

1 Peter 3:20

by John Gill

The sermon highlights God's longsuffering and patience with ungodly men, using the example of the ark and the flood to illustrate his usual method of affording outward means to those who refuse to repent.

Scripture: Genesis 6:14, Matthew 7:13, 1 Peter 3:20

Topics: "Salvation through Faith", "God's Longsuffering"

Description

John Gill expounds on 1 Peter 3:20, discussing the disobedience of those in the days of Noah who ignored God's warnings and the preaching of Noah, leading to their destruction in the flood. He emphasizes God's longsuffering during the 120 years of ark preparation, where only eight souls were saved, illustrating the narrow path to salvation through faith in Christ, akin to entering the ark. Gill draws parallels between the flood's waters that saved Noah and his family and the Gospel's dual nature of salvation and judgment, encouraging believers to remain steadfast in their faith amidst trials.

Transcript

Ver. 20. Which sometime were disobedient,.... To all the instructions and warnings which God gave them, to all the strivings of his Spirit, and to the ministry of Christ, by Noah; they continued in their profaneness and impiety, and to corrupt their ways, and fill the earth with violence and wickedness; not believing what they were threatened with, or that ever a flood would come upon them, and destroy them: and this "sometime" refers to the time of their being upon earth, who were now in hell; "to the days of Noah"; hereafter mentioned; and which the Syriac version connects with this clause, reading it thus, "who of old were disobedient in the days of Noah"; at which time it was, that Christ, by his Spirit in Noah, went and preached to them: when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah: that is, when God, who is longsuffering and patient, waited on these disobedient ones, in Noah's time, for the space of an hundred and twenty years:

while the ark was preparing; by Noah, according to the directions which God gave him, Ge 6:14 and which, as R. Tanchuma says {b}, was fifty two years a building; others say {c} an hundred years; but Jarchi says {d} it was an hundred and twenty; and which seems most likely, that being the term of time in which God's longsuffering waited on them; during which time Noah was preaching to them, and building the ark:

wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water; the eight persons were, Noah, and his wife, and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, and their three wives. It is a common tradition with the Jews {e}, that

besides these, Og, king of Bashan, escaped the flood; and who, they say, is the same that escaped, and told Abraham of Lot's being carried captive by the kings {f}; the manner of his escape at the flood they relate thus {g};

"Og came, who was delivered from the men that died at the flood; and he rode upon the ark, and he had a covering upon his head, and was fed with the food of Noah; but not for his worthiness was he delivered, but that the inhabitants of the world might see the power of the Lord;"

and elsewhere {h}, after this manner, citing those words, "and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark", Ge 7:23 they add,

"except Og, king of Bashan, who sat on a certain piece of wood which belonged to the scaffolding of the ark, and he swore to Noah, and his sons, that he would be their servant for ever. What did Noah do? he bored an hole in the ark, and every day reached out food to him, and he remained alive, according to what is said, De 3:11 "only Og, king of Bashan", &c."

But this is all a mere fiction; and equally fabulous is the account the Arabians give, who say {i} that eighty persons, together with Noah, were taken into the ark, among whom was Jorham, their father; for there were no more than eight persons saved; and this is the apostle's sense; and agreeably the Syriac version renders it, "and eight souls" dwxlb, "only entered into it, and were saved by water"; and we are told by some of the eastern writers {k}, that when these eight went out of the ark, they built a city, which they called Themanin, which, in the Arabic language, signifies "eight", according to their number. The ark was a type of Christ, into whom whoever enters by faith, or in whom whoever believes, shall be saved; but as they that entered into the ark were but few, so are those that enter in at the strait gate, or believe in Christ; and they that went into the ark were saved by the water bearing up the ark, even by that by which others were destroyed; as the very same thing, for different reasons, is the cause or means of destruction and salvation; so Christ is set, for the fall and rising of many, is a stumblingblock to some, and the power and wisdom of God to others; and the Gospel, and the ministers of it, are the savour of life unto life to some, and the savour of death unto death to others. This instance of the dispensation of the providence of God to the old world is very appropriately, though by way of digression, introduced by the apostle; showing, that in times past, as then, God's usual method has been to afford the outward means to ungodly men, and to bear with them long, and then bring down his vengeance upon them, and save his own people; and this suffering saints might depend upon would be their case, and therefore should bear their afflictions patiently.

{b} In Pirke Eliezer, c. 23. {c} Elmacin. Hist. apud Hottinger. Smegma Orient. I. 1. c. 8. p. 249. {d} In Gen. vi. 15. {e} Targum Jon. in Deut. iii. 11. T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 61. 1. {f} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 37. 2. Targum Jon. & Jarchi in Gen. xiv. 13. {g} Targum Jon. in Gen. xiv. 13. {h} Pirke Eliezer, c. 23. {i} Pocock. Specim. Hist. Arab. p. 38. {k} Eutychiei Annal. p. 43. Elmacin. Hist. I. 1. c. 1. p. 12. Patricides, p. 10. Apud Hottinger, Smegma Orient. I. 1. c. 8. p. 251, 252.

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