

Beacons of the Bible

The Flood of Waters

By Henry Law

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"Behold, I, even I, am going to bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish." Genesis 6:17

We now reach the most dreadful scene which earth as yet has witnessed. Horror of horrors darkly frowns. The whole world lies drowned! Depths of waters have gone over it. What Beacon can be more appalling! Its warning speaks loud as thunder's roar. It terribly proclaims that righteous wrath is no vain dream. Each drop in this unsparing deluge cries piercingly, 'Behold sin's merits!' What seeds of misery are sown by it! How deep is the cup of vengeance in its hands!

Holy Spirit, send now especial help! Shake deadness from our hearts. Quicken dull ears to hear. Implant poignant conviction of the malady and its misery. Disclose the evil and its curse. And then display the Gospel in all the brightness of its rescuing love.

Let the curtain gradually rise on this wide desolation. God speaks--"Behold I, even I, am going to bring a flood of waters upon the earth." There must be some mighty cause. What can unbar these fearful sluice-gates? The cause, indeed, is mighty. The effect is mightily commensurate. God saw the whole earth flooded with evil. Can evil thus dwell--and vengeance slumber! This cannot be. The flood of wickedness calls for flood of punishment.

But God proceeds not without avowal of reluctant sorrow. The preface to this sentence states--"It repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at His heart." Genesis 6:6. Thus condescendingly He speaks as man to man. He adopts, as His own, feelings known to our experience. He comes down to the level of human intellect. Let not the statement be misinterpreted, as denoting fickleness in the great "I Am." The deep channel in His immutable purpose cannot change. With Him "is no variableness neither shadow of turning." James 1:17. The announcement only prepares for altered action, such as human agents show, provoked by disappointed hopes--goaded by pained spirit. Abounding wickedness begets results, which men would naturally expect, if any work regretted and bewailed, had become grief to the designer's heart.

We are thus guided to the dread resolve. Patience can endure no more. Outraged attributes claim vindication. The righteous sentence therefore is pronounced--"I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth--both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air--for it grieves me that I have made them." Genesis 6:7. "Man, who treads earth, the glory of creation--the mirror of My skill and power--the home of undying life--made in My very image, after My likeness--crowned with authority over lower beings--man shall be swept away--and not man only, but with him all the living world. Sin has made him abominable. He has infected nature's universal range. The stain is universal. The ruin shall be universal too."

Reader! pause here. Crowds of solemn reflections press forward. Check not their dreadful voice. They loudly proclaim that iniquity is a monster wholly hated by our God. Can it be otherwise? He is holiness too dazzling for mortal eye to view. How can He tolerate unholiness? He is purity too vast for human intellect to grasp. Can He be lenient to impurity? He is righteousness too perfect for imperfect words to open out. Can He endure unrighteousness? His whole essence and being--are Holy--Holy--Holy. His word, His throne, His heavens, are Holy--Holy--Holy. How then can He look down on sin? How can His indignation sleep, when He surveys a world filled only with transgression? Reason alone concludes, that the wicked cannot stand in His presence. Revelation tells us of anger justly rising, and vengeance justly smiling. The present fact adds fearful confirmation. "God looked upon the earth; and behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold I will destroy them with the earth." Genesis 6:12-13

But tenderness still grants some respite. Even now God strikes not without a pitying pause. He loudly proclaims, that wrath is kindled and fury ready to break forth. But still a forbearing hand seems slow to execute.

Where is the sinner who goes down unwarned into the pit? An unseen hand often restrains with gentle touch; a voice within often persuasively reminds, that ruin follows sin--that against it heaven's gates are barred; and all God's attributes are armed; and all God's universe will rise--that for it hell burns--and the fiery lake is heated; and the everlasting chains are forged.

The annals of the old world prove this. When the avenging arm is raised, mercy pleads, 'Not yet!' Truth announces, that the inevitable end should come, but forbearance checks the final step. "My Spirit shall not always strive with man--for he also is flesh, yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." Genesis 6:3.

Here is a respite. Here is space to think--to weep--to turn--to pray. The space, also, echoes with tidings of God's grace. A faithful teacher is raised up. "The

patience of God waited in the days of Noah." 1 Pet. 3:20. To the last moment faithful lips proclaim a refuge. "Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God." Can we proceed without pondering this lovely picture of a saintly man! Amid the flood of evil he lived, the first of human race, graced with the more than royal title of "just" or righteous. In this name the principle of his life appears. God in His sovereign love, and by the mighty power of His spirit, implanted faith in his heart. Thus he "became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Heb. 11:7. His enlightened eye discerned redemption's distant day. His enraptured heart entirely embraced salvation's scheme. His confiding soul reposed delightedly upon the God-man's work. Thus he was righteous in the Righteousness of God. Faith in the heart must be uprightness in the life. So Noah was perfect or sincere amid abounding wickedness. He walked in the light even as God is in the light, and they had fellowship one with another. He could not be silent. The zeal of a saved soul must blaze. The sun cannot be dark. The fire cannot be ice. The ocean cannot but swell with flowing waves. The vigorous tree cannot be barren wood. He who knows Christ cannot be mute. Gratitude must work. Love must extol. Faith must point to the dying Lamb. The faithful subject must proclaim the King. So in this interval Noah raised his faithful voice.

He preached loudly by voice--loudly too by deeds. A refuge was revealed to him. The ark--a graphic type of the Deliverer, Christ--was to be built. "By faith," he diligently worked--Heb. 11:7. Through many years of tarrying wrath he toiled. It is instructive to stand beside him in his persevering labors. It is no visionary thought, that countless sneers and keenest ridicule would oftentimes mock. Unbelief would jeeringly deride a work so strange--a ship too vast for any waves to float, constructed on dry ground! Designed to save from unknown billows--from a flood signaled by no foreshadowing marks! In it two of every living creature to be housed! What instinct would direct them! male and female side by side! who would thus select and guide! the fierce, the tame, to consort in peace! where would their food come from! how shall Noah's household live uninjured in their midst! what turmoil--contagion--uproar--peril--fights! These, and like jests, would shoot their venom at his heart. But he looked up to God--away from earth. Faith made him quick to heaven's voice, and deaf to man's reproach. Thus they persisted--he in obedience--they in sin, until the set time arrived.

Is it not so now? Unbelief still lives. Its atmosphere is the secret, or muttered, or uttered sneer. But fast comes on the time, when faith shall triumph--unbelief shall perish. We read this in the end of the old world. The decreed years by sure advance reached their appointed goal. No unusual signals seemed to have marked the nearing of the avenging waters. There was no wail above. There were no tremblings below. The sun poured down its usual rays. The skies presented their clear canopy of blue. Nature shook not with foreboding terrors. Earth seemed at peace. The groves were melody. The fields waved happy crops. The guilty inhabitants rose to their daily toil and sin. Nothing disturbed the dream, that the course of events, which had always been, would continue forever. "They

were eating and drinking--marrying and giving in marriage"--"and knew not, until the flood came and took them all away." Matt. 24:38-39.

Fearful scene! appalling ignorance! destructive blindness! besotted folly! But in defiance of awakening warnings, such catastrophe will be poured out. What says the Lord? "So shall also the coming of the Son of man be." The returning Jesus stands at the door. His chariot-wheels are ready to descend. His saints are bounding towards the glorious advent. Prayer is ever crying, "When shall it once be?" "Come Lord Jesus--come quickly." But that day of days will find the godless world asleep--busied with its daily triflings--drunk in besotting merriment. Stupor will introduce despair.

Was not the old world thus startled? The ark receives the faithful remnant. The Lord's hand bolts the door. And then the heavens darken. The burdened clouds lower. All nature trembles. The storm breaks. There is no more delay. The rain descends. The showers increase. The waters fall in ceaseless torrents. Floods from above stop not their fury. Springs from beneath heave up their streams. What a moment for astonished man! What terror would thrill through the stout-hearted, when first the fear assumes real form. Can the Preacher's threat be verified! Is it so--that earth shall be a watery waste! Truth--found to be *truth too late*--stares them in the face. They look upwards--nothing but waters fall. They look around--the earth seems to be dissolving into ocean. Where shall they flee--to lofty buildings--to trees--to hills--to mountains? Alas! deliverance is not in them. Waters follow with their rising swell. All refuge fails. There is no respite in the falling deluge. There is no ascending above the ascending tide. The work of sure destruction surely goes forward. Death stalks abroad unchecked. The rich--the poor--the noble--the peasant--the lettered--the ignorant--the *young*--the old, lie in the one embrace of drowning throes--they are all swept together to one tomb of waters--they all disappear beneath one covering flood. No cries avail. The ruin cannot stop--no wringing hand--no smitten heart--no bended knee--no upward look--no contrite tears--no agony of prayer--no loud acknowledgment of guilt--no arms extended towards the ark, can mitigate the execution. Perishing multitudes find too late, that God is true, see too late wrath gone forth to its work, and feel too late the iron-pressure of its hand, and learn too late the bitterness of being lost.

Ah! with what anguish do they now see the ark borne peacefully above the billows. What sharp remorse contrasts the happy safety and the dread despair! The thought now burns them, as a fiery coal--oh! that we had been wise--that we had listened--that we had not closed our ears--that we had not hardened our hearts--that we had not madly resisted every warning--that we had not wilfully defied destruction! But we would not hear--and this is our desert. We would not turn--and this is the result. We would have our sin--and these are sin's wages. Once we *would* not have our God, and now we *can* not.

Reader! seek profit from this end of sin. See not in vain the whole earth one

charnel-house. Gain wisdom from this wide reign of desolation. Ponder what the Holy Spirit inscribes upon this recording pillar. "All the living things on earth died--birds, domestic animals, wild animals, all kinds of small animals, and all the people. Everything died that breathed and lived on dry land. Every living thing on the earth was wiped out--people, animals both large and small, and birds. They were all destroyed, and only Noah was left alive, along with those who were with him in the boat." Genesis 7:21-23.

The ruin was thus sure and vast. All terms are brought together to depict life totally extinguished. Death in wide-spread arms embraced all breathing beings. One unsparing scythe felled all living things. Sin had spread very largely. Destruction overspreads it. Crowds of sinners thronged the earth, and they are crowded into a grave of billows. Man's pollution had polluted the world and all its contents. All, therefore, are thus swept away. Sin is no trifle. It cannot go unpunished. A deluged world sighs a sad proof. This wrath was visible. But there is wrath beyond--far worse--eternal.

Now look forward. Another flood draws near. It is decreed--denounced. God's word foretells it. God's holiness requires it. God's power will bring it. God's wrath will inflict it. Have you not heard--do you not know--that "the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men?" 2 Pet. 3:7. The world, profuse in iniquity, is ripening as dry stubble for these flames. Patience again will reach its limits. The fiery deluge is ready to devour. Vengeance will soon unloose the final woe. Say then, what will be your case, when this last flood of flames glares terribly? Are you delivered from the wrath to come? Are you secure within the one appointed Ark?

Happy, thrice happy they, whose glad response can testify, that, through abounding mercy, they are locked safely in the arms of Jesus. Nestled there, they know no fear. In Christ they are at peace with God--cleansed in expiating blood--robed in glorious Righteousness--sanctified by the indwelling Spirit--newborn by transforming grace. Thus they await, calm in heavenly joy, the coming of the day of God--in the which "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Pet. 3:10.

Thus beside the Beacons of just wrath, may these pages always place the glorious cross. Amid the threats of righteous judgment, may they ever sound the Gospel-note of full redemption. Above the warnings of perdition, may they wave the banner of salvation. If earth's loftiest mountain were the Pulpit--if the thunder's loudest clang were the voice--if the assembled family of man composed the audience, let this proclamation issue, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." Rom. 8:1.

The curse of the Law thunders in vain around them. It fell on Jesus in their place,

and was exhausted on His head. It should no more scare--for it can no more harm. God's justice--the inexorable foe of every sin--no more presses its claims. It is now their advocate. It pleads, that full satisfaction has been made, and payment rendered to the uttermost. To punish those who died in Christ, would be unjust. Their death is past. They sit above the coming flood. They soar above these everlasting miseries--saved with everlasting salvation--blessed with everlasting blessedness. Soon they will shine forth, glorious in everlasting glory--waving everlasting palms--hymning everlasting praises--joying in everlasting joys. "The Lord shall be their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended."

For them there is no flood of wrath--no flood of fire--only a flood of glory!

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