

Safe in the Day of Evil

"And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation." – Genesis 7:1

Summary:

Noah's entrance into the ark reveals the privilege of godliness: God does not merely command his servant to go to safety, but invites him to come where God himself will be present. The terror of the Flood shows the greatness of this refuge and teaches that the Lord knows how to deliver the godly while reserving the unjust for judgment. Scripture repeatedly assures believers that God marks, preserves, supports, and finally vindicates those who distinguish themselves for him. Noah's privilege also reached his household, reminding parents that faithful instruction, example, and prayer bring great advantages to their families, though each person must personally repent and believe. Godliness is therefore profitable for this life and the life to come.

Outline:

1. **God invites his people into refuge**
 - The Lord says "Come," assuring Noah of God's presence and safety in the ark.
2. **Judgment reveals the greatness of salvation**
 - The destruction outside the ark displays the evil of sin, the justice of God, and his care for his people.
3. **The Lord distinguishes and delivers the godly**
 - God marks his servants, supports them in trial, and preserves them from condemnation.
4. **Godliness brings blessings to the household**
 - A believer's instruction, example, and prayers give the family spiritual advantages.
5. **Godliness is always profitable**
 - God honours those who honour him, both in the present life and in eternity.

Text

We have seen Noah's character and piety; here we see his privilege: "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." It is needless to ask how the invitation was conveyed—whether through a vision, dream, inward impulse, or voice in the air. Noah knew it came from God. The wording is significant. God does not say, "Go thou and all thy house into the ark," but "Come," as though he were there. Indeed, he was there and would keep his servant and family safe with him in the day of evil.

To grasp the privilege's greatness, recall the danger Noah faced and picture the scene. The time had come to fulfill the threat: "The end of all flesh is come before me. And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die."

All nature seems horrified by its Maker's anger. As Noah enters his refuge, every sign foretells a gathering storm. Winds rage, darkness covers the sky, heaven's windows open, clouds release torrents, and the fountains of the deep burst forth. Rivers overflow, seas swallow the land, and inhabitants flee the valleys and plains. For a time, hills and mountains offer refuge as people climb higher, but they have no food. Driven by hunger, they turn on one another, and the weaker are killed and eaten. The stronger survive until only trees remain. They cling desperately to branches until weakness or numbness loosens their grip, sending them into the flood. At last, deathly silence settles over the universal watery grave.

Before perishing, many witnessed the misery of thousands and recognized their own fate in that of fellow sufferers. Others died within sight of safety, tormented by knowing they had refused it when they could and thus caused their own destruction. How they would envy the man they had derided!

What did Noah feel and reflect? How deeply did he recognize sin's evil, God's justice, power, goodness, care, and provision for his people? How much joy and gratitude would he feel, and how firmly would he resolve to love and serve God!

The apostle Peter teaches how we should use this dispensation. Since God “spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly,” “the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” The present is not wholly retributive; we walk by faith, not sight. Another period approaches when we shall discern between the righteous and wicked, and between those who serve God and those who do not. Yet even now God distinguishes between the Egyptians and Israelites, sometimes drawing this confession from unholy lips: “Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.”

Scripture often speaks of this interposition on behalf of God’s people. He ordered a mark to be placed on the foreheads of those who mourned for the abominations done in the land, so that the executioner might pass them by. John heard the angel cry to those who had power to hurt the earth and sea: “Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.”

The Saviour says to the church of Philadelphia, “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” God likewise says, “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.”

If we distinguish ourselves for God, he will distinguish us. As Matthew Henry expresses it, “If we keep ourselves pure in times of common iniquity, he will keep us secure in the times of common calamity.” Though we suffer with others, we need not suffer like them. God can provide inward support, turn affliction to our good, and transform enemies into friends and losses into gains.

Though believers may suffer temporarily, those in Christ Jesus face no condemnation, and soon every tear will be wiped away. Therefore, the Lord’s people need not fear bad news but should remain steadfast, trusting in Him. This privilege was not merely personal but extended to Noah’s household, whom he was permitted to bring “his house and all his house into the ark.” Belonging to the godly brings outward and spiritual benefits. Since God’s servants bless others—repairing breaches,

restoring paths, restraining judgment, and bringing blessing to their country—they naturally benefit their families as well.

Abraham provided for Ishmael. David acknowledged that God had promised his servant's house a lasting future. When Solomon's transgressions threatened the loss of ten tribes, God assured him it would not occur during his reign, for his father's sake. Parents should fear the Lord for their children's good. Their best provision is not silver or gold, but the Lord's blessing, which enriches without sorrow. True religion is not inherited, but godly families offer spiritual advantages through instruction, example, and prayer. Those who reject these benefits bear their own sin and face greater punishment.

Ham was in the ark but, without repentance, perished forever despite being delivered from the flood. "Many shall come from the east and west and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

We will have reflected to little purpose unless this conviction remains: we cannot serve God for nothing. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." He inhabits eternity, governs this world, and possesses other worlds in which to display himself; therefore, he can always fulfil his word: "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

This sermon is taken from William Jay's devotional, *Morning and Evening Exercises* (January 18, Evening), first published in 1854.