermons, but what Peter does reveal is that Noah's obedience to God was not kept private. The man who was righteous before God also proclaimed righteousness before his generation. **His witness involved the life he lived AND the truth he spoke.** This should help us avoid two errors. The first is talking about righteousness while living in a way that contradicts what we say we believe. Every believer knows the reality of engaging in behaviors that are contrary to scripture. 1 John 1:8–9 tells us that denying our sin is self-deception, while confessing it brings us back to God who forgives and cleanses. The answer to hypocrisy is not lowering God's standard until we can meet it, but repentance and dependence upon Christ. Our confidence is ultimately not in a righteousness we have produced, but in the righteousness we have received in Christ (Phil. 3:8–9). The other error is believing that a godly life makes sharing about Christ optional. Our behavior matters greatly, but behavior by itself cannot explain the gospel. The truths of the Gospel must be spoken. Paul asks, “How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?” (Rom. 10:14). Peter holds both aspects of following Jesus together when he calls Christians to “proclaim the excellencies” of God while keeping their conduct honorable before the world (1 Pet. 2:9–12). **A faithful witness lives out the truth and speaks the truth.**

While we are given responsibilities in following God, Noah shows us the limits of our responsibility. He built the ark, entered when commanded, and cared for what God entrusted to him. But it was God who brought the animals to Noah according to the promise he had made (Genesis 6:20; 7:8-9). Noah obeys, but God accomplishes what Noah cannot. This truth affects how we live day to day, but also how we go about evangelism. Christians are responsible to speak the truth, love, pray, and make Christ known. However, we are not capable of producing conversion in others. Paul writes, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth” (1 Cor. 3:6–7). That truth should neither make us passive nor anxious. **We faithfully do what God has given us to do and trust Him with what only He can accomplish.** There is also a sense of urgency in this passage. God tells Noah that seven days remain (Gen. 7:4), and verse 10 says, “And after seven days the waters of the flood came upon the earth.” God's patience was real, but it was not endless. Jesus uses the days of Noah to describe how people continued ordinary life until judgment suddenly came (Matt. 24:37–39). God's patience should never be confused with His approval of rebellion. **For Christians, this should produce an urgency to point the lost towards Christ who is the world's only hope to be saved from judgement.** As long as Christ has not returned, there are still people around us who need to hear the gospel. God's judgment makes having a faithful witness more necessary, not less.

Finally, the additional seven pairs of clean animals point toward something beyond survival. God commands Noah to take additional clean animals into the ark (Gen. 7:2–3), and when the flood is over Noah will offer some of them in worship (Gen. 8:20). God is preserving Noah not only so that he can stay alive, but so that he can continue worshipping God. Titus 2:14 describes Christ in similar terms as the One who gave Himself “to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession.” **We are not only saved from judgment. We are saved for Christ.** Christianity is not about adding Jesus to a life that still fundamentally belongs to us. “You are not your own, for you were bought with a price” (1 Cor. 6:19–20). We belong to Christ, submit ourselves to His Word, pursue holiness by His grace, and speak about the Savior who has made us His own. We don't have to force results, but we can't remain silent about the gospel either. **Like Noah, God's people are called to remain faithful in their generation while trusting God whose Word will ultimately prove true.**

To Ponder:

4. If we only think about salvation in terms of what we have been saved *from*, rather than who we are saved *for*, what impact does that have on our day-to-day lives? What vital parts of the Christian life end up missing?
5. A Christian witness requires both actions and words. Which are you more likely to neglect: living your life in a way that aligns with your beliefs, or verbally sharing about Christ? What usually holds you back in that area?