

THIS ARK CAN GO THROUGH FIRE

~Other Speakers G-L: Allan Halton:

We've been talking about the great flood of Noah's day and the ark he built, and how that is a figure of the atonement of Christ on Calvary. We saw that Peter likened the flood to a great baptism, and the ark to God's salvation in that baptism. Peter said that the Christian's baptism in water is "a like figure" (1 Pt. 4.21). Water baptism is itself a figure that cannot accomplish what the real baptism can—the cleansing of the conscience.

This does not mean we should not be baptized in water, as some have taught (the early Quakers and the Salvation Army, for instance). The early Quakers taught that as a mere outward ordinance water baptism wasn't necessary. I can understand their stand on this; the church of their day had become totally seized up with the formalism of outward ordinances. But Paul, after that experience on the Damascus Road, was baptized in water. And in other places in The Acts we find that the apostles who baptized people in the Holy Spirit also baptized them in water. And so we do this also. It's a step of obedience that shows our commitment to submit to the true baptism—baptism into Christ—all our days.

And we are yet going to discover that baptism into Christ, the baptism of the cross, the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire—all this along with water baptism is really only "one baptism"—is going to make us invulnerable to the fires of the Day of the Lord. This is our "ark."

Peter has much to say about Noah and the flood as something that foreshadows the present dispensation and what is before us now—the fires of the Day of the Lord. And he says that in the last days there would be scoffers walking after their own lusts 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 the creation (2 Pt. 3.4).

George Warnock points out in one of his writings (Chain Reaction in Realms of the Spirit) that we are well past that time now. Men are no longer saying that all things continue the same. How could they? Things have accelerated dramatically the last few decades. What with the AIDS epidemic, and 9/11, and devastating earthquakes and tsunamis, and peace and order disintegrating on every hand... no one says any more that things continue the same. More and more the words of the scoffers are hollow in their mouths when they ridicule the words of the Lord.

Peter reminds them (and us) that it was the word of the Lord that sustained the old world (the world before the flood, 2 Pt. 3.5). It was the word of the Lord that had created the heavens of old, and the earth. It was the word of the Lord that on the third day had caused the dry land to appear out of the water (Gen. 1.9). Even during the time when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared, the word of the Lord continued to sustain that world.

But then the day... and the hour... and the minute came... and by the same word of the Lord the windows of heaven were opened and all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the world was deluged with water, and perished (2 Pt. 3.6).

It is only the word of God that continues to sustain our present world (Heb. 1.3, 11.3). Only the word of the Lord. Not yet, He says. Not yet. Not yet. The longsuffering God who waited in the days of Noah is waiting again in our day. He is longsuffering toward us not willing that any should perish but that all come to repentance (2 Pt. 3.9). And so we account that His longsuffering is with a view to salvation (2 Pt. 3.15). It's not because He is slack on the job and doesn't care about this sin-torn world. He hates iniquity far deeper than we. But the work of the Holy Spirit in God's people is not finished yet. The Ark is not quite ready yet.

But when it is finally ready? He will speak. There will be fire.

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 (destruction) of ungodly men" (2 Pt. 3.7).

What the ark was in prophetic type back in the days of Noah it is in reality now. Back then those in the ark became the beginnings of a new creation. All else was destroyed. Noah was the "eighth person" (2 Pt. 2.5). "Eight souls were saved by water" (1 Pt. 3.20). Eight in Scripture is the number that signifies a new beginning. It is the same now. God has a new beginning in mind—a new creation. Its beginnings are already

in the Ark. For “if any man be in Christ he is a new creature...” (2 Cor. 5.17).

And only what is in the Ark Christ Jesus is going to survive the fires of the day of the Lord.

All else will not make it through. “The earth and all the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Pt. 3.10). Wickedness shall not rise up the second time. We will all be glad. For out of it will come a new creation, a new heaven and a new earth in which dwelleth righteousness—that is, in which righteousness is not an unwelcome unwanted stranger, but is at home (2 Pt. 3.13).

I long for that Day. Surely we understand that this is not about some kind of vengeful God wreaking wrath on innocent victims. It’s about a God of love who is pained more deeply than we can comprehend with the evil that has engulfed His world. That’s what motivated Him back in Noah’s day. He hated the iniquity. He hated the violence. He put a stop to it.

What He has in mind as a result of the fires of the day of the Lord is a world in which righteousness is at home. He is a God who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity. Do you and I also love righteousness and hate iniquity? Are we like Him ourselves? Just as Noah built the ark and in doing so condemned the world, we can hasten the coming of the Day of Fire by our own “ark building”—our holy and godly lives—as we mentioned last time.

Therefore, since all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,
Looking for and hastening the coming of the Day of God... (2 Pt. 3.11, 12, NKJV).

We can hasten that day!

And we can be found in Christ in that day—in the Ark, that is, when everything around us is going up in smoke.

Wherefore, beloved, seeing ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless (2 Pt. 3.14).

There is only one Place in this universe where anyone can be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless. That is in Christ. In the Ark.

Beloved, there are many who mock these Bible stories, and scoff at them—at the word of the Lord. Let us see to it that we ourselves are not mockers and scoffers. Let us take these things seriously. Let us get out of Sodom. Let us get into the Ark. I remember as a young man how I myself used to heap scorn upon such fairy tales, and the naive people who believed them. But I remember the night I was converted. It still stands out in my memory how I suddenly saw that the story of Noah and the ark was actually true. It was not a fairy tale. It was true! It actually happened! What a change had taken place in this I-know-better mind of mine!

And so I say... let us take God seriously, just as Noah did, who being “warned of God of things not seen as yet,” by faith built that ark and entered it. Let us give diligence to do the same. God means business. Judgment is at the door. This has been so impressed upon my spirit of late. How little we understand God—that He is a God who exercises not only lovingkindness, but also “justice and righteousness in the earth” (Jer. 9.24). How terribly people have presumed upon His goodness and lovingkindness and longsuffering and patience and grace. But when His hour comes He is going to show His undiluted hatred for unrighteousness and iniquity. It has caused Him such deep pain to see what iniquity has caused in His earth.

He is going to deal with it all. The Day of Fire is dawning. And just as the ark was the only way through “the stormy waters,” the Cross of Calvary is the only way through the fire—the fires of judgment of the Great Day of the Lord. It is the mystery of the Cross. What to some is certain destruction becomes for others their salvation—because of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.