

98-06-21b

We're ready now to resume our study in Genesis chapter 7, where we see Noah, after waiting all this time, after all of his labor building the ark, God says, OK, get into the ark. The animals come in to him, associated with him and his righteousness. They are going to be delivered.

And then they wait. They wait for a day, and another day, and a third, and a fourth, and a fifth, and a sixth, and a seventh day. It's the same day of the week when the floodwaters finally cover the earth, as it tells us in chapter 7, verse 10.

Noah has to wait. And this is also an exercise in faith. As if he hasn't already demonstrated the faith that has made him righteous in the past, here's another opportunity to wait.

The means of deliverance has been constructed by faith, by Noah. According to the divine design. It's a divine design, but it's a human construction.

We see echoes of this in Paul's exhortation to work out your own salvation in fear and trembling. We recognize, why do you have fear and trembling? Fear and trembling is always the prospect of something, isn't it? You figure something is about to happen, and you have fear and trembling. And looking in prospect at the judgment of God, it causes a holy type of fear, a holy type of respect.

And it prompts us, it reminds us, that there's a lot on the line, and we need to work out our own deliverance, our own salvation. That's what Noah does. And then after he has done so, the ark is finished, all the pitch is on it, the last peg has been driven.

He's in the ark, animals are in the ark, everything's ready. A little cuckoo clock on the wall of the ark there and the water's just ticking back and forth, back and forth. No rain, no water.

And he waits. And he waits a week. I was recently separated from my family for a little over a week.

A week is a long time. You think about it, a big old empty house here, it sort of seemed like the ark with the animals in it, fish and cats. You wait, and you wait, and you wait.

And they're cut off from everyone, and they wait. But they didn't decide it was a bad idea, didn't reverse, didn't wander out, didn't get distracted. And that's the thing we need to remember.

The Bible has a lot to say about waiting. We saw this in the Psalms. Psalm 25.5 is where we left off.

Where David sets the environment for waiting, the way that we wait, the way that he waits is in the truth of God. He prays for that truth. And this is another legitimate prayer that we can pray for ourselves and for others.

Show me your ways, O Lord, in Psalm 25.4. Teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me. This is the expression of the attitude of asking, seeking, and knocking.

And Jesus promised us that God the Father always honors this request. Lots of times people lament and say, Oh, you know, I'm stuck in a church. Hopefully nobody here does.

But people say, We just don't seem to get any good teaching. It's shallow. I don't seem to be getting fed and so forth.

Well, have you taken it before the throne? Because if you do, God will answer that prayer. Jesus has said, You, being evil, know how to give good things to your children when they ask you. How much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask Him? Ask and it shall be given.

Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be opened to you. Go to Proverbs 2. If you seek for it as silver, search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

It's a divine promise. It is just as sure as the motion of the planets and the rising of the sun in the morning. David knows that, and so he prays that prayer.

He claims that promise. Show me your ways, for you are the God of my salvation. On you I wait all the day.

Deliverance of God may not come immediately when we start operating in faith and when we claim His promise. The problem may still exist. The ark may be sitting there on perfectly solid, dry ground, and people may be peering in saying, what are you doing in there? We wait.

We wait on the Lord. We don't waver in the faith. Remember what Jesus said about the man who puts his hand on the plow and then looks back? Like, well, I'm not really sure I should have started this furrow.

We wait. Turn over a few pages to Psalm 27, verse 14. Psalm 27, verse 14.

Wait on the Lord. Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord.

It's emphatic there, isn't it? Wait on Him. If your heart doesn't feel too strong, do like it says over in James. If you're wavering, well, pray.

God will strengthen you. Wait, I say, on the Lord. Many of the psalms, of course, as you go through, you see the illustration of that principle in David's life and practice.

Look at Psalm 37, verse 9. This is part of our Scripture reading this morning. You can start up at verse 7. Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. David is still the author here.

He's encouraging others to do what he's already illustrated and demonstrated in Psalm 25. Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Do not fret because of Him who prospers in His way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.

Cease from anger. Forsake wrath. Do not fret.

It only causes harm. Now, how do you get rid of that fretting? How do you get rid of that envy? How do you get rid of that attitude? Like love, it's not necessarily something you can just decide to not have any more than you can decide to have love. You have to do it through faith.

He says, remember the principle. Evildoers will be cut off. There's going to be a day of judgment.

God keeps track. God knows. God is absolutely righteous.

God is absolutely just. There's nothing that slips past Him. There's no perversion of His justice.

He knows all of the details. Leave it in His hands. And we say, God knows.

God will judge. I believe that. I don't have to worry about it.

He can do a much better job of worrying about it and taking care of it than I can. And that faith leads to rest. It leads to confidence.

It leads to a strengthened soul. For those who wait on the Lord shall inherit the earth. Something Jesus is going to echo in the Sermon on the Mount.

For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more. You will look carefully for his place, but it shall be no more. It reminds me of Noah poking his head out of the top of the ark and looking around.

The place of the wicked is no more. Look at verse 34 of this same psalm. A portion we did not read in our Scripture reading.

Talking about the wicked watching the righteous seeking to slay Him. The Lord will not leave Him in His hand nor condemn Him when He is judged. Wait on the Lord, He says in verse 34, and keep His way and He shall exalt you to inherit the land.

The word in Hebrew for exalt literally means to lift up. And of course, you have an actual sense in which Noah is lifted up during this time of judgment. The very judgment that wipes out the world and washes it away with water lifts up Noah and he does in fact inherit the land.

When the wicked are cut off, you shall see it. I have seen the wicked in great power spreading Himself like a native green tree yet He passed away and behold, He was no more. Indeed, I sought Him, but He could not be found.

Look at verse 37. Who is it that we mark and observe? The blameless and the righteous. Two of those three characteristics that we noted about Noah.

Mark the blameless man and observe the upright for the future of that man is peace. If we are blameless, if we are upright, our future is peace as well. Transgressors shall be destroyed together.

The future of the wicked shall be cut off. The word transgressors there is particularly interesting because transgress is to cross a boundary and it reminds us of the fact that believers are primarily the transgressors. You can't leave something unless you started out in it.

You can't disobey unless you are in a situation where obedience is required. And obedience and walking in the right path is commanded of believers. We tend to just say, well, those transgressors, they're all unbelievers.

They're not. Look at Psalm 59. We're going to concentrate on verse 9. But in Psalm 59, verse 6, talking about the wicked transgressors, at evening they return, they growl like a dog, they go around the city, they belch with their mouths, swords are in their lips.

They say, who hears? But you, O Lord, shall laugh at them. You shall have all the nations in derision. I will wait for you, O you, His strength.

For God is my defense. Or God, my strength. God is my defense.

My God of mercy shall come to meet me. God shall let me see my desire on my enemies. Do not slay them lest my people forget.

Scatter them by your power and bring them down, O Lord, our shield. The sin of their mouth, the words of their lips, let them be taken in their pride and for their cursing and lying which they speak. Consume them in wrath.

Consume them that they may not be. And let them know that God rules in Jacob to the ends of the earth. Psalm 62.

The same idea here of trusting God even as He is disciplining others, judging the world. In Psalm 62, truly my soul silently waits for God. From Him comes my salvation.

He only is my rock and my salvation. He is my defense. I shall not be greatly moved.

How long will you attack a man? You shall be slain, all of you, like a leaning wall and a tottering fence. They only consult to cast him down from his high position. They delight in lies.

They bless with their mouth, but inwardly they curse my soul. Wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation.

He is my defense. I shall not be moved. You can go through the whole rest of that Psalm 62 and see those things.

In order to wait on God, we have to look to Him. We have to continue the faith that we started with and not be diverted from it the way Paul tells the Galatians. He says, You started well.

You ran well. Who hindered you? Who deflected you? I recently saw a rerun of that Olympics. You remember the lady that was this great marathon runner and so forth and then some gal that was running barefoot from New Zealand named Vera Budd or something was running by and was kind of awkward and got her feet tangled up and tripped this poor gal.

She fell down. She had been working for months and months and this was her year. She was at her peak.

Somebody tripped her up. Somebody hindered her and she didn't finish the race. Of course, she was feeling so sorry for herself.

She probably could have gotten up and done something, but she just lay there and cried. Then she cried the blues about it for months afterward. I think everybody kind of felt like she should have had a little more of a charitable spirit toward the poor gal that inadvertently tripped her up.

But that's the idea. Who deflected you? Who tripped you up and hindered you? You started well. Paul tells the Galatians, you started by faith.

Are you now going to be completed by doing something different than faith? You're not. We need to remember that as well. Look at Psalm 123, verse 2. Waiting involves being persistent.

Unto you I lift up my eyes, the psalmist says. Unto you I lift up my eyes, O you who dwell in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, as the eyes of a maid look to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God until He has mercy on us.

We keep on looking until the mercy comes. It may not come right away, but we keep on

looking. We don't start looking around looking for other solutions.

These have all been examples from the Psalms. I just want to show you a couple of examples in Isaiah of this same idea of waiting. Isaiah 8, verse 17.

This is in a section where it's talking about the discipline on Israel. One of the passages that is quoted in the New Testament is here in verse 14 of Isaiah 8. He will be as a sanctuary. This is the Lord of hosts, mentioned up in verse 13.

The Lord of hosts, Him you shall hallow. Let Him be your fear. Let Him be your dread.

He will be as a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble. They shall fall and be broken, be snared and taken.

Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples, and I will wait on the Lord who hides His face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in Him. It doesn't matter what's happening with the rest of Christendom, what's happening with the rest of the nation, what seems to be happening in the world. We start worrying about the overseas stock markets and the domestic economy and one thing and another.

God is in fact in the midst of disciplining the house of Israel and the house of Jacob. But Isaiah says, I will wait on the Lord. He's hiding His face from the house of Jacob.

I will hope in Him. He's going to be a sanctuary for the remnant of Israel who, like Isaiah, trust in Him and look to Him even as the rest of the nation is disciplined. Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given Me.

We are for signs and wonders in Israel. And there's a lot you could say about that. The remnant, the significance of the remnant, those who exercise faith, those who are righteous, even in the midst of discipline, they're preserved in Israel in this time just as Noah and just as in every age.

And finally you have the Scripture that has hung for a long time right in this very room. Isaiah 40, verse 31. Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.

There's a time for running. There's a time for walking. Whatever it is, those who wait on the Lord will have the strength to do it.

Sometimes you have to discipline yourself like that song from the 60's, Walk Don't Run. The Ventures on guitars, Walk Don't Run. When you're clearing the exits of the theater because there's a fire, you walk.

You don't run. When you're getting out of a stadium full of people and there's a panic of some sort, you walk and not run. You have to have self-discipline to walk and not run.

There are other times when running is required. You have Elijah running from one place to another there in Kings. Whichever is required, God gives us the strength.

Our strength is renewed as we wait on Him. So this is just a brief glimpse of the principle that Noah is demonstrating as he waits in the ark seven days just as God had commanded him. The Lord shut him in.

God told him to go in. Once he got in, Noah didn't reach around. This is one of the little attention to detail things.

No matter what account you see, I've seen cartoons, I've seen claymation, I've seen actual movies of Noah and the ark and so forth. Every single one I've ever seen, Noah and his sons get the ropes and haul the hatch shut and close the ark. The Bible says the Lord shut him in.

God closed the door. And this is an important detail because there is a time of opportunity. Behold, now is the hour.

Now is the day of salvation. Seek the Lord while He may yet be found. Call upon Him while He is near.

There is going to come a time when it's too late. And Noah didn't decide when that time was. God did.

God shut the door. Now there's no option to get into the ark. Nothing else can enter the ark.

God has shut the door. And discipline is coming. The period of grace is well known.

Grace before judgment. You see it illustrated time and time again. Now is the time.

Don't wait until the door shuts. And then you see in the movies all these people clambering and hanging onto the sides and the water is washing them away. It's a terrible thing.

But you also get the idea that people weren't convinced until their own misery beset them. And their motivation is to get away from the misery, not that they suddenly have a burning desire to know God. So this is not unjust and it isn't arbitrary on God's part.

If you're not willing to walk in and seize God's grace when it's available, when things are calm and the storm's not there yet, people who do rush to God... You know, everybody goes down to the church to pray when somebody's on their deathbed or there's a big crisis. Then everybody wants to go to God. But why do they do that? They want the

answer to a problem.

They want the pressure or the pain to be released. It's not a genuine desire to know, to seek, to have fellowship with God. And God knows that.

So God calls. God gives the opportunity. God makes the doorway of grace available and open to people who are going to respond to the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit, respond to the Word of God and come.

If you're not going to respond then, if you're responding later, it's not genuine. And God knows that and the door is going to be shut. Verse 17 of Genesis 7 The flood was on the earth forty days.

The waters increased and lifted up the ark and it rose high above the earth. God literally exalting the righteous in this case. The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters.

The waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward and the mountains were covered. Now, I gave you a little mental challenge last week.

How do we know that the mountains were covered to a depth of fifteen cubits? A cubit, if we go by the normal definitions, is about eighteen inches. So, it's a foot and a half. This would be roughly twenty-five feet, somewhere along in there.

So, how did Noah know? He's sealed up in the ark. God closed the door. The window's not open.

Obviously, not out there in the folksale with a sounding line. How does he know? Well, I don't know either exactly how he knew this, but I'll give you the only two possibilities that have occurred to me. One is, in the pre-flood climate, you know that the highest mountains, nothing grows up there, right? Most of them are iced over and so forth.

And even in the summertime, when the ice melts and you have some vegetation growing, you don't get trees. There's a line. If you've been in Colorado, you know there's the line and stuff doesn't grow above that.

Well, in the pre-flood climate, when you had the canopy and you had the completely different conditions, it's possible that trees grew all the way to the tops of the mountains. It is possible that there were some tall trees and during the flood and all of the other catastrophe happening, probably their leaves and stuff got stripped off. But you know how it is if you've ever seen a flood.

You can see the marks on whatever it is that sticks up above the high water level. You see the debris line on posts. I've seen it on fence posts or on the sides of buildings or

whatever.

One possibility is that maybe on Mount Ararat in those early days before the climate on the earth changed, maybe there were some tall trees. The tree would only have to be 25 feet tall or taller to be able to exhibit a high water mark, a debris line on it. It says the hills were covered to a depth of 15 cubits, roughly 25 feet.

So if you had a 30 foot, 40 foot, 50 foot tree up there, no doubt after all of this takes place and the waters recede, you would see some line on it. The other possibility is that this is the draft of the arc or approximately how much water it draws. If it's going to clear and no one knows that the arc floated all around this area and didn't run aground until the waters began to recede, then it had to at least have covered the mountains to that depth because that's how much water the arc draws.

So there is a reason why the Bible records this. By the way, Mount Ararat is 16 or 17,000 feet in elevation. There are a couple of places in the world where there are higher mountains today.

What they call the C-O-R-I-L-L something rather. It's the name of the mountain range that goes all the way through South America, North America up into Alaska, which is basically your Andes and the Rocky Mountains. That mountain range that goes all the way through North and South America, you've got some mountains that are about 10,000 feet higher than Ararat.

Also in the Himalayas, you've got mountains that are higher by about 10,000 feet. Do those mountains have to have been covered? I mean, that 10,000 feet, when you multiply that times the surface of the globe and do your spherical geometry and all that, that's a significantly greater amount of water. If you stop and think about it, is mankind in North and South America at this time? No.

Are they down there where the Himalayas are? No. The place where civilization is, is all in this region. The highest mountains are up there in Armenia or Western Turkey or whatever.

And these mountains, it is sufficient in my mind to satisfy what the Bible account says, that these mountains, the mountain range of Ararat, was covered to that depth. It is interesting to note that geologists have discovered fossilized plant and animal remains well above the snow line in the Andes and in the Rockies and in these other Himalaya mountain ranges. There are fossilized remains that indicate that at one time, life existed on those surfaces, that ground, whether before it was upheaved, is that a verb, upheaved? Before it heaved up and became that high, or that it was covered with water.

These fossils were deposited one or the other, but there is undeniable geological evidence, fossil remains up in these very high mountain ranges, indicating that they at

one time were near water, were covered with water or had life on them. So it is not a local flood. You can't get water this high over Ararat and not have it on the rest of the planet.

I mean, water doesn't do that. You can't get it to heave up unless it was a really strange supernatural thing. And it says all the high hills, it doesn't say mountains in verse 19 by the way, it says all the high hills under heaven, under the whole heaven were covered.

It leaves room for the tips of some of these tallest mountains where there was no meaningful human life, might have still stuck up through it. Compared to the surface of the globe, this is like a needle point on the planet. It was sufficient to kill all flesh that moved on the earth.

In verse 21, birds, cattle, beasts, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth and every man, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land died. So he destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground, both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air, they were destroyed from the earth, only Noah and those who were with him. And that phrase once again emphasizes what we saw last lesson.

You're with Noah, you're in the ark where righteousness dwells, and you're delivered or you're destroyed, you're washed away with water. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive. The waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

This is the 40 days and nights of rain and 110 days following that where the water crests. One of the interesting things about the chronology here, these notations of days and how long it took to swell and to subside and so forth is that this is very realistic compared to a lot of the ancient flood accounts that survive in other cultures. The Bible could say, well, 40 days, 40 nights, the whole earth was flooded, 40 days later it's all gone.

Well, anybody that's ever seen a flood, you know that long after the rain has stopped, the waters continue to rise and they crest, and it takes them a long time to subside. And if somebody was making up this story in the Bible, none of us seriously think that Moses made this up, but it's interesting how realistic the time interval is. It conforms to the laws of nature, the natural time that it would take for this to all happen.

But we saw last time, and I gave you toward the end of our session last Sunday, the three different ways you can look at the big structure of these chapters and how it makes a big chiasm, whether you look at it dramatically or structurally or chronologically, the notices of days. You have 7 days, 7 days, 7 days, 40 days, 150 days, and then it reverses back out. 150 days, 40 days, 7, 7, 7. Any way you look at this, there's a chiasm, and right in the center you have chapter 8, verse 1. Then God remembered Noah.

The judgment has reached its peak. The wrath of God has exhibited itself and expressed itself in this great judgment on the earth. What is it that stems the tide? What is it that stops this plague of judgment? It puts you in mind of the plague that ran through Israel when Moses put the bronze serpent up, and the plague stops.

It reminds you of God's judgment on Israel and near Jerusalem when David goes up and the angel halts over the threshing floor where the temple will eventually be built. The judgment is sweeping through. It reaches a certain point, and it stops.

Well, when did this judgment stop? Well, the account, the structure of it, in several different ways, all centers on chapter 8, verse 1. God remembered Noah. The principle of God's memory is an interesting one to trace, or God remembering is an interesting one to trace through Scripture as well. Look at Genesis 19, 29.

This is in Abraham's life. You remember Sodom and Gomorrah and the fire and brimstone and all the pagans and these terrible homosexuals and everybody else are all obliterated down there, their lot, wife, pillar of salt, all of that. Verse 27 of Genesis 19, Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord.

Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the plain, and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace. And it came to pass when God destroyed the cities of the plain that God remembered Abraham. Who is it that gets delivered out of Sodom? It's Lot and Lot's daughters, and initially Lot's wife, but she didn't wait.

She didn't do like Noah and just stay in the ark, stay with the plan of deliverance. She turned and looked back and turned into a big mineral deposit. It came to pass when God destroyed the cities of the plain that God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow.

It is not Lot's righteousness that delivers him. It's Abraham's righteousness. God remembered Abraham and delivered Lot for Abraham's sake when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt.

You can look at Genesis chapter 30 and verse 22. You've got this dueling birth machines going on here. Jacob and his wives and his concubines here generating the twelve tribes of Israel, and one of them will be fertile and bare for a while, and then she'll stop having children, and the other one will sort of play catch up.

And in Genesis 30, you have the birth of several of these. In verse 17, God listened to Leah. She conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son.

Leah said, God has given me my wages because he's given my maid to my husband. She called his name Issachar. Leah conceives and bears the sixth son, and that's where you get Zebulun.

Then she bears a daughter and called her name Dinah. Then in verse 22, God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. And she conceived and bore a son and said, God has taken away my reproach.

She called his name Joseph and said, the Lord shall add to me another son. Joseph, who's going to be the means of deliverance of Jacob's family, and in a sense, the line of Abraham and the future nation of Israel, Joseph comes into the picture because God remembered Rachel. You can see this same idea in 1 Samuel 1. Remember Hannah when she prayed because her husband had two wives.

You know, the wife is having a child every other year, it seems like, and she hasn't had any. But she goes down and prays, and Eli sees her and thinks she's drunk because she's so emotional. And if you look in 1 Samuel 1.19, God remembered Hannah.

And God gives her a son. He turns out to be Samuel, and you know the role that Samuel plays in the history of Israel. He's the one that's going to anoint King David.

And through David comes to David's greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In Numbers 10, verse 9, you have God remembering Israel in time of war. When the heat is on, when there's opposition.

Numbers 10. The blowing of the trumpets for warfare and so forth is described in the first 7 or 8 verses here. Verse 7 of Numbers 10.

When the assembly is to be gathered together, you shall blow, but not to sound the advance. The sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpet. These shall be to you as an ordinance forever throughout your generations.

When you go to war in your land against the enemy who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the Lord your God, and you will be saved from your enemies. These trumpets, when they get blown, this is the equivalent of an individual praying. And it says, when you blow these trumpets, God will remember you and give you victory.

He will deliver you from the hands of your enemies. He will deliver the land into your hands. You will be remembered before the Lord.

When God remembers someone, there's deliverance. When God remembers someone, there is the answer to prayer. When God remembers someone, their salvation comes to pass.

In Exodus 2, verse 24, going backwards a little bit. Exodus 2, verse 24. This is back when the Israelites were in bondage in Egypt.

The Pharaoh who knew Joseph died. And God says in verse 23 of Exodus 2, the children

of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out. And their cry came up to God because of their bondage.

So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them. So this gives us just a flavor for being remembered by God.

You can see this throughout the Scripture. I could give you dozens of other references. Israel under discipline in Isaiah 49, verses 14 and 15.

Have we been forgotten? Has God forgotten Israel? No, He has not. Even in the midst of judgment, He remembers the remnant. He preserves them.

David and the covenant with David is remembered throughout the history of Israel. There are many references to this. Turn to Job chapter 14.

This is Job. In fact, the heading of chapter 14 in the New King James is Job waiting for change. You look at verse 13.

This is Job praying, O that you would hide me in the grave, that you would conceal me until your wrath is passed, that you would appoint me a set time and remember me. He's thinking, I wish that I could be tucked away like Noah in a secret place and that judgment would pass over and I would be preserved. If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service, I will wait until my change comes.

You shall call and I will answer you. You shall desire the work of your hands. For now you number my steps, but do not watch over my sin.

My transgression is sealed up in a bag and you cover my iniquity. I could do a lot on this passage, but just keep that in your notes for waiting and for God remembering. God remembers other things besides the faithful.

If you look in Amos 8 and verse 7, God also remembers unconfessed sin. Those who are judged, even though as we saw in Psalm 37, it may seem like they're prospering, it may seem like they're going on, God remembers. God is faithful and God is just, both in forgiving and cleansing us and in judging those who depart from Him.

We don't want to be in that category. And finally, in Habakkuk, don't get to go to Habakkuk very often, but Habakkuk 3 and verse 2, the prayer is, God in your wrath, remember mercy. And of course, God does.

It's a facet of His character. So, that's why we have at the center of this chiasm, at the center of this great account of the flood, once again, the emphasis on Noah and his righteousness. God remembered Noah, and that is presented as the cause for the flood abating.

God is now going to end the judgment and begin to reconstruct the earth. So, the floodwaters are going to recede. Look back at Genesis chapter 8, because we have fascinating language here.

God made a Ruach to pass over the earth and the waters subsided. What does it say in Genesis chapter 1 verse 3 when the waters cover the earth? The spirit of God, the Ruach, Elohim, moves over the face of the waters, broods over it, hovers over it. Here you have the Ruach on the waters once again and the waters subside and the dry land begins to appear, just as it does in the creation account of Genesis chapter 1. The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped.

The rain from heaven was restrained. The waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the 150 days, the waters decreased.

This has the idea that it began to decrease after the first 150 days. Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat, and the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

It came to pass that at the end of 40 days, from the time that the tops of the mountains appeared, Noah opened the windows of the ark, which he had made. He sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. He also sent out from himself a dove to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground.

So, he sends out a raven and he sends out a dove. In the interest of moving forward in Genesis, I could stop. I could do a whole lesson on ravens.

I could do a whole lesson on doves. We could do a whole lesson on the waters receding. Let me just give you a few points quickly about ravens and doves.

Ravens, according to Deuteronomy 14.14, are an unclean bird, not to be eaten. So, how many ravens are there on the ark? There's only two. Two ravens, one of them gets sent out.

If this one, something happens to it, if it drowns or can't find its way back, there won't be any ravens for the whole rest of human history because there's only one left. But this one is sent forth and comes and goes until the time that they leave the ark. It goes out in the day, comes back at night.

Ravens are notable in Scripture. They are associated with various things. What's your first recollection of ravens? What can you think of about ravens in the Scriptures? Elijah, by the brook Cherith.

God says in 1 Kings 17, verse 4, I have commanded the ravens and they will feed you.

This is particularly interesting when you remember that a raven is an unclean bird. The means of Elijah's provision and sustenance in time of judgment on the earth is an unclean bird.

God occasionally provides for us in times of crisis through unusual means, means that we wouldn't expect. I'm sure Elijah would have preferred angels coming, angels sometimes come and minister food to people. But here it's these nasty ravens that bring Elijah his food for these months by the brook Cherith.

But this is a time of judgment and there is provision even in the judgment. And ravens are often associated with judgment and also associated with provision. Remember in Luke 12, verse 24, where Jesus is talking about they toil not, neither do they spin and that sort of thing.

He says God feeds the ravens. God makes provision for the ravens and He'll make provision for you. So they're associated with the provision of God.

You find this in Job, again, in chapter 38 and verse 41. Ravens are also associated with judgment. In Proverbs 30, verse 17, it says when the wicked are judged, the ravens are going to fly by and pick their eyes out.

So that's maybe a little closer to our context. You find this also in Isaiah 34, verse 11. When the dwelling places of the wicked are desolate and uninhabited, the ravens are going to dwell there.

So ravens are associated with judgment. The first bird out of the ark is the bird that is unclean, the bird that represents judgment. He goes and flies around and sees all of the debris, whatever may be left after nearly a year of the wicked and the judgment upon them.

But then he also sends out a dove. What are doves associated with? Well, what's your first mental picture there? Baptism of Jesus, the Holy Spirit descending like a dove, perhaps? Doves are associated with the opposite of what ravens are associated with. They're a clean bird.

They're associated with deliverance. Psalm 55, verse 6, I want to fly away like a dove and rest. In Psalm 68, verse 13, Israel is compared to a dove that God is going to crest or gild with gold and silver and glorify in the latter days.

In the Song of Solomon, chapter 6, verse 9, my beloved is a dove. It's a picture of beauty and belovedness. In Ezekiel 7, verse 16, you remember Ezekiel and Isaiah, times of great disaster and judgment, calamity in Israel.

And the remnant, the survivors who live through and are preserved by God in this time of judgment are compared to mourning doves. They will mourn like the doves when they

see the judgment that God has wreaked in their homeland. The mourning survivors in Ezekiel 7, verse 16.

Matthew 3, verse 16, of course, baptism of Christ, Holy Spirit. Jesus tells His disciples that they need to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves in Matthew 10, verse 16. And one of the things that upsets the Lord Jesus Christ when He goes in and cleanses the temple is that doves are being merchandised.

Doves are being sold in the temple. Matthew 21, verse 12. So those are some of the things about these two birds.

They have symbolic value. The other thing to know about doves is that they only come to rest, they're only comfortable on dry, clean areas. I've seen this in our own backyard.

We've got doves out here. And when it's wet, you don't see them. So Noah can tell something.

Now, does Noah base his decision to leave the ark on what the birds do? He doesn't, does he? Once again, he waits for the command of God to leave the ark. These birds are reconnaissance. Noah anticipates.

He has an idea of when God is going to tell him to leave because he knows what the status of things is. He knows what the status of the receding waters and the returning land and so forth is. He is aware of his times.

He watches the signs and the seasons. He takes action to keep himself abreast of where he stands in history, but he still waits for the command of God before he takes action. There's a great lesson there for us as well.

Well, we'll pause at this point and pick up with Noah and see him exit the ark and the events that happen afterward next week. But let's close here in prayer. We thank you, Father, for the privilege of studying your word.

We thank you for the many examples of deliverance, of the gracious way that you deliver us through faith, through patience and waiting for the fulfillment of your promises. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will enable us to see the application of these things in our particular circumstances, in our particular lives. We pray that as we live in the coming days and weeks that our lives, like Noah's, will reflect your glory and be an example of the honor that you do your own righteousness when you assign it to us through faith.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.