Studies in Genesis - 11

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In our last lesson we considered something of why God sent the flood "upon the world of the ungodly," and why He "saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness" (II Peter 2:5). Today we want to see what the Word of God says about the flood itself, as recorded in Genesis 7 and 8 and related passages of Scripture.

Before we turn to these chapters, inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, we would remind ourselves again that, whereas the skeptic ridicules this sacred story, the Lord’s people accept it by faith. "With God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26). And whether we understand it or not, we believe it.

Whether we understand what is in the Word of the Lord depends on whether the Holy Spirit has revealed it unto us. God nowhere tells us that we must understand His Word. He does tell us that we must believe it. My friends, if we stand by the Word, the Word will stand by us.

So it is that we accept by faith the record concerning the ark and the flood, even as we accept the creation story by faith. And yet it is remarkable that, after all the ages past, God is now permitting men to understand things that in all the centuries have been dark to them. Our forefathers were satisfied to take these things by faith; but now God is opening a few things to let us see. And these things which former generations of believers simply took on faith are perfectly understood in this day by those to whom God has given further light. So we can believe that in the days to come, in the glory, God will reveal all the dark things, and we shall be glad if we took God’s Word just as it is.

As an illustration of how seemingly impossible things have been made clearly possible, even from a human point
of view, let us consider for a moment one more detail concerning the building of the ark, before we go on to study the record of the flood itself.

It has to do with the "window," which God told Noah to put in the ark—"above." As we saw in our last lesson, God thus spared Noah and his family the distress of witnessing the suffering and death all about them; and thus God kept them "looking up" for light and heaven-sent blessing. But here is an added thought, worthy of our careful consideration:

A certain scientist, a believer in Christ, in reading Gen. 6:16, wondered about the size of the one window for so many people and animals—for light and for ventilation. If it was "a cubit" square; that is, eighteen inches, then it must have been very small for so large an ark. Therefore, this scientist determined to study carefully the Hebrew text for the real meaning; he did not question God's Word in the least.

In the first place, he found that the Hebrew word translated "window" in Gen. 6:16 is never again used for "window" in the Old Testament. Another word translated "window" occurs scores of times in the Old Testament, but not the Hebrew word used here. This word, however, is used in six or seven places in the Old Testament to mean "brightness," or "to make provision for brightness." Accordingly, the scientist concluded that this must be the meaning of the same Hebrew word in Gen. 6:16, used to describe the "window" in the ark.

Moreover, he noticed the peculiar wording of Gen. 6:16 in the Hebrew, translated in our King James Version as follows:

"A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above."

After careful study, this man decided that this passage could be translated like this:

"A place for brightness, or an open place for brightness, shalt thou make in the ark, and within a cubit thou shalt finish it toward the top." That is the Hebrew of it, "Within a cubit thou shalt finish it toward the top."
Our Revised Version renders these words in a similar way:

"A light (or, 'roof,' margin) shalt thou make to the ark, and to a cubit shalt thou finish it upward (or, 'from above')."

That is, the sides of the ark were to be built up within eighteen inches of the sloping roof of the ark; and between the top of the side and the overhanging roof that was to shed the rain, there was to be an opening of eighteen inches all the way around the ark. This afforded plenty of ventilation and plenty of light. That is exactly what the verse says. Therefore, this Christian student of the Scriptures came to the conclusion that this was the wise instruction, which God gave to Noah, providing in a most practical way light and ventilation for all.

And so it always is with God’s inerrant Word. It is the foolish critics of the sacred Scriptures who are proved to be in error; never our infallible, all-wise Lord who wrote His eternal Word! "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21).

That is why we approach the study of the flood today, knowing that it actually took place more than 2000 B.C., even as God has said. The simplicity of faith ever triumphs over the tangled maze of doubt and unbelief.

**God’s Invitation to Righteous Noah**

"And the Lord said unto Noah, come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation" (7:1).

Noah had done "according unto all that the Lord commanded him" (7:5). And now God’s gracious invitation to him was, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." And then God added these words of commendation, "For thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation."

When God determined that the end of all flesh had come, He found one man who would believe Him. "By faith Noah . . . prepared an ark." And "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

Now, my friends, can you put the two together, grace and faith? Wherever there is faith, God gives grace; and
wherever you find grace, you find somebody that has faith. God cannot exercise His grace except where somebody believes Him. God in His grace does not want anybody lost, but the only way God can save you, my friend, is by faith. All the infinite riches of God's grace are for you. Grace is for you. All His riches are for you, summed up in grace—but only if you believe. "By faith Noah" obeyed God; and "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." And Noah "became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. 11:7).

What kind of righteousness did Noah have? The righteousness of a good life? No, God can not accept that for justification. Noah very likely was the best man living, but that is not why God accepted him. God accepted him because he had justification by faith. My friends, God today can not use the best man walking the face of the earth if he is not a justified man. But we see in Noah an example of grace, faith, and justification. And Noah was a man God could use.

It is a sad state of affairs today that many standing in our pulpits have gone far away from the message which Noah preached—justification by faith in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet this was the lesson God gave to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and to Abel, Enoch, and Noah.

There are many evidences, even among the heathen nations today, that the world had the knowledge of salvation in distant ages. For example, the Chinese word for "righteousness" is composed of two signs, one meaning "a lamb," and the other meaning "for me." The Chinese language probably dates back, nearly to the time of Noah. It has thirty thousand characters; and it is a very difficult tongue to learn. Yet the ancient language of this ancient people tells the Chinese man that "righteousness" means "a lamb for me." This evident token of a prehistoric knowledge of the meaning of the shed blood of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8) gives proof that God had taught His creatures of the righteousness which He requires—not good works, but faith, as the only way of
salvation. But the world long ago corrupted God's truth; and then they lost God's plan of how to get rid of sin.

Oh, my friends, I am preaching to you this morning, to tell you that if you want to be righteous before God, do not seek righteousness by changing your life. That does not work. God does not accept that. If you hear this and you think you have lived a good life, remember that you are not righteous because of your life. It is your faith in His Son, the only Saviour, that makes you righteous with God. The moment you believe, you stand before God accepted, righteous before the Lord. This has been preached all down through the ages by all who have been true to the Word of God.

"And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him."

It had been no small task, to build the ark, and to provide food to last a little more than a year for his family and for all the animals. But God gave him wisdom. And God always gives wisdom and grace for every task He assigns to His children. And in the doing of the task, His children receive added blessing. How good is our God!

**THE EXACTNESS OF GOD'S CALENDAR**

"And it came to pass after seven days (following Noah's entrance into the ark), that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights" (7:10-12).

Will you notice how exact God is in His calendar? Will you notice the date at the top of the page, if you have a Scofield Reference Bible, 2349 B.C.? In your ancient history that you study in high school and college, you do not have any dates like this. Historians can fix approximately the certain dynasty of an old kingdom, several hundred years B.C., or they can fix approximately the reign of a certain king. It is all approximate; but here, 2300 B.C., God gives you the very day of the month; and if God wanted
to, He could give you the hour and the minute. God's calendars are right.

Do you not see how different the Bible is from every other book? This is not a book among books; this is a Book as strange among the books of the world as the Lord Jesus is among the men of the world. The Lord Jesus deserves a place in the highest heavens; as high as the heavens are above the earth, is Christ's place above all men. There is no use reckoning Him among men, although He was human; He belongs in the highest heaven. We are told that God has set His Word in the highest heaven, where men can not touch it. So 2300 years B.C., God is showing us His calendar. God takes us to a wall, as it were, where there is a calendar hanging, and says: “See, 2300 B.C., 4300 years ago, away beyond the building of the pyramids”—God puts His finger on His calendar and says, “That is the very day that Noah went into the ark.” My friends, you do not need to be afraid of God's Word. You do not need to be afraid to go out and tell people you are trusting the Word of God. God is willing to give you His Word, to the day and hour of everything He has ever done.

On a certain day, one week after Noah entered the ark, the flood came upon the earth. “And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days” (7:24). Exactly five months after the flood began to sweep the earth, “the ark rested . . . upon the mountains of Ararat” (8:4).

“And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen” (8:5).

When Noah was 601 years old, on the first day of the first month, “the waters were dried up from off the earth” (8:13). But Noah waited for God's express command before going forth out of the ark. Therefore, He was in the ark exactly a year and ten days after the flood came, as a comparison of 7:11 and 8:13, 14 clearly shows.

**The Waters of Judgment**

Now that was no ordinary storm. Not only were “the windows of heaven” opened, but “all the fountains of the
great deep” were “broken up” also (7:11). It was a very great miracle! Water came up from “the great deep” beneath; and water came down from “the windows of heaven” above.

Scientists tell us that there is not enough water in the world to cover the earth and all the mountain tops with water. But how much water is underneath the continents, no scientist knows. There is no doubt that the condition of the earth’s surface was changed at that time. There is no doubt that many of the upset conditions that we see in the rock formations of mountains at this time are the result of the flood in the days of Noah, when God made the crust of the earth to heave upward so that the water underneath gushed out, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the water came from underneath and from above.

It is said now, my friends, whether we believe it or not, that there is more water hanging in the atmosphere around the earth than in the oceans on the earth. At least, God had a plan by which the whole earth was covered; and undoubtedly the conditions, the rock formations that we have in the world today, are an evidence of what God said here.

“The fountains of the great deep were broken up.” Is it not wonderful that God tells us just how He did it? “The fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.”

“And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and of every man” (7:19-21).

I want to show you in the New Testament God’s reference to this. Please turn to II Peter 3:3-7 for God’s commentary upon these searching words:

“There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts . . .”
We expect, therefore, that there will be those who scoff at these things which we firmly believe. But let us note the rest of that sentence from Peter, together with the words that follow:

"... And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water."

Now that is how the earth was in the days of Noah, before the flood, out of the water and in the water." Just what the condition was, we do not know; but that is the explanation of the New Testament. But let us read further:

"Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water perished."

God had a certain formation of the earth at that time, "in the water and out of the water." There probably was not the same atmospheric condition which we have now; for probably up to the time of the flood there had never been a storm. Certainly there had not been a rainbow. It was after the flood that God put His bow in the cloud; so that at that time there was evidently a strange formation. Undoubtedly the scientists of Noah's time told him or showed him the impossibility of the flood; but in the New Testament we read that the world was "in the water and out of the water." The waters underneath and above overflowed the earth, and there was a great upheaval.

In our last lesson we called attention to the fact that, before the flood, rain seems to have been unknown; and we referred to Gen. 2:5, 6 as throwing some light upon this subject:

"The Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth... but there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground."

In this connection, let us note also that, even after "the flood was forty days upon the earth... the waters increased"
(7:17). And again we read that "the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth" (7:18). These verses seem to speak plainly, saying that even after the rain had ceased to fall, "the fountains of the great deep" "increased" upon the earth. Yes; it was a very great miracle which God performed when He sent the flood "upon the world of the ungodly."

You say, my friend, that you are glad you were not on earth in the days of Noah? Let me show you what God says in that same passage, from II Peter 3:7, about another awful judgment, yet to come upon this godless world:

"But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

This world is being kept by God now where it is. Men are fighting for power; men are fighting for money, fighting for fame; governments are fighting for territory; one man pushes down everybody else, that he may be dictator; men still go on fighting for the things that are here; and this world is just being kept here by the Word of God. Day after day the Word of God is holding it in place where it is—keeping it ready for what? Water? No; the bow in the clouds assures us, "No more water." This godless world is "reserved unto fire." My friends, if you believe there was a flood, you have to believe this, because here you have the same Scripture linking together the judgment of the flood that is past and the judgment yet to come by fire.

So ungodliness goes on, and God is just holding the earth where it is. The next time He is not going to wash it with water. As somebody says, God flooded and scrubbed and cleaned the earth with water; and sin still exists. The next time He is going to burn it out; and when it comes back from the flames that shall envelope it, it will be a world "wherein dwelleth righteousness."

"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.
Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

**GOD "DELIGHTETH IN MERCY—NOT IN JUDGMENT**

My friends, our holy God has to judge sin. He had to purify the corrupt world in the days of Noah by sending the flood; and He will have to purify this evil world again by fire. He must judge sin. But our holy God is also a God of love; and He “delighteth in mercy”—not in judgment. In Isa. 28:21 He describes His righteous judgment as “his work, his strange work . . . his act, his strange act.”

God does not want to judge anybody. People say over and over again, “We don’t believe God will send anybody to hell.” My friends, neither do I. God will not send anybody to hell—if God can help it; for if a man goes to hell, he goes over the dead body of the Son of God. What more can God do? Judgment? Yes; but it is God’s “strange work.” The great act of sending judgment? Yes; but it is God’s strange act upon the whole earth.

God “delighteth in mercy”—not in judgment. In Micah 7:18 we read:

> "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy."

Does God pass by sin? No; God never passes by sin, except where He can find a way to dispose of sin. And if your sin has found a Substitute to bear the punishment, then God passes by your sin. We have been studying about the waters of judgment upon a corrupt and God-rejecting world. And before we leave this subject, I want you to see that when God destroys, He has to destroy; that when man sins and brings destruction upon himself, sin and destruction touch
the heart of God; and that God has gone to all extremes to save man from the destruction that will come.

My friends, you who are listening in this morning, have you sinned, and are you without salvation? Listen to God's eternal Word: "He is able to save . . . to the uttermost!" (Heb. 7:25). God did not say, "I will offer salvation to those who have not sinned very much." God did not say, "I will offer salvation to those who do not blaspheme My name." God said, "All blasphemy shall be forgiven." He is able to save to the uttermost! Why? Because God delights in mercy, and "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10).

Only those who know God know the ways of God. There is only one way to know the ways of God, and that is to know God Himself. When you know God, you are fully satisfied that everything that God does is the very wisest thing; that even what God does in judgment He does only because it has to be done, and only because there is no other course.

"But," you ask, "how do you know that?" Everybody knows that who knows God. Those who judge God do not know Him. A minister in England said, "You who do not love God do not know Him; for if you knew God, you would love Him." Those who do not believe, and those who curse God, and those who hate God, and those who will not listen to God, are those who do not know Him. But those who know God are satisfied with everything that God does. And what they read in the Book they accept, whether they understand it or not. They are satisfied that God doeth all things well."

In Rev. 15:3 the tribulation saints are described as singing His praise:

"And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

That word "saints" ought to be translated "the ages." But notice the words, "Just and true are thy ways." And these words are recorded in the last book of the Bible. All the history of God's doings and God's works is in between
the flood and this fifteenth chapter of Revelation. Now, my friends, you can say that. So would all men be able to say it, even atheists and unbelievers, if they would take the record between Genesis and Revelation and find out what God has done and said. Instead of stumbling over the flood as an act of judgment, they would be repeating Rev. 15:3, “Just and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages.” God who is supreme over eternity, who sees the end from the beginning, who knows what is coming, who knows how to meet it when it comes, who knows how everything will head up and just how to stop it at the best time, God always does what is best. Therefore, Romans 8:28 is absolutely true: “All things work together for good to them that love God; to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

“GOD REMEMBERED NOAH”

“And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark” (8:1).

God did not forget. “God remembered Noah.” God saw him every moment. God had shut him in, and God kept judgment out and kept life within; so in the ark Noah was safe. But he was not one whit more safe than the man God has put in Christ because he has believed. Christianity is not only to be saved, but to be safe. To have God put you in Christ, you are just as safe from judgment as this man was, as across the mountains he sailed while that storm was raging and before the water abated. With nothing but death and destruction on the outside, this man was saved and safe inside. God “shut him in,” or, literally, “covered him round about.”

But, my friends, when God shut this man in, He shut the others out; and it was just as impossible for them to get in as for this man to get out. That is the sad part. I have seen a picture of people clamoring at the door of the ark for Noah to let them in. There is no Scripture for that. It may be that before they had reached the highest hills, where they doubtless fled for safety, the ark had lifted from her moorings and had sailed or drifted away, miles out of the sight of everybody, so that when they would be saved, there was no
ark to be found. We do not know. But we do know this, that the door was shut; and that after Noah was shut in, nobody else got into it.

Oh, my friends, will you let it go so long? Have you let it go now? Suppose God shuts the door today? Suppose this is the end? Suppose my invitation this morning is the last invitation you will ever hear? What will you do? If God says the door is shut, what will you do?

I read the other day of a minister who preached on that incident in the life of the Lord Jesus, when the rich young man went to Christ. The Lord loved him, and said, "Come and follow Me." But the record tells us that "he went away, because he had great possessions." He went away. Where did he go? Where is he now? He went away. The door was shut. What will you do? Is there any one in the radio audience this morning who has not up to this moment trusted Christ? Will you just trust Him this morning? It is only a step. It was only a step for Noah. He stepped into the ark, and God shut the door, and he was safe. Christ is waiting to save you. Will you step in this morning?

"God remembered Noah . . . and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged; the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; and the waters returned from off the earth continually" (8:1-3).

"For wise reasons" the waters "decreased slowly and gradually." "And the ark rested," tradition says, upon Ara Dagh, "the finger mountain," whose summit "consists of two peaks," 17,750 and 18,420 feet above sea level.

"And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen" (8:5).

Exactly five months after the flood began, the ark had rested "upon the mountains of Ararat." Then about two and one-half months later "were the tops of the mountains seen."

"And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: and he sent forth a raven . . . Also he sent forth a dove" (8:6-8).
THE RAVEN AND THE DOVE

The raven "went to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth." But "the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark.”

Read again the familiar story. Recall how Noah waited "yet other seven days” before sending out the dove a second time; how she "came in to him in the evening,” with an olive leaf in her mouth; and how after seven more days he sent forth the dove, and she "returned not again unto him any more.”

Now the raven, an unclean bird, undoubtedly found carcasses to feed upon. It found a resting place, and did not return to the ark. But the dove "found no rest for the sole of her foot.”

Some people teach that the dove and the olive leaf symbolize peace, but in the Bible the dove is always a type of the Holy Spirit. The raven is a type of the flesh, which can enjoy "the pleasures of sin,” in a world that is under the curse of a righteous God. What matters if the world is dead? What matters if the world is rushing to perdition? The flesh can have a good time. But not the Holy Spirit. And if you have the Holy Spirit, that is why you can not have a good time in sin. The dove found no place to rest and had to return.

But the time came when, in the new earth, the dove, a type of the Holy Spirit, could rest. Yet there had been a time when the dove could not rest.

First, the dove came back with nothing; then the dove came back with an olive branch, which is a type of life; then the dove returned no more, a type of the new earth that is yet to come. This is a figure. At the present time the raven finds plenty in the world; but the Holy Spirit finds nothing in the world. At the second visit of the dove to the world, it brought back the olive branch, a type of the fact that life had appeared. That is a type of the time when Jesus came and brought life into a world of death; so that in the midst of death there is life. This is a world of death; but there is life for those who find Christ, and that life is by
the Holy Spirit. Life has come. But there will come a time when the Holy Spirit will make this world His home.

My friends, glorious things are coming. The time will come when God will again live and reign here in this world. This is a strange and peculiar age in which we live. Do you know that now God is not welcomed in the world that He created? Men are the creatures of His hand; the earth brings forth harvests, and men live on the harvests; men are living at the hand of God; and if a single harvest should be withheld, for one season, the world would die. The whole world is living at the hand of God; yet the world will not listen to God, and God is not welcomed here. When God sent His Son, His Son was crucified and went back to heaven with five bleeding wounds, received at the hands of men. But the time will come when God will return to this earth. Then He will be welcomed, and the Holy Spirit will find an abiding place on earth.

I want you to turn, please, to Isa. 65:17 for a glimpse of the glories of the age to come:

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.”

That is yet to come. God is going to make this world over again. My friends, we ought to praise the Lord that this present condition of things is not permanent. We ought to praise God for that. There is no way out for the nations, which today are staggering under the great burden of armaments and cruel war. There is no other reason for the world’s financial condition except its great burden of armaments, forts and navies and standing armies, using up the wealth of the world. But it is not permanent, praise God for that!

The new world will be so glorious that we shall forget all about this present existence. God will re-create this world. He will fill it with His presence; His glory shall cover the earth “as the waters cover the sea”; and joy and happiness and plenty shall be so wonderful in the world that this present existence, with its wars and depression, its trouble and sorrow and dying, its open graves and empty chairs
and desolate homes, will be forgotten. "The former shall not be remembered."

I wonder if we are praying for that? Instead of the church’s being a fourth-class entertainment bureau, it ought to be on its knees, praying for the glorious age to come. We can save people out of the world now, and lead them to Christ by faith; and if we get down and pray that the coming of the Lord may be hastened, we shall do more for the world than man, with all his schemes for social uplift and social betterment, will ever accomplish. Just to be down on our knees praying for the Lord to come, when there will be a world so filled with glory that the present one shall not be remembered or come into mind—that is your wonderful privilege and mine.

"Noah Went Forth Out of the Ark"

When Noah was 601 years old, "in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry" (8:13).

But Noah waited almost two months longer for God's express command to go forth out of the ark. This command came "in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day"—exactly one year and ten days after the flood began to come upon the earth.

Note the orderly fashion in which the occupants of the ark left this refuge that had, for so many months, been their home. First Noah and his family "went forth out of the ark," then the animals "after their kinds." Literally translated, these words mean "according to their families," "implying increase" during their stay in the ark.

It has been suggested that the repeated references to "yet seven days," or "after seven days," or "yet other seven days," seem to indicate that Noah observed the Sabbath, even during his stay in the ark. The Sabbath Day of the Mosaic Law had not yet been instituted, of course. But, as we have already seen, God must have appointed a time, as well as a place and a way by which His believing children could approach Him in worship. We offer this only as a suggestion, but one that may well be considered.
Certain it is that Noah was grateful to God for physical safety from the flood, to say nothing of his gratitude for justification by faith in the coming Redeemer from sin. His very first act after his departure from the ark was to present an offering unto the Lord.

"AND NOAH BUILDED AN ALTAR UNTO THE LORD"

Noah "took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not curse the ground any more for man's sake" (8:20, 21).

Wonderful words follow these, in this remarkable passage, words setting forth God's covenant with Noah, never again to destroy the earth with a flood. This—the message of the rainbow—we shall study in our next lesson. But just here we would remember that it was at the place of the altar that God "said in his heart" and to Noah His covenant—words of promise.

God was pleased with Noah's burnt offering. How Noah knew just how to offer to the Lord, we do not know. Just how Abel knew that God would accept a little lamb as an offering, we do not know; but Abel knew. Abel killed a little lamb and brought that lamb to the Lord, and God showed that He was pleased. And now here is Noah coming out of the ark; and before he does anything else, before he builds a tent, before he erects a dwelling place, before he breaks the ground, he offers to God a burnt sacrifice. And it is remarkable, that the burnt offering, more than any other sacrifice, shows forth the fulness of Christ as an offering pleasing to the Father.

I have not time this morning, but if you will read today the first chapter of Leviticus, and read the notes in your Scofield Reference Bible on that chapter, you will perhaps get just a little of the blessing that is in the picture of the burnt sacrifice. When they brought a burnt offering to the Father, they took the entire offering and put it upon the altar; and every part of it was burned and went up to God—the sinner saying, "This is something I bring for God
alone. God gets every part of it." It all went up to Him, well-pleasing to God.

Let us take time just here to see how God explains the deep and beautiful meaning of the burnt offering in Eph. 5:2:

"Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour."

That is, Christ, when He offered Himself, was the burnt offering. He was wholly given to God. He was given to God for us, as an offering for us; and He was entirely consumed. He was a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God, and God was pleased with His sacrifice for us. So God is pleased with us in Christ.

God was pleased with Noah. Why? In the sacrifice that Noah offered, God did not look at Noah; God looked at the sacrifice, and smelled a sweet savour, and God was pleased. God does not look at you or me. If God has to find goodness in you and in me, we are in a bad place. God finds His satisfaction in the One who stands for us. Christ is our sacrifice. God looks at Christ, and Christ says, "I stand for him." And God is pleased with you and with me "in Christ." So when Calvary was erected, there was another sweet-savor offering to God; and God is pleased with everybody who trusts Christ.

This is what the Holy Spirit meant when He said in Heb. 13:10-14:

"We have an altar, whereof they (Jews who rejected Christ) have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." (The Jewish temple was still standing when this was written; and our "altar" is Calvary's Cross!)

"For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate (of Jerusalem). Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."
My friends, who is your Sacrifice? Do not bring money for a sacrifice. Do not ever serve the Lord and say that is your sacrifice. Calvary is your sacrifice! God is pleased with you because you are trusting His Son; and if you want to please God, point to Christ and say, “He died for me.” Then God, seeing Christ, is pleased with you; God will smell a sweet savour and be pleased. Do you not see? It is all in the Sacrifice, not the sinner.

Like Noah, you may be justified “by faith” and find “grace in the eyes of the Lord.” Then in Christ Jesus, the Ark of Safety, you will be eternally secure from God’s righteous judgment upon sin. Go to the place of the altar, even to Calvary’s Cross, where an acceptable offering has been made unto the Lord, even Jesus, the holy Lamb of God, “without blemish and without spot.” Hear His own reassuring promise, and be saved for all eternity:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life” (John 5:24, R. V.).