

GOD'S COVENANT WITH NOAH – ITS SIGNIFICANCE (PART I)

Dearly beloved,

You can read this account in Genesis 9.9 to 17. The first significance is that the church is preserved. The days prior to the world-wide flood were characterised by wickedness. This is evident from the words of Genesis 6.5, that the imagination of man was evil continually and God repented that he had made men upon the earth. And as a result of God's righteous judgment upon this wickedness, God will destroy the whole world with a flood. But God will save Noah's household which includes his wife, his three sons and their wives, seven of every kind of clean animals and two of every kind of unclean animals.

God commanded Noah to build an ark, which is a huge boat. And at the same time for one hundred and twenty years, Noah preached the righteousness of God, declaring that God will destroy this world by a flood. But to these people, Noah's declaration is somewhat strange because they have not seen rain before. This is evident from Gen. 2.5, "And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and *there was* not a man to till the ground". And you can imagine that the people thought Noah mad in building an ark. But according to Hebrews 11, Noah builds the ark in faith. God had warned him of the coming judgment by water not seen as yet. Noah believed God's Word and therefore he began building the ark with the fear of God in his heart. The building of the ark served the purpose of saving his household and thus the church of that day will be preserved. And through faith, Noah became the heir of the righteousness by faith.

How is Christ seen in the preserving of Noah's family? According to I Peter 3.21, "The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ". The flood is a picture of baptism. Baptism is a sign and seal of the blood of Christ that was shed for us on the cross. Baptism is also a sign of the spiritual blessings that proceed from the cross of Christ unto us. And thus, the flood is a picture of Christ's blood. This is also evident in what our Baptism Form which says, "O Almighty and eternal God, thou, who hast according to thy severe judgment punished the unbelieving and unrepentant world with the flood, and hast according to thy great mercy saved and protected believing Noah and his family; thou, who hast drowned the obstinate Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, and hast led thy people Israel through the midst of the Sea upon dry ground, by which baptism is signified".

What is the impact of the flood? Before the flood, there was sin, wickedness. And through the blood of Christ, that is the flood, the wicked died, including all the animals that were outside the ark. And through the blood of Christ or the flood, the whole creation was made anew. This is the picture of the new heavens and the new earth which our Lord will usher in at His Second Coming (Rev. 21.1-4). And it is through the blood of Christ that we have been cleansed from our sins. But we are not yet perfect for sin still reigns in our hearts and we have only a small beginning in our new obedience.

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