

~Other Speakers G-L: Allan Halton:

After I wrote last time about getting out of Sodom I read over the passage in Luke where Jesus talks about the days of the coming of the Son of man (Lk. 17.22-37).

Jesus said that the same day Noah entered into the ark, the flood came and destroyed them all.

And He said the same day Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

That is, all those who were carrying on a "business as usual." This is the emphasis of Jesus' warning in both scenarios. The majority of people were going about the ordinary activities of everyday life when Noah and his family were entering the ark, and Lot and his family were getting out of Sodom.

God did not rain down destruction on Sodom till Lot and his family got out of Sodom.

He did not bring the flood upon the world of the ungodly till Noah and his family had entered into the ark.

But in both cases as soon as this was accomplished destruction followed swiftly—the same day.

"So shall it be also in the days of the Son of man," Jesus warns. "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed (unveiled)" (Lk. 17.26,30).

...But reading this passage I noticed something I hadn't seen before. One involves getting out; the other entering in.

Getting out of Sodom is critical. We must hasten our escape from Sodom at the peril of our lives. But this is an emphasis that doesn't give us the full picture of our need—nor of God's wondrous provision of salvation in the day of judgment. God had an ark for Noah and his family in the midst of great destruction. He has an Ark for us today... and we must enter into that Ark. What is this all about?

I think it's very meaningful that God instructed Noah to pitch the ark within and without with pitch. It's the same word—kaphar—that is used for to make atonement. It means simply to cover. The same root is found in the word translated mercy seat in our English Bibles—kapporeth. And this mercy seat, this Covering, is Christ Himself.

For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God

Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (Gk. mercy seat, compare Heb. 9.5 where the same word is used) through faith in His blood... (Rom. 3.23-25).

So the ark typifies the atonement—God's provision in Christ for sinners to be made righteous by faith, and thus saved from the wrath that is the inevitable desert of those who make a continual meal of ungodliness and refuse to push away from that table.

Peter bears witness to this view of the ark; he compares Noah's flood to baptism, and the ark to God's salvation in Christ.

...The longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water.

The like figure whereunto baptism doth 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:

Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and power being made subject unto Him (1 Pt. 3.20-22).

Peter likens the flood to a great baptism, and Noah's ark to Christ's salvation in that baptism. He says God waited with much longsuffering in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared. "Wherein (that is to say, in the ark) few... were saved by water." Those in the ark were saved in that great "baptism" of the flood... because of the ark.

But then Peter continues, “the like figure whereunto baptism doth now save us...” Baptism, says Peter, is itself a figure, a “corresponding figure,” as Greek scholar W.E. Vine defines the word. What is water baptism a figure of, then? It’s a figure of our participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now note. It is not baptism in water that saves us. We are not saved by being baptized in water. Water baptism is just a type, a figure, of the true baptism. The true baptism, the real baptism, is baptism into Christ—into His death and resurrection. This is where our salvation lies. It is Christ who is our Ark of salvation. It is Christ in whom the old man has been judged and totally done away with—crucified—and in whom the new man has come into being in resurrection life, a new man who is as righteous as God Himself.

And so we must be baptized into Christ in order to be saved from the wrath to come. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mk. 16.16). This is not a reference to water baptism. It’s talking about the baptism that saves us—baptism into Christ. Water baptism attests to this. The baptism of the Holy Spirit initiates it. The baptism of the Cross fulfills it. (Remember, Jesus spoke of His pending Cross a baptism, Lk. 12.50.)

And so the writer of Hebrews tells us that Noah by building the ark became heir of the righteousness that is of faith (Heb. 11.7). Noah heard God, and acted upon what he heard. Building the ark was Noah’s great work of faith. This resulted in his salvation.

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith (Heb. 11.7).

I think we see in this passage a prophetic glimpse of Jesus Christ, who in His death and resurrection was preparing an ark to the saving of His house—the household of faith. Christ Himself is our Ark of salvation—which we enter when we are baptized into Him in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In that instant we are new creatures in Christ; in that instant we are in the true Ark of God—and have confidence that we will be preserved through every trial and judgment to come...

...As we continue to submit to this baptism and abide in this Ark from day to day. Our Ark will see us through all the “stormy waters” with rejoicing... as we continue to work the work of faith, resting in Him, trusting in Him, and obeying Him. Those who are doing this are secure in the Ark.

This is the thing the writer of Hebrews is emphasizing—the obedience unto which we are called, the obedience of faith... which becomes the ark of our own salvation, as Noah’s obedience became. There is a work of faith by which we, too, build an “ark” and enter it. Many there are who carry on day in and day out just as the people did in the days of Noah. Others are building an ark. How? By hearing what God is saying, and obeying. This becomes our ark of salvation. Yes, Christ Himself is the Ark. But this daily ark building becomes our statement of faith—that we believe Jesus Christ to be the Ark of our salvation, the only Ark that is able to see us through what we have to go through today... and what is coming tomorrow. Our patient day-by-day “work” on this ark is our statement that we believe God concerning things not seen as yet.

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house...

Noah believed God... and he built that ark. The proof that we believe is that we are doing the same thing.

And those who are not doing this? This is what accounts for the sense of urgency in this hour. Many are not doing this. Our Lord urges, “Build that ark, get into the ark!” It’s possible to be baptized in water and still not be in the Ark. It’s possible to receive the initial baptism of the Holy Spirit and still not be prepared for what is before us because we are not submitting to the daily baptism of the Cross Jesus spoke of. It’s possible to neglect our salvation. Yes, Jesus built that Ark for us on Calvary. Only He can atone for sin. But the proof that we believe this is shown in our daily walk of faith with Him—we are taking up our cross and following Him. We are abiding in Him, and in His yoke. We are resting in Him. We are listening for His Voice and obeying Him.

In this way we too are building that ark, and are entering it, and are ready for what is about to descend on our world, confident that right in the midst of the fires of the Day of the Lord there is no more secure place in the universe.