

Do You Have A Refuge?

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[0 : 00] Genesis 6, starting at verse 5. Verse 8 says, Verse 10.

Verse 17. There it is.

Now turn to chapter 7, starting at verse 11.

Genesis 7, 11 says, In the 600th year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the 17th day of the month, on that day, all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened, and rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.

On the very same day, Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of the sons with them, entered the ark. They and every beast according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth according to its kind, and every bird according to its kind, every winged creature.

[2 : 36] They went into the ark with Noah, two and two, of all flesh, in which there was the breath of life. And those that entered, male and female, of all flesh, went in as God had commanded them, and the Lord shut them in.

This is the word of God. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for how you have unveiled yourself to us. You've unveiled the God who saves. Thank you for your word, Lord.

How you minister to your word through the plain reading to your people, every true believer in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. Lord, we acknowledge this is a mystery in its foolishness to those who don't know you.

But those who have your Holy Spirit within us, it bears witness. This is the truth, that Jesus Christ came to save sinners like us. Thank you for this glorious type, this shadow that we can study today, Lord.

[3 : 56] We pray that you will minister your grace to your people today through this message. We ask this for the glory of King Jesus in our midst. Amen. Here's an eyewitness account of a regional local flood.

He wrote, The water rose so fast, we had to scramble upstairs from the first floor. Jim remembered, the wave of death came right behind us, waltzing up the stairs like it owned the place, and quick as a wink, got to swirling around our ankles on the second floor.

Jim says, It was my fault that we stayed. They had just bought a brand new home. It was made of brick, and they had put brand new shingles on the roof.

But Hurricane Katrina, it caused a canal breach on 23 different spots that made the waters flood 80% of the city of New Orleans.

Some parts were buried in 15 feet of water. So kids, that basketball hoop is 10 feet, five more feet above that.

[5 : 15] 1,800 deaths, 78,000 people displaced by one regional flood. And Jim said, It was my fault that my family and I got trapped there.

He thought he had a good refuge. And it probably was better than most. But when the floods came, no man-built refuge was enough. It's hard for us to fathom this entire earth buried in the waters that came from the deep as well as from the sky.

But that's what the Bible tells us happened. A worldwide flood in which people like you and me were living their lives like Jim, and they were caught without a refuge.

So that's my question for each one today. Do you have a refuge? There's only one refuge for you, for your body and your soul.

It's revealed in all of the Bible by further steps. So from this passage, I want to try to highlight four covenantal observations.

[6 : 33] Number one is this. God is the covenant Lord ruling over all of his creation. He is the holy covenant Lord.

He is the holy covenant Lord who rules over the entire world. And as the Lord over his creation, he sees each person's natural evil inside and out.

look again with me at verse five, Genesis chapter six, verse five, God observed that the wickedness of man was great.

Man's evil deeds had multiplied in the whole earth. This speaks to the intensity of man's sin. See, it's one thing if man uses evil words, but we read that these were the deeds of men.

It was blatant action. The deeds were evil and wicked because all of mankind had become so corrupt.

[7 : 40] To describe this a bit further with biblical language, we read in Galatians 5, 19, that the works of the flesh include sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and worse.

Some of you are thinking, well, that describes the folks I just worked with all week. It's not only the intensity of sin that's highlighted, it's also the quantity.

It's that evil deeds by wicked men had multiplied to the point that the whole earth was filled with nothing but that. The Bible says it was violent. violent. And there is the Lord, the covenant Lord over all his creation.

Verse five, he saw that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil. continually. God saw man's slavery to sin. He saw what's inside man and described it as only evil.

[9 : 02] Your soul is addicted to wickedness, not just some of the time or most of the time. Your natural state is to be addicted to evil continuously all of the time.

John Calvin described this as the natural hereditary depravity of all of mankind. It's a corruption of our nature that is diffused into all parts of your being.

I had to look up in the dictionary, what does diffused really mean? You got like a diffuser of puts oils mixed in with the air, or sometimes you will try to take oil and you'll diffuse a aroma into it.

And it means that one element is so intermingled with another that it takes it over, even on an atomic level. So this is describing the root of man's sin.

God sees man's insides. It's the imagination. It's man's thoughts. God sees man's heart. God sees man's heart.

[10 : 11] Romans 1.30 describes this as hating God, being a slanderer out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. Spiritual rebellion.

It's to be insolent, haughty, boastful, and inventors of evil. 1 Corinthians 6, verse 11.

Paul writes to the church, people like you and me, so were you. And so natural sinners cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

It's impossible to have peace with God. What that means is that as God is Lord over the whole creation, and his new kingdom of heaven and earth is coming, there will be no place for sinners.

His rule will be established over all creation. Where will you be in your natural state? In our natural state, you and me would be homeless when the new heavens and the new earth are ushered in, because God is the covenant Lord over all his creation, and he sees you and me, each of us, in our natural condition.

[11 : 31] And he sees that we are evil inside and out. You can't be a Christian unless you say, that was me. And my heart is still bent in that direction, unless the spirit keeps me close to Christ.

Here's our second covenantal observation. The Lord's wrath burns against sin because he is good, and because he is just, he must punish evil.

The Lord's wrath, his holy righteous anger, burns against sin because he is good. How could it not? And because God is just and powerful, he must punish evil.

The language to describe this to us, it's using something we can relate to. Look at verse 6. God saw the world that way, and God repented.

The King James says, what he saw repented the Lord, that he had made man on the earth. Verse 6 says, it grieved him, God, at his heart.

[12 : 41] Well, we know from all of Scripture that God is spirit. God is not man. So God does not have physical eyes, but the language is that God saw.

God does not have a heart like a man does, but yet God was grieved at his heart. That's our prophetic idiom from Moses' pen. We know that the eternal decree of God is immutable.

It does not change. But yet, God's wrath against sin is so strong, the Scripture describes it as God repenting of what he had made.

It's like God says, O creation, I am holy, and I made all my creation very good for my glory. But man's slavery to sin and Satan has ruined my world.

And because he sits on the throne as Lord over his creation, the holy God cannot tolerate evil without responding. He is not distant.

[13:41] Our God is active in this world. And the just God cannot leave sin unpunished, or he would no longer be just. The God who created order, peace, and beauty won't leave his creation in chaos forever.

He rules over it. It's his. He won't leave us to ruin ourselves. He won't leave his image bearers to self-destroy through violence forever.

So in verse 7, the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and the beast and the creeping thing and the fowl of the air.

See, the animals were not God's image bearers, but they are being affected by man's sin. Because the second commandment is a prohibition against turning creaturely things into gods or worshiping something creaturely, we can infer that before the flood, people had done just that.

That's what Paul roars about in Romans 1 and 2 as well. So the Lord will destroy both man and beast. You can almost imagine the type of idols they came up with, creeping things, the fowls of the air, because it grieves me that I have made them.

[15:01] God is all-powerful, and God is good. And so God must unleash his wrath to punish evil. We read in verse 11 that the earth was corrupt before God.

The earth was filled with violence, and God looked upon the earth, and behold, he saw that it was all corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. It's a real horror to think of what we deserve if we were left to ourselves.

We need to understand that the wrath of God cannot let evil go unpunished. Eric Alexander pointed out that the real horror of being outside of Christ is that there is no other shelter from God's wrath.

The Lord, ruling over his creation, because he is good, he must pour out his wrath to punish sin, and because he is just, he must punish evil.

But remember the promise. The seed of Eve will destroy the Satan, the serpent's head, crush it. How will the Lord be faithful to his promise, and also be faithful to being just, and good, and punish evil?

[16:32] How will he do this? And this is our third observation, that the Lord, he is faithful to his covenant of grace, and he provides sinners a refuge for salvation.

Yes, the Lord is faithful to his covenant of grace, and he provides sinners with a refuge for salvation. In verse 13, we read that God said, the end of all flesh is before me, because the earth is filled with violence.

Behold, I will destroy wicked mankind along with the earth. So God will do this. But we read in verse 8, that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

Let's define this term. First of all, grace is different than mercy. Mercy is to withhold deserved punishment. And God is merciless against sin.

But yet we read that those same eyes, so to speak, the eyes of God that saw the wickedness of Noah's heart, mind, imagination, and deeds, that same God looked graciously at Noah.

[17:55] Now grace, it not only withholds punishment, like mercy does, but grace also generously blesses. Grace is better than unmerited favor.

Unmerited favor would be like this. Picture a teenager who lives on the street, and he's always getting into trouble. And then a man gets out of his car and sees that homeless teenage troublemaker, feels pity for him, and gives him a crisp \$100 bill.

That would be unmerited favor. But grace is so much more than just that. Grace is giving favor to one who has demerited it.

So grace, in the biblical sense, is if that teenager saw that same man, picked up a big rock, smashed his windshield, when the guy gets out of his car, kicks him in the shin, spits in his face, gives him the middle finger.

That man doesn't reach for his wallet. He takes that young man to the courthouse and adopts him. You're going to be my son, and I'm going to disciple you and show you unconditional love.

[19 : 13] That's grace. It's favor, great favor and blessing to one who has demerited it. So Noah, he found grace in God's eyes.

Grace is when God shows favor to a man like Noah, or like you and me, who have demerited it. See, God showed favor to Adam and Eve and Noah, even though they were rebels, and every thought of their mind was bent toward evil always.

But God is faithful to his covenant of grace. Look at verse 18. God says to Noah, with you I will establish my covenant, and you shall come into the ark, you and your sons and your wife and the sons' wives with you.

Isn't that a great promise? God did not find Noah gracious.

Noah deserved God's wrath, just like everyone else, just like we do. But Noah received God's favor. Where did God find this grace? God found grace for a man like Noah in himself.

[20 : 31] God graciously elected, pardoned, accepted, and preserved Noah because he's faithful to his covenant of grace. Do you see the work of the covenant of grace being unveiled even in this ancient story?

In verse 18, Noah gets the promise that you shall come into the ark. Noah, do you have faith in this promise? I will save you by my grace.

Well, we see Noah's faith, in his response. His response was simple, to believe and obey. We read in Hebrews 11, 7, that by faith, Noah, when warned, in holy fear, he built an ark, and God saved his family.

By faith, Noah condemned the world and was heir of righteousness that keeps with faith. And this is because the Lord is faithful to his covenant of grace and he provides sinners like Noah, like you and me, a refuge for salvation.

The fourth covenant observation is this. The Lord patiently calls all covenant breakers to find safety in his provided refuge.

[21 : 56] The ark was not just for Noah, it was for whoever would repent and believe. The Lord patiently calls covenant breakers to find safety in the refuge that he has provided.

Through Noah, God preached free salvation to the whole evil world. We read in 2 Peter 2, 5, that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. In 1 Peter 3, 20, we read that God's divine long-suffering waited patiently in the days of Noah as the ark was being prepared.

So there's Noah, hammer in one hand, preaching from the other side, and as people are mocking him and seeing this massive wooden structure go up, he's calling to them, repent, turn to God the creator.

You know what's been handed down since Adam and Eve through Seth. You know the promise.

Repent and believe. We read in Genesis 7, verse 16, that God then sent a male and female of every species, and he sent Noah and his family into the ark, and then the Lord shut them in.

God himself closed the door of the ark when the day had come. What comes next was real clouds in the sky, heavy rain, overflowing lakes, hungry waves, most likely boiling lava as the springs of the deep were opened up, swallowing up home after home, fear, angry panic, lost loved ones, running to the mountains, and then clamoring to be the last king of the hill.

[24 : 02] We read in 2 Peter 5 that God himself protected Noah inside the ark. God protected everyone who fled to the refuge God provided.

And then, God's judgment poured down on the whole earth. God's wrath purged the world of sin because God is holy, but God preserved those in his appointed refuge.

Well, this story of Noah, it shows us that the effects of the fall were so devastating that God himself must act so the world doesn't self-destroy a thousand times over.

And we should never forget that, the total depravity and how broken the city of man will be if God were to leave it, take his hands off. What we're going to see next week is that God himself must stabilize the stage, so to speak, before the playwright, God, enters his own drama as the hero.

For today, we need to see Jesus Christ as the refuge God has provided. In 1 Peter 3.21, Peter says that this was a type, this was a shadow, and there's a greater antitype, a greater substance that was unveiled at the coming of Jesus Christ.

[25 : 42] There's a corresponding fulfillment in the new covenant to the flood and the salvation God provided. See, Noah was a real person. The flood was a real historic event.

every mountain range on every continent of the world has evidence of marine life, not just fish from a sea, but sea stars and seashells that would only be found on oceans, are on the tops of every

mountain of the world.

We don't need that, but we should not be surprised when they find it. Ancient civilizations have passed down in their oral tradition even though they've been darkened by the devil.

So we have in the Sumerian story, the Babylonian history, Celtic myths, African myths, Pacific tribal legends, and even the Chinese character for ship, it's three characters combined.

It's a boat, eight mouths, and the number eight. There it is. There's the three. So a ship is a big boat with eight people on it.

[26 : 50] The number eight is Noah and his wife, his three sons, and their wives. There's eight people on the ship. Both Noah and Adam are foreshadowing the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Adam was born without sin, but he chose to sin. Noah was born into sin, and he could never escape it. But Jesus Christ became the man that Adam chose not to be by sinning, and the man that Noah could never be.

Noah could not start a perfect new creation after the flood. He still had the depraved, sinful nature that he would pass on. In John chapter 5, our Lord Jesus Christ said that all of the scriptures testify of him.

Genesis chapter 6 and 7 testify of Jesus Christ. Jesus is revealing to the world, I, God the Son, I am the hero. World history is my story.

Jesus Christ is the Lord over all his creation, and he is the one who sees you. Even in the flesh on earth, he could see what was inside man, and he sees that your natural inclination is evil, continually, inside and out, and the evil deeds, they displease him.

[28 : 18] The wrath of Jesus Christ himself burns against sin because he is good, and he's also just, he will come back to judge the living and the dead, and he must punish evil.

Yet Jesus came to fulfill the covenant of redemption that God the Father had given him to do in obedience. And Jesus Christ became the refuge, he became the ark, he became the one that whosoever has an ear to hear, run to me and be safe.

Why can you be safe if you run to Christ? Because being divine, the flood of God's wrath won't destroy him, he will rise again.

Yet being a man, he can relate to you and he can take you in, he can be the one that you have union with God, through his work. God must pour out his wrath against sin and evil.

And Jesus Christ endured the cross. He received the wrath of the holy God so that whoever would be sheltered by him can survive.

[29 : 34] He passed through the waters of judgment and he came out alive and victorious on the other side to inaugurate his new creation. you see how all of this is unveiling the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Well, the tone of this passage today is of stern warning. I'm doing my best to present the glory of the gospel, but not missing out on this tone of warning.

That's how the whole new covenant interprets the flood. See, just as Adam's fall, it made all people of earth want to willingly forget who God is.

We don't want to remember the moral law of God that he's written on man's heart and mind. So also in 2 Peter 3, 5, we read that you willingly forget the word of God, that same word that sent the floods that destroyed the earth, that same word of God promises that Christ is coming again.

And just as people were eating and drinking and living as if there would be no end to their life, on the day that Noah entered the ark, Jesus says in Luke 17, 26, so people today are just as rebellious in their minds and hearts and imaginations and they will be caught by surprise on the day of the Lord.

[31 : 01] Just as God was true to his word and he sent a flood that destroyed all the wicked rebellion of man, so also the wrath of God against sin, it will purge this earth when Christ returns to judge the living and the dead one day.

And this will be Jesus Christ, the man who is exalted at the right hand of the Father coming to judge and to pour out wrath, have the right picture of Christ.

Revelation 6, 16 says on that day, wicked sinners who had blasphemed God, they will run to the mountains and rocks and beg them to fall upon them and smash them.

They'll say fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne. Listen, and from the wrath of the lamb for the great day of their wrath has come and who can stand.

And just as the wrath of God against sin was poured out in the waters of judgment on the flood, you who have run to Christ as your refuge, take comfort. So also the wrath of God against your sin and against my sin, it has already been poured out on our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross.

[32 : 23] 1 John 2, 2 says he, Jesus Christ himself, is the propitiation. He is the satisfaction, the appeasement of our sins.

The wrath of God is satisfied. I love how Milton Vincent reflects on this gospel truth. Now, when I am sinning, God's grace does abound, ensuring my justified status is sound.

No wrath is awakened in God at my sin because Christ appeased it to say so again. God's heart pulses only with passionate grace, which jealously wants me back in his embrace.

If you have run to Christ as your refuge, then you can know this promise in 1 Thessalonians 5, 9. God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us.

Amen. Just as God brought new order to his creation after washing it with the waters of judgment, so also Christ brings peace and order to you who are a new creation in him.

[33 : 45] You are new. Your sins do not determine who you are. It's Christ's righteousness clothing you. You are that new.

You are that washed if you are justified by running to Jesus as your Savior. And just as God patiently waited with long suffering, desiring that none should perish, desiring that sinners run to his son repenting, so he calls you and everyone who has an ear to hear, repent, run to Christ.

God has already provided your refuge. God's wrath purged the world of sin, but he will preserve you who are in his appointed place of refuge.

He will shut you in. He closes the door behind you. You are safe from his wrath. When we think of waters and judgment, we have to also think of baptism.

Christ passed through the waters of judgment. He didn't skip around them or avoid them. He passed through the death that you and I deserve on the cross.

[35 : 05] And he rose to newness of life so he could pass and channel the blessings, the grace of God from heaven to everyone who runs to him.

And that's what we celebrate with baptism. You are washed with his blood and by his spirit. His blood washes you by grace. First Peter 3:21 makes this interpretation, this fulfillment.

Peter wrote that baptism celebrates that God has cleansed your conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God with all angels and authorities and powers being subject to him.

you are baptized, you are washed by water and the spirit. An orthodox catechism explains that at your justification, the moment you believe in Christ and you receive his righteousness, at that very moment, God has renewed you.

He has set you apart to be a member of Christ's body so that you and I may more and more become dead to sin and increasingly live a holy and blameless life.

[36 : 15] We grow into what we already are. We are washed by the blood of Jesus. So dear Christian, today, your Lord tells you this evil world is perishing away.

There is no other refuge. Don't be like the man who counted on his home and his shingles. There is no refuge but Jesus Christ.

Christ. And if he has shut you in, if he has shown you his grace, called you into his son, Jesus Christ, he will keep you alive just as he kept Noah and his family alive.

Run to my son, God says. I am faithful to my covenant of grace. I will preserve you, all of you who are in Jesus Christ. My son is your refuge.

Run to him and live. Let's pray. Let's pray.