

Mount Ararat

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[0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help, and with the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read, the book of Genesis and chapter 8. Genesis chapter 8, and if we read again just from the beginning, Genesis 8 at verse 1. But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark, and God made a wind blow over the earth, and the water subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed. The rain from the heavens was restrained, and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days, the waters had abated, and on the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. The ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.

I'm sure we've all heard or used the phrase, a mountaintop experience. A mountaintop experience. And we often use that phrase to describe an experience in our lives that brought joy and happiness. And it was a memorable experience, whether it was a holiday, or a trip, or even a period in our life, maybe a wedding, a graduation, a birth, or even your own conversion, or when you professed your faith. It was a mountaintop experience, an experience that you didn't want to come to an end. Because it was such a momentous and memorable occasion that's unforgettable, and it's something that you'll treasure for the rest of your life. It was a mountaintop experience. Well, over the next few weeks, I'd like us to think about the mountaintop experiences of others, by considering some of the mountains in the Bible. I want us to consider some of the mountains in the Bible. And as you know, mountains, they're repeatedly mentioned throughout the Bible, because on the tops of mountains, it was there that God revealed his character and demonstrated his power. And whether it was Noah, or Abraham, or Moses, or even the disciples, they all had mountaintop experiences. They all had these momentous and memorable occasions that were unforgettable, and something that they would treasure for the rest of their life. And as we consider some of the mountains that are mentioned in the Bible, we'll see that these mountaintop experiences, they provide for us significant moments in the story of redemption. These mountaintop experiences, they provide significant periods in God's story of salvation.

They're memorable, and they're unforgettable experiences. And experiences like when Abraham had to sacrifice Isaac. We'll consider that, God willing, next week. Or the fire falling from heaven on Mount Carmel. Or even God giving his law on Mount Sinai. Or when Jesus revealed his glory on what we call the Mount of Transfiguration. You can work out what mountain that was, if you want, or just wait for us to come to it. But you know, there's one mountaintop experience that, thinking about it, I would certainly find it memorable and even unforgettable.

And it would be seeing a boat sitting on the top of a mountain. I think you would never forget seeing that, if you saw a boat sitting on the top of a mountain. And that's what we learn about in this passage in Genesis chapter 8. We're considering one of the most well-known biblical narratives, Noah and the ark. And how Noah's ark came to rest on the top of Mount Ararat.

And this is what's remarkable, because Mount Ararat, it's not only located in modern-day Turkey, right on the border with Iran. But Mount Ararat, it also stands at 5,137 metres tall.

[4 : 23] Which is both the tallest mountain in Turkey, and also the tallest mountain mentioned in the Bible. And so as we think about Noah's mountaintop experience this evening, I want us to think about it under three headings. I want us to consider Noah's ark under three headings.

Redemption in the ark, rest with the ark, and restoration after the ark. Redemption in the ark, resting with the ark, and restoration after the ark. So this is Noah's mountaintop experience.

First of all, redemption in the ark. Redemption in the ark. We're told in verse 1, God remembered Noah, and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark.

And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the water subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed. The rain from the heavens was restrained, and the waters receded from the earth continually. I'm sure you're familiar with the children's song.

Mr. Noah built an ark. The people thought he's such a lark. Mr. Noah pleaded so, but into the ark he would not go. Down came the rain in Torrance. Down came the rain in Torrance. Down came the rain in Torrance.

[5 : 42] Down came the rain in Torrance. But only eight were saved. We're familiar with the words of the children's song, but sadly they also remind us about the familiar reality that seems to take place in every generation. The reality of the hardness of the heart to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

you know the biblical narrative of Noah it's familiar to those who have never even read the bible they've heard about this man Noah who saved his family from a devastating flood which destroyed the world in fact the story of Noah's ark and the flood it's so well known that it became as you probably know it became a Hollywood blockbuster back in 2014 and maybe you watched the film yourself but you know I don't think it would matter how many special effects were used to create the Hollywood movie with the big film sets and the computer generated pictures the reality was far worse the death of all mankind you know it certainly wasn't entertainment for Noah and his family watching the world being destroyed before their eyes it wasn't movie material and it wouldn't have been award-winning to see those from Noah's community whom he knew and loved so well it wouldn't have been award-winning to see them drowned by this unstoppable flood my friend when God destroyed the world with a flood it was a scene that Noah and his family would have etched in their memories for the rest of their lives they would never forget the day that God flooded the world and you know in many ways you wonder why Noah's ark is a favorite children's story we always see Noah and the picture the children's picture he's there in the ark and he's got a big smile on his face but you know Noah's ark was surrounded by the problem of sin Noah's ark the story of of Noah and the ark is came about because of the problem of sin the problem of sin was so awful that we're told back in

Genesis 6 that the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually the problem of sin and the progression of evil in the earth was so severe that the Lord wanted to destroy the world with a flood the Lord wanted to start again we're told there that he repented that he had even made man because he was so evil and you know in the midst of the problem of sin and the progression of evil there's this character that comes forward Noah and when we're introduced to Noah back in Genesis 6 we're told that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord despite everybody that lived around Noah Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord Noah was this righteous man in fact when the Lord told Noah to build an ark in the desert where there was no sea and it had never rained it had never rained by that point in the world's history because there was a mist that would always come up every evening to water the ground but even though all this had happened even though there was no sea and no one had ever seen rain Noah became this preacher a preacher of righteousness Noah preached that the only way to be saved was to follow the Lord's plan of salvation and the Lord's plan of salvation for Noah and his family was to construct this ark according to the Lord's dimensions and design and as you know the ark you can read read it yourself in chapter 6 and 7 the ark was this box-like ship it was 450 foot long it was 75 feet wide and it was 45 feet high and you know whenever I think of the size of Noah's ark I'm sure I've mentioned this to you before I always think of that it was roughly one and a half times the size of our old ferry the Isle of Lewis and every time I see the old ferry when it's back in Stornoway I always think Noah's ark it's one and a half times the size of no of the Isle of Lewis which when you look at it it doesn't seem that big and it certainly doesn't seem big enough to house Noah and his family as well as all the animals that the Lord was going to put into the ark but people have worked it out and the truth is there was more than enough space to accommodate both man and beast safely inside the ark and yet we're told that it took 120 years for Noah and his family to gather all the necessary materials and construct this box-like ship and while they built the ark and the people around him thought it was such a lark Noah was this preacher of righteousness because for many years Noah he held out the free offer free offer of the gospel to lost sinners compelling them to come and find redemption in the ark my friend the people in Noah's day they had years of opportunity they had years of hearing the message of salvation years of being reminded that judgment is coming God's mercy was being patiently extended to these lost sinners for a lifetime and for years Noah this preacher of righteousness he was preaching and urging his community to be ready Noah pleaded with the people he knew and loved to come into the ark Noah exhorted and encouraged sinners to find redemption in the ark but as you know the awful tragedy was that they refused to listen they ignored all the warnings they walked away from this preacher of righteousness and thought he was a fool the people of Noah's community they became complacent they thought well

God's never going to flood the earth he's been banging on about this for so long judgment is never going to come so they become comfortable they became complacent and comfortable and content with their lot but when God finally shut the door of opportunity he shut the door of opportunity and you know I find it one of the most solemn verses in the Bible God shut the door God shut the door and you know my unconverted friend like the people of Noah's day you have had years of opportunity years of hearing the gospel years of being reminded about sin and righteousness and judgment you've had a whole lifetime just think about how old you are and how long you've been sitting under the gospel you've had a whole lifetime of God's mercy being held out to you but you know my friend with every passing day and every passing week and every passing month and every passing year eternity is coming closer and closer and your window of opportunity is getting smaller and smaller and your time to act is getting shorter and shorter and the same message the same message that Noah preached is being held out to you tonight you need to come into the ark you need to come into the ark you need to be in Christ you need to be in Christ because you'll only find redemption in Christ you'll only find salvation security safety and satisfaction in Christ therefore you need to be in Christ you need to come and embrace Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior before you're too late and before the door of opportunity is finally shut you need to be in Christ and you know with all these opportunities and all these years of hearing the gospel and not responding because maybe you're waiting for a more convenient time in your life do you know I wonder if like many people before you

I wonder if one day you'll be caught out you'll be caught out that's what happened in Noah's day Noah preached the way of salvation for years Noah heralded the name of Christ repeatedly Noah pleaded for people to find redemption in the ark and he said to them again and again come into the ark but the people living in his community they refused to listen and they ignored all the warnings and Jesus says to us as it was in the days of Noah so will it be with the coming of the Son of Man in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking marrying and giving in marriage until Noah entered the ark and this is what's frightening Jesus says they were unaware they weren't ready for it they were unaware of the danger they were in they were unaware of the fact that judgment was just a breath away they were unaware that their end was right in front of them they were unaware that death was going to leave them and judgment was going to find them and eternity was going to hold them they were unaware until they were caught out they were caught out and the flood came and swept them all away.

[15 : 42] And Jesus says, so will it be. So will it be with the coming of the Son of Man. There were many that day who were caught out.

The question is, in this day, will you be caught out? Will you be someone who is caught out? Caught unaware, unready, unprepared.

Caught out because you aren't in Christ. My friend, you need to find redemption in the ark. You need to be in Christ. You need to be in Christ.

So redemption in the ark, that's the first thing we see here. But secondly, resting with the ark. Resting with the ark. We're told in verse 4, Now the location of Noah's ark has, and the waters continued to abate until the tenth month.

In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen. At the end of forty days, Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made, and he sent forth a raven.

[16 : 57] It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. Now the location of Noah's ark, and where it came to rest, has been discussed and debated, as you know, for generations.

Many people have made archaeological attempts to discover Noah's ark on Mount Ararat. In fact, in 2010, back in 2010, a group called Noah's ark Ministries International, they discovered wood on Mount Ararat.

And the wood was correctly dated to be about 4,800 years old, which would coincide with this biblical account in Genesis 8, of Noah's ark and the flood, and how the flood destroyed the world.

But, you know, sadly, however, that discovery on Mount Ararat back in 2010, it led to the disappearance of a local man from Stornoway, who disappeared on Mount Ararat.

You'll remember the sad news of Mr. Donald Mackenzie, who was only in his forties at the time. He went missing while searching for the remains of Noah's ark on Mount Ararat.

[18 : 07] And I don't think he was ever found. And so, as you can expect, Ararat was a dangerous place. And it was not only dangerous because it was the tallest mountain in Turkey, standing at 5,137 metres tall.

But Mount Ararat is also a volcano. That's something I didn't know about it. In fact, there are two volcanoes in the region of Ararat, the mountains of Ararat, as it says in the Bible.

There is Great Ararat, which is the highest peak, 5,137 metres. And then about 11 kilometres away from it is the other peak called Little Ararat, which stands at 3,896 metres tall.

And so both Great Ararat and Little Ararat, they have been known for their volcanic activity. Although, well, they haven't erupted since 1840.

The 2nd of June, 1840. So they are dormant volcanoes. But when you look them up, and you'll see these stunning photos of Ararat, and the region of Ararat, you'll see that the mountaintop is covered with snow all year round.

[19 : 24] And it's said that the last 100 metres to the top of Mount Ararat, it's all turned to ice. It's that cold. Which means that it must have been cold in the ark.

Because it certainly wasn't this five-star Mediterranean cruise for Noah and his family. You know, it would have been an awful experience being inside that box for over a year.

And yet it was better being alive inside the ark with redemption than being lost outside the ark and perishing.

But you know what I find so incredible? And you know, I loved studying this. What I find incredible about this is how high the sea level rose to make the ark rest upon the top of Mount Ararat.

We know that Ararat is 5,137 metres tall. But we're told in chapter 7, chapter 7 and verse 17, we're told, The flood continued for 40 days on the earth.

[20 : 28] The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters.

And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them 15 cubits deep.

You know, I find that incredible. That when God flooded the world, the sea level rose to 15 cubits higher than the mountains, so that the mountains were covered.

And as we said, Ararat, it's the tallest mountain in Turkey. It's close to the border of Iran. And Ararat was covered 15 cubits higher than Mount Ararat.

And as we know from our study of the tabernacle, we know that the length of a cubit. A cubit is the distance from your elbow to the tip of your finger, which is about 45 centimetres, or 50 if you're David.

[21 : 34] So Ararat, it was covered. Covered by 15 cubits. Or you could say that Noah's ark, it floated on the sea, and it floated four and a half metres above the top of Mount Ararat.

You know, it's incredible that while Noah and his family were safe inside the ark, the 5,137 metre mountain of Ararat was four and a half metres below them.

I find that incredible. It's amazing. Amazing how God flooded the world. And this is in the Bible. We have to believe it. But as we read at the beginning of Genesis 8, when God remembered Noah, not that God had forgotten Noah, but when God remembered his covenant to preserve Noah and his family, God allowed, we're told, he allowed the rain to stop and the floodgates to cease and the waters to subside.

And we're told that on the 17th day of the seventh month, after five months in open sea, seeing nothing, the sea level, we're told, began to fall until Noah's ark finally came to rest on Mount Ararat.

But the water subsided very slowly because we're told that the water decreased steadily until the 10th month. So it wasn't for a further three months that the tops of the mountains finally became visible.

[23 : 06] And then Noah, we're told, waited again for over a month. He waited 40 days until he opened the window in the ark. You know, Noah and his family were in the ark nine months before they sent out the raven.

They were in this box for nine months before they sent out the raven. And then we're told in verse six, at the end of 40 days, Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made and he sent forth a raven.

It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. Now, as you know, a raven is a scavenger bird that eats almost anything.

Most people view them as pests because they steal food and they steal anything that they can find. But Noah used the raven. He used the raven to see how far the sea level had fallen before he would open the door to the ark.

And for the raven, it seems that the sea level had fallen far enough to find plenty to eat that had never returned.

[24 : 15] Sadly, there would have been lots of dead bodies and even animal carcasses lying on the ground for the raven to eat. Because we're told at the end of Genesis 7, we're told that all flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth and all mankind.

They all died. But you know, Noah, he didn't want to open the door of the ark and let all the animals out until he was sure that there was life. He wanted to make sure that there was life.

So we're told in verse 8, Then he sent forth a dove from him to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. But the dove found no place to set her foot and she returned to him to the ark for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth.

So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. So when Noah sent out the raven, it had plenty to eat because it could feed upon death.

But when Noah sent out the dove, and had returned, Noah knew that there was still no sign of life because the dove could only eat fresh fruit and vegetables.

[25 : 28] And so Noah, verse 10, we're told, He waited another seven days and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. And the dove came back to him in the evening and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf.

So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. When the dove was sent out the first time, the authorised version tells us that she didn't find rest for the sole of her foot.

She didn't find rest for the sole of her foot. And that was because there was no life. There was only death. The second time the dove was sent out, a week later, she came back with a leaf.

But still, she didn't find rest because there was no life. There was only death. But the third time the dove was sent out, another week later, she didn't come back because she had found rest and she had found life and there was no more death.

And you know, I love that phrase in verse 9. The dove found rest. The dove found rest. And I love the phrase in the passage because it's actually a play on words.

[26 : 44] The Hebrews were very clever in how they wrote things. Because Noah, the name Noah means rest. The name Noah means rest. We're told that it was on Mount Ararat that the ark rested.

And when the dove was sent out, she sought rest, but she found no rest because there was only death. But when the dove was sent out again, she found rest because she found life and there was no more death.

So you see, there's this play on words throughout the passage. And it's emphasizing to us that we won't find rest until we find life. We won't find rest until we find life.

And you know, that's the emphasis of the gospel, isn't it? That we won't find rest for our soul. We won't find salvation, safety, security, and satisfaction until we find life in Jesus Christ.

We won't find rest until we find life. And the wonder is, Jesus Christ, he promises to give us rest for our soul and he promises eternal rest to all who find life in him.

[28 : 00] That's why Jesus says to us in the gospel, we were considering this on Wednesday evening, that great call, come, come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find what? Rest for your soul for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

That's what Genesis is telling us. This flood story, we won't find rest until we find life. You won't find rest for your soul until you find life in Jesus Christ.

That's why Jesus says to us, come to me. Come to me. Come to me with all your burdens. Come to me with all your concerns.

Come to me with all your worries. Come to me because you won't find rest until you find life. You won't find rest until you find life.

[29 : 02] There are many lessons you can learn from that dove. When Noah received redemption in the ark, he found rest with the ark. And that's what we need to discover.

We need redemption in Christ so we'll find rest with Christ. But you know, Noah, he not only received redemption in the ark and found rest with the ark, this is what I want us to consider lastly, he found restoration after the ark.

Restoration after the ark. Redemption in the ark, rest with the ark and redemption after the ark. Redemption after the ark.

Look at verse 13. We're told that in the 600th year and the first year in the first month on the first day of the month the waters were dried, dried from off the earth.

And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked and behold the face of the ground was dry. In the second month on the 27th day of the month the earth had dried out.

[30 : 05] Then God said to Noah, Go out from the ark you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh, birds and animals, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth that they may swarm on the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.

So after resting on Mount Ararat for seven months and after being inside the ark for one year and one week the door of the ark was finally opened.

And God commanded Noah and his family to leave the ark. They're told to go. And you know when I read this I'm always reminded of that children's song only eight were saved.

How many people walked out of the ark alive? Only eight were saved. Out of all the world out of all the opportunities that were given to lost sinners to experience redemption in the ark and rest with the ark only eight were saved.

And yet you know we can often be tempted to think that in the day and generation that we live in. It's a dark day. People don't go to church anymore. The world is taking over. They're all distracted. The tide of secularism is running riot in our nation and there's no hope for the church anymore.

[31 : 30] The number of people who follow the Lord is small and so few people stand up for the truth. And yet when we consider Noah's day there were only eight Christians in the world.

Only eight people following the Lord on the face of the planet. And it was through them that restoration after the ark was to come. It was through them that restoration after the ark was to come.

Because as we read in verse 17 there the Lord commanded Noah he said bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth that they may swarm on the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.

Now where have we heard that command before? Where have we heard that command be fruitful and multiply on the earth? As you know we heard that we first heard that command when it was given to our first parents Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden be fruitful and multiply on the earth.

But as you know a lot had happened on the earth since the time of Adam and Eve. A lot of sin and sickness and suffering and sorrow had happened on the earth since the time of Adam and Eve.

[32 : 58] But God's command of restoration after the ark it was going to take place through Noah and his family but it was going to take place only to a point.

And this is what I find very interesting. The command is the same command that was given to Adam and Eve be fruitful and multiply. But what's interesting is that when the flood destroyed the world and all that was in it all the animals and the insects and the birds and even mankind you could say that God was undoing his creative work.

God was undoing the days of creation. When you look at the days of creation and what was made on each particular day God was undoing the days of creation but only back to day two.

He was undoing his days of creation all the way back but only to day two. Because it was on day one of God's creation that God said let there be light and God separated the light from the darkness.

My friend there was restoration after the ark because through the destruction of the flood God was undoing all these days of creation from day six day five day four day three day two and then he stopped.

[34 : 22] But where do we find God undoing the first day of creation? At Calvary. God was undoing the first day of creation at Calvary because it was at midday at Calvary that this world was plunged into darkness.

He undid the light when the light of the world became sin for us. Amazing what God was doing in restoring his creation.

And at that moment in the darkness God made Jesus to be sin for us even though he knew no sin all so that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

My friend there was full restoration after the ark and it was promised and it was procured in the person of Jesus Christ.

So Noah had a wonderful mountaintop experience didn't he? God was promising to restore the whole creation the whole creation through the person of Jesus Christ.

[35 : 43] That's a mountaintop experience that Noah and his family would never forget because they received redemption in the ark they found rest with the ark and they experienced restoration after the ark.

And tonight you know the gospel the gospel that comes to us from Mount Ararat is that we must come or to come to this Jesus because there's redemption in him there's rest with him and there's restoration that we receive from him and it all comes through Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone.

So my friend you come to him and you keep coming to him keep coming to this Christ if you know him keep coming to him if you don't know him start coming to him because it's only in him that you will find rest for your soul.

A mountaintop experience and may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. Gracious God and loving Heavenly Father we give thanks to thee for even the stories in thy word that these experiences of thy people long ago that they saw the wrath of God and yet they saw the grace of God and Lord help us to look at Calvary and see in that place where Jesus was condemned to see the wrath of God revealed in all its fullness and yet to see the grace of God revealed in the person of Jesus and Lord help us to come to this Jesus that we would find redemption in him that we would find rest for our souls that we would find that restoration that takes place where he begins that good work in us and promises to bring it on to completion oh Lord help us we pray to learn even from

Noah's experience to know that the Lord is one who provides rest for our soul that he is with us every day in life and he is with us right to the end Lord keep us and we ask keep us in the week that lies ahead whatever is before us help us to know Lord that the Lord one who is going before behind and even beside us keep us then we pray lead us and guide us by thy spirit for we ask it in Jesus name and for his sake Amen We're going to bring our service to a conclusion by singing the words of Psalm 93 Psalm 93 in the Scottish Psalter Psalm 93 we're singing the whole Psalm it's on page 354 in the blue Psalm book Psalm 93 we're singing the whole Psalm the Lord doth reign and clothed as he with majesty most bright his works to show him clothed to be and girt about with might the world is also established that it cannot depart thy throne is fixed of old and thou from everlasting art the floods

[38 : 58] O Lord have lifted up they lifted up their voice the floods have lifted up their waves and made a mighty noise we'll sing the whole Psalm of Psalm 93 to God's praise the Lord a friend and clothed is he with majesty most bright his words mixture the kali for this love through this and harvest in the heart of his in the sound and current the ■ieron will nee and many depart.

Thy throne is fixed of old and thou from everlasting art.

The floods, O Lord, have lifted up, they lifted up their voice.

The floods have lifted up their waves and made a mighty noise.

But yet the Lord that is on high is more of might by far than noise of many waters or great sea below star.

[41 : 35] Thy testimonies testimonies everyone in faithfulness excel and holiness forever, forever, Lord, thy house be cometh well.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen. for six to eight to amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen.