

**Introduction** (Gen 8:1-19)

In November 1995, I was spending some time with the Lord. My conversation with the Lord went something like this. “Do you have a word for Karen? Her birthday is coming up, and I would love to share a word of encouragement from You.” The Lord did respond to me, but He gave me a very different answer than I expected. He did not give me a word for Karen at that time. Instead He gave a life-changing word to our whole family. He told me, “This is the last page of this chapter of your life.” I knew exactly what the Lord was telling me. I had won the Tallahassee Open that year and was playing professional golf. 1996 would be my last year playing golf. That would be the end of this chapter of our life. We were going to turn the page and begin a new chapter of our lives in 1997. During the next year, God told me to plant a church, and He gave me the vision for that church. That was not the word I was expecting.

In our text today, Noah and his family have been in the flood chapter. At the beginning of the flood chapter, Noah built an ark. We don’t know how long it took, but it took many years. He entered the ark, along with all the animals, and then God sent the flood. They have been in the ark for a long time, and it seemed to them that the chapter would never end. There are some chapters of our lives that seem like they will never end. God will get us through, and we will eventually turn the page to a new chapter. For Noah and the animals, this is the end of the flood and the destruction of all flesh on earth. They are in the ark waiting for the waters to recede and the earth to dry up so they can start a new chapter. Our text today gives us details about the water subsiding, and their disembarkation from the ark. It is the end of the chapter. Next week, we will begin with Genesis 8:22 and the start of a new chapter in their lives, and for the new world.

**The End of the Chapter** (Gen 8:1-19)

1. The Water Subsides (Gen 8:1-14)
  2. Everyone Disembarks (Gen 8:15-19)
1. **The Water Subsides** (Gen 8:1-14)

(Gen 8:1-14) “But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided. {2} Also the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky was restrained; {3} and the water receded steadily from the earth, and at the end of one hundred and fifty days the water decreased. {4} In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat. {5} The water decreased steadily until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains became visible. {6} Then it came about at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made; {7} and he sent out a raven, and it flew here and there until the water was dried up from the earth. {8} Then he sent out a dove from him, to see if the water was abated from the face of the land; {9} but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him into the ark, for the water was on the surface of all the earth. Then he put out his hand and took her, and brought her into the ark to himself. {10} So he waited yet another seven days; and again he sent out the dove from the ark. {11} The dove came to him toward evening, and behold, in her beak was a freshly picked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the water was abated from the earth. {12} Then he waited yet another seven days, and sent out the dove; but she did not return to him again. {13} Now it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the water was dried up from the earth. Then Noah removed the covering of the

ark, and looked, and behold, the surface of the ground was dried up. {14} In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.”

Our passage begins by saying that God remembered. Noah has been on this ark in the storm of all storms. The whole earth has been flooded and there is no land anywhere in sight. He is on the ark with his family and with every type of animal and creature on the earth. Months have gone by and there has been no indication that the flood was subsiding. Noah probably asked the same question that we have asked in the midst of our storms, “Where are you God?” When John the Baptist was arrested and put in prison, he asked the same question. He sent word to Jesus saying, “Are you the Christ, or do we look for someone else?” This is the same John that declared that this is the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. This is the same John that declared that Jesus existed before him. This is the same John that said that he was unworthy to untie his shoes. This is the same John that said, “He must increase and I must decrease.” His expectations of the Messiah were being challenged. Certainly, if Jesus is the Messiah, I am not going to be left in this dark, smelly, prison. The Messiah would certainly deliver me from this situation. All of us go through some difficult times and are prone to ask God, “Where are you?” That is what Noah asked, and our passage begins with an affirmation that God had not forgotten Noah and the animals. God remembered Noah and all the living creatures.

(Matt 11:2-3) “Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples {3} and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?”

(Luke 3:16) “John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

(John 1:15-16) “John \*testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" {16} For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.”

(John 1:29-31) “The next day he \*saw Jesus coming to him and \*said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! {30} This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.' {31} I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.”

(John 3:30) “He must increase, but I must decrease.”

Do you ever feel like God has forgotten you? Have you been in a difficult situation, and asked, “Where are you God? Have you forgotten me?” I have had a couple difficult chapters in my life. I spent seven and a half years managing a golf resort, and it was a very difficult chapter. The owner was very greedy and his oldest son was a thief. God had not forgotten me. As I look back, His grace and blessing was on me. It was just difficult to see at the time. In Psalm 23:4 we see that God walks through the valley of the shadow of death with us. God is with you even in your darkest hours. This is the reason Moses recorded that God remembered Noah and the animals. Noah needed to be patient. It was going to take some time for the water to recede. When God remembered Noah and the animals, He took action. He did some things to speed up the drainage process. There are some natural processes for drainage to naturally happen, but God did some supernatural things to help drain off all the water.

**a. Natural Processes**

First, we have the natural processes. “The water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days.” It takes time for water to drain. As a professional golfer I studied golf course design. When you design a golf course, one of the key design elements is drainage. Every square inch of the golf course has to be included in the drainage plan. There are basically two types of drainage. The primary drainage is what we call surface drainage. Everything has a general slope and drains to lower areas. In those lower areas, called collection areas, a drain is put in and the water will go into underground drainage pipes to lakes and/or ponds. As a professional golfer, we were always looking for the collection areas and drains, particularly around the greens so that we would know what the overall slope was. What looked like a straight putt generally would break toward the drainage area. The second kind of drainage is called subsurface drainage. There were drainage tiles under the green and as the water percolated through the green, it would reach the drainage tiles and flow away from the green. Jack Nicklaus loved to use subsurface drainage tiles and it made reading his greens more difficult. The subsurface drainage is a secondary system and is not as effective as the surface drainage. The water prevailed on the earth because it needed to drain. It drained off of the higher ground to the lower collection areas. At the same time, it percolated into the ground in the same way that a subsurface drainage tile works. We have large underground water reservoirs and my belief is that these underground reservoirs got filled from the flood waters. In any case the waters prevailed on the earth for one hundred and fifty days.

**b. Supernatural Intervention**

First, God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided. Wind is a natural occurring element, and it causes water to evaporate more quickly. But, our text says that God caused the wind to blow. This was an intentional intervention by God to speed up the drying process. The wind did not start blowing immediately. It came at the appropriate time. I believe that God delayed the wind for a number of reasons. Winds cause great waves. If God had caused the winds to blow immediately, it would have been a horrible boat ride. I believe one of the reasons that God delayed the winds so that the ark would not be violently tossed around by the waves. We know that God works all things together for good, and we may not see the good at the time, but we have to trust that God is working things out for our good in the storms of life.

Second, God shut off the supply of water. He did this in two ways. He closed the fountains of the deep and He also closed the floodgates of the sky. There were tremendous water storages underneath the surface of the earth. During the flood, God brought rain and He brought water from the fountains of the deep. God closed the fountains of the deep. God also closed the floodgates of the sky so that the rain from the sky was restrained. Any further rain would have prolonged the flood, so God held off all the rain.

In Genesis 2, we saw that no rain had come upon the earth. Up until the flood, there was no rain on the earth. A mist would come up and water the earth. The water and mist came from the fountains of the deep. We also saw in Genesis 2 that there were rivers that flowed out of Eden to water the garden. Since there was no rain yet, there must have been springs and other outcroppings of water that formed rivers. I believe these waters were from the fountains of the deep, and God shut off these water supplies so that the waters would recede.

(Gen 2:5-11) “Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to

cultivate the ground. {6} But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground....{10} Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. {11} The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.”

Third, God changed the topography of the earth and oceans. The earth was flatter at that time, but there were still existing mountains and natural drainage. We find in Psalm 104 that some supernatural changes took place in the flood. The waters receded or fled at God’s rebuke. We also read that the mountains rose and the valleys sank down. The waters of the oceans were shallower before and the mountains were not as tall. Now, some mountains are 30,000 feet tall and some of the ocean bottoms are 35,000 feet deep. God supernaturally restructured the earth and provided places for the waters to drain off more quickly.

(Ps 104:6-9) “You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters were standing above the mountains. {7} At Your rebuke they fled, at the sound of Your thunder they hurried away. {8} The mountains rose; the valleys sank down to the place which You established for them. {9} You set a boundary that they may not pass over, so that they will not return to cover the earth.”

How did this happen? One of the ways that God raised up the mountains was through volcanoes. There were volcanic eruptions that created mountains. The mountains are made up of igneous rocks. Ignis is Latin for fire. Igneous rocks are also known as volcanic rock or magmatic rock. Igneous rocks are formed from lava that cools quickly. When the volcanos on the ocean beds and on land erupted, the lava was quickly cooled by the water, and igneous rocks were formed. As the waters retreated there was also sedimentary deposits made that covered the igneous rocks. The waters receded through natural drainage processes and through some supernatural intervention by God.

### **c. Drainage Reports**

The waters receded steadily, and at the end of 150 days, the waters decreased. In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, which was exactly 150 days, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.

(Gen 8:3-4) “and the water receded steadily from the earth, and at the end of one hundred and fifty days the water decreased. {4} In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat.”

The waters continued to decrease, and on the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains became visible. This was the 224<sup>th</sup> day from the beginning of the flood. Then, at the end of forty days, which would have been the 264<sup>th</sup> day, Noah opened the window of the ark, and they all celebrated some fresh air. Noah opened up the window and sent out a raven. Ravens are scavengers. They feed off of dead carcasses. In addition to the billions of people that had died, there were billions of animals and creatures that had died. The raven signifies the end of the destruction of every living thing with breath that had been on the earth.

(Gen 8:5-7) “The water decreased steadily until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains became visible. {6} Then it came about at

the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made; {7} and he sent out a raven, and it flew here and there until the water was dried up from the earth.”

Next, Noah sent out a dove. The dove found no resting place and returned to the ark. Seven days later Noah sent out the dove, and this time the dove brought back a freshly picked olive leaf. Noah knew the water was abated and there was life again on earth. The raven, representing the death was sent out, and now the dove was sent out, representing life. Historically and also in the church, both doves and olive branches are symbols of peace. In the 5th century, St Augustine wrote that, “perpetual peace is indicated by the olive branch which the dove brought with it when it returned to the ark.” In the Great Seal of the United States, an eagle has an olive branch in its right talons and 13 arrows in its left talons. The olive branch signifies that the U.S. wants peace, but it is balanced by the 13 arrows, which means that the U.S. is willing to go to war if necessary. The 13 arrows represented the thirteen original states.

(Gen 8:8-11) “{8} Then he sent out a dove from him, to see if the water was abated from the face of the land; {9} but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him into the ark, for the water was on the surface of all the earth. Then he put out his hand and took her, and brought her into the ark to himself. {10} So he waited yet another seven days; and again he sent out the dove from the ark. {11} The dove came to him toward evening, and behold, in her beak was a freshly picked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the water was abated from the earth.”

After the dove returned with the olive leaf, Noah waited another seven days and sent the dove out again, but she did not return to him again. We infer that she built a nest and started her new life outside the ark.

(Gen 8:12) “Then he waited yet another seven days, and sent out the dove; but she did not return to him again.

On the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the water was dried up from the earth. There was no standing water and the surface was dried up. It was dry on the surface but it was wet, spongey, and squishy underneath. If you had walked on it, you would have sunk into the mud. This was 318 days after the beginning of the flood. Then, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of the second month, the earth was dry. Noah and the animals could now walk on the land without sinking into the mud. This was 375 days after the beginning of the flood. They had been in the ark for 382 days, one year and seventeen days.

(Gen 8:13-14) “Now it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the water was dried up from the earth. Then Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the surface of the ground was dried up. {14} In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.”

## 2. **Disembarkation** (Gen 8:15-19)

(Gen 8:15-19) “Then God spoke to Noah, saying, {16} “Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you. {17} Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you, birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” {18} So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. {19}

Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by their families from the ark.”

One word that I want to point out that is mentioned in their disembarkation is “families.” We read that *“Noah went out with his sons and his sons’ wives with him. Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by their families from the ark.”* The beasts, birds and creatures went into the ark by twos, male and female. They left the ark by families. We saw in Genesis 1 that God commanded Adam and Eve, and all of creation to be fruitful and multiply. He wanted them to fill the earth. Their time in the ark had not been wasted. God’s purposes and plans were being carried out. The pairs of all the creatures were fruitful and multiplied in the ark. They were no longer pairs, but families. God has always been interested in families. In our church, we want to be families. We want strong families. Strong families begin with strong marriages. As a church, we want the children and youth included and made to feel important. They are important. They are precious. God has plans for each member of the family. We are a church family, and all of you are individual members and important family members.

I could have called this section Obedience. Even though it had been over a year and the surface of the earth was dry, Noah did not disembark until God told him to. Noah lived an obedient life. When the Lord told him to build an ark, he built an ark. He built it according to the blueprints that God gave him. When God told him to get into the ark, Noah and his family, and all the creatures did exactly what was commanded them.

Look at all the verses that speak of Noah’s obedience. In Genesis 6:22, *“Noah did according to all that God had commanded him.”* In Gen 7:5, *“Noah did according to all that the Lord had commanded him.”* In Genesis 7:9, *“there went into the ark to Noah by twos, male and female, as God had commanded Noah.”* In Genesis 7:16, *“those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him.”* And now in Genesis 8, the Lord tells Noah to *“go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your son’s wives with you,”* and in verse eighteen we read, *“So Noah went out, and his son and his wife and his sons’ wives with him.”* Noah was obedient to the Lord in all things.

The Christian life is to be characterized by obedience. In the Navigators Wheel, there are four spokes. The vertical spokes are the word and prayer. The horizontal spokes are evangelism and fellowship. The hub of the wheel is our relationship with Christ. On the outside of the spokes, on the tire part, they write, “The Obedient Christian.” They recognized that our lives are to be characterized by obedience.

After we receive Christ into our lives, we are to be baptized. Baptism does not save you, but it is an act of obedience. It is a picture of salvation. Our sins and our old life is buried with Christ, and we are raised up to live a resurrection life. Baptism represented was also an act of repentance. John preached a baptism of repentance. It is a turning away from our sins and our old way of life to Jesus Christ. Baptism does not save you; it is simply an act of obedience to what God asks us to do. Our Christian life begins with obedience to the gospel, and to baptism, and it is to be characterized by obedience.

Listen to a few Scriptures where God speaks to us about obedience. In Deuteronomy 28:1, He says, *“Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.”*

In John 3:36, John the Baptist said, *“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”* In Hebrews 5:9, we read that Jesus *“became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.”* Our salvation begins with obedience to Christ.

In John 14:21, Jesus said, *“He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”* Our Christian walk begins with obedience, and our obedience to His commands is an evidence of our love for God.

In Acts 5:29, *“Peter and the apostles answered, ‘We must obey God rather than men.’”* And in Acts 5:32, they said, *“And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.”*

In addition to obeying God, we are to obey the authorities that God places in our lives. In Ephesians 6:1, Paul instructs children to *“obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”* In Colossians 3:22, Paul instructs *“slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.”* Our obedience should not be external, but should be with sincerity of heart. You can usually tell a person who is obedient from the heart by their attitude; there is a humble submission to the authority.

In Hebrews 13:17, we are commanded to *“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”* Our Christian walk is characterized by obedience.

## **Conclusion**

As we come to a close today, I want to ask two questions. I want us to look at 2 Thessalonians 1:6-12. Paul is addressing Christians who are afflicted and suffering. He encourages them to persevere the storm. He tells them that God will repay with affliction those that have afflicted them, *“dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus.”* We know that the coming of the Lord will be just like the days of Noah. There will be destruction of the world, not by water, but by fire. God will deal out retribution. In verse nine, he says, *“these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.”* This morning, have you heard the gospel, which means good news. Judgment and destruction are coming, but the good news is that Jesus Christ has made a way for you and I to escape that destruction. Just as God told Noah to build an ark to save his family, and he obeyed, He sent His Son to provide a way of escape for us. We simply need to believe in our hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead, and confess Him to be Lord. Have you obeyed the gospel and received Christ into your life?

The second question is very similar. Is your life characterized by obedience. When God speaks, do you obey? Do you obey His word and apply it in your life? Do you obey the things that He tells you? Do you obey and honor the authorities in your life? Do you obey from the heart or is your obedience outward? How is your heart attitude in your obedience?

Shortly after I became a Christian, the Lord gave me a life verse, Ezra 7:10. *“For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in*

Israel.” God made it clear for me that my life was to be a life of obedience. I was to practice the things that I studied in Scripture, and then teach them to others. Even though this is my life verse, I believe it applies to all of us. God wants us to put into practice the things that we are learning from His word. Are you being obedient to his voice? Are you being obedient to His word? Is your life characterized by joyful obedience? If not, spend a few minutes speaking with the Lord about that this morning. Ask Him for forgiveness. Ask God to help you to become obedient.

If you have never received Christ and obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ, I encourage you to do that right now. Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? Do you believe that He came and died for our sins? Do you believe that God raised Him from the dead? If so, I encourage you to receive Christ into your life. Ask Jesus Christ to come into your life right now. You can pray a simple prayer like this, “Jesus, I do believe that You are the Son of God. I believe that You died on the cross and paid the price for my sins. I believe that You were raised from the dead. I ask You to come into my life and take away my sins. I confess You to be Lord and Master of my life. I pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.