

## Introduction

The world was once destroyed by *flood* and it will one day soon be destroyed by *fire*:

2 Peter 3:5-7 "...the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

The catastrophic flood and the coming fire elicit one of two responses:

- - "scoffers" deliberately forget the flood and discount the fire:

2 Peter 3:3-6 (NIV) "...in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed."

- - "saints" give diligence to their faith as they look back on the flood and forward to the fire:

2 Peter 3:13-14 "...we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless..."

Noah was God's saint in the midst of scoffers prior to the flood. *You* are God's saints in the midst of scoffers prior to the fire! This morning we will present evidence that the scoffer is deliberately and willfully ignorant of the flood and the fire. Our emphasis, however, will be to encourage the saints to give diligence to their faith!

There is a key phrase that is repeated four times in our text:

Genesis 6:22 "Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did."

Genesis 7:5 "And Noah did according to all that the LORD commanded him."

Genesis 7:9 "two by two they went into the ark to Noah, male and female, as God had commanded Noah."

Genesis 7:16 "So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in."

Twice *Noah's* faithfulness is noted in performing all that God had commanded him. Twice *God's* faithfulness is noted in performing for Noah all that He had commanded. In 6:22 and in 7:5 we read of what Noah faithfully did; in 7:9 and in 7:16 we read of what God faithfully did. Noah *faithfully persevered* to the end in all that God

had commanded him. God *faithfully preserved* Noah to the end in all that He had commanded him.

Your faithfulness to persevere in all that God has commanded you is a major New Testament theme; God's faithfulness in preserving you in all that He has commanded you is also a major New Testament theme!

You should persevere to the end; God will preserve you to the end!

#1 You Should Persevere To The End  
According To All That God Has Commanded You  
6:12 - 7:5

Genesis 6:12 So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

Genesis 6:13 And God said to 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.

Earlier in 6:3 God said that the judgment of the flood would come in 120 years. As a result we commonly hear that Noah took 120 years to build the Ark. It may not be crucial, but I'd like to point out that Noah probably spent slightly less time on the Ark.

In 5:32 we read that Noah was 500 when he began having children. In 7:6 we read that he was 600 when he and his wife and their adult children and their wives entered the completed Ark. When God tells Noah to build the Ark, He mentions that Noah's sons and their wives will enter the Ark with him. Unless this is a prophecy to Noah that he will one day have sons and daughters-in-law, then his sons, born after his 500th year, are already married adults by the time God tells him to build the Ark. This means the actual building took less than 120 years, probably somewhere around 80 years. In other words, God set the time for the flood at 120 years, but didn't commission the building of the Ark until sometime after that. We just want to be accurate!

Eighty years is still a long time; the Ark was quite a project. Verses 14 through 22 describe its design.

It was a three-decked barge, designed to float rather than to navigate. The Ark was approximately 450 feet by 75 feet. The available floor space of the three decks was over 95,000 square feet and its total volume was 1,396,000 cubic feet. Imagine waiting at a railroad crossing while ten freight trains, each pulling 52 boxcars, move slowly by, one after the other. That is how much space was available in the Ark - its capacity was equivalent to 520 modern railroad stock cars. A barge of this gigantic size, with its thousands of built in compartments, would have been sufficiently large to carry two of every air-breathing animal in the world today on only *half* of its available deck space!<sup>1</sup>

Two other details are noteworthy:

1) It was covered, inside and out, with "pitch." This substance was to insulate the Ark from the surrounding waters of judgment. The word for "pitch" is the Hebrew, "kophar," to cover, and is the word used elsewhere for "atonement." Noah was a carpenter whose wood was an atonement into which all who came at the free invitation of God were saved. Jesus Christ was a carpenter and more than a carpenter. His work with wood was on the Cross at Calvary - an atonement to which all who come at the free invitation of God are saved!

2) The Ark had a single door in its side. There was only one door, and all must enter by that door. Jesus is the one "door" all men must enter by for salvation!

After 120 years of His longsuffering waiting, in verse 4 of chapter 7 we learn that God waited another week before releasing His wrath.

Genesis 7:4 "For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made."

Why the seven days? Certainly last minute preparations were necessary... There is also an interesting spiritual reason.

After decades of faithful preaching by Noah, God gave an "Ark call." "Come into the Ark..." Just before judgment was about to fall, the animals miraculously migrated to the Ark. God fulfilled His prophecy. Faithful preaching, fulfilled prophecy, and an invitation to "come" to salvation characterized the Last Days before the flood. Those same things characterize the Last Days we are living in as well.

**\*\*Noah persevered.** Our text defines perseverance this way: walking with God and faithfully performing all that God commands you to do.

When you mention the perseverance of God's saints, you enter a realm of intense theological argument. Men have for centuries disagreed with one another on what it means to persevere. Here is how you might summarize the disagreement:

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<sup>1</sup>John C. Whitcomb, The World That Perished, p. 25

- - Many thoughtful and able scholars believe that perseverance is the inevitable consequence of your salvation; in other words, *since* you are saved, you will persevere to the end without the possibility of ever falling away from saving faith in Jesus Christ.

- - Many other thoughtful and able scholars believe that perseverance is an important condition of your salvation; in other words, *if* you are saved you will persevere to the end, and avoid the very real possibility of falling away from saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Whether perseverance is a consequence or a condition of salvation won't be settled anytime soon. The Bible seems to teach that those who are truly saved *will* persevere and that those who persevere *are* the truly saved. There is something about perseverance that everyone agrees with: Perseverance should characterize your walk with Jesus Christ. You should persevere according to all that the Lord has commanded you. The Bible tells us in many places to be diligent, to remain steadfast, to continue on, and to endure to the end. Having begun to walk with Jesus, we are to be found progressing and growing spiritually.

Genesis 6:9 says, "Noah walked with God." At two key moments later on in his life, Noah is seen persevering in "all that God had commanded him" to do. This is a pattern for us as believers.

- - The earth was corrupt and filled with violence, but Noah persevered in his morals.

- - He had the pressures of raising a godly family, but Noah persevered in his marriage.

- - He was called to a difficult task, but Noah persevered in his ministry.

If Noah could persevere in his walk in these areas, so can you and I. He did it by God's grace - 6:8 "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." That same grace is superabundantly available today!

- - In the area of morality, become familiar with what God has commanded in His Word. Are you doing according to all that He has commanded you? In God's grace, you can!

- - In the area of marriage, become familiar with what God has commanded in His Word. Are you doing according to all that He has commanded you? In God's grace, you can!

- - In the area of ministry, become familiar with what God has commanded in His Word. Are you doing according to all that He has commanded you? In God's grace, you can!

The context within which you are faithful to persevere is God's faithfulness to preserve you. Remember verses 9 and 16:

Genesis 7:9 two by two they went into the ark to Noah, male and female, as God had commanded Noah.

Genesis 7:16 So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in.

These are statements about *God's* faithfulness to Noah, to keep and to preserve him to the end according to God's commandments.

#2 You Will Be Preserved To The End  
According To All That God Has Commanded You  
7:6-24

We've looked briefly at the Ark. It was of a design that could withstand a global flood, and it was sufficiently large to house all of the animals that were required. Scoffers will argue that Noah couldn't have possibly rounded up all of the necessary animals - let alone in pairs! We agree; he didn't. God brought them supernaturally. Scoffers will argue that Noah couldn't have stored sufficient food, nor would he and the seven others have had time to feed and water the animals, or clean their stalls. We agree. The animals undoubtedly ate upon first entering and then settled into a supernatural hibernation. Such things are known to occur *naturally* in many species today!

Scoffers attack the idea of a global flood. They see traces here and there of a local flood - - but not a catastrophe like the one described in the Bible. Even a casual reading of the text indicates that this flood was global:

Genesis 6:17 "And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die.

Genesis 7:17 Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth.

Genesis 7:18 The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters.

Genesis 7:19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered.

Genesis 7:20 The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered.

Genesis 7:21 And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man.

Genesis 7:22 All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died.

Genesis 7:23 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 in the ark remained alive.

Genesis 7:24 And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.

This is enough to convince the saint, but not the scoffer. There is abundant evidence *outside* of the Bible to convince him!

There is abundant historical evidence - -

Flood stories appear in over 40 different ancient cultures. Their accounts are filled with mythological and fanciful details not found in the biblical record, but the presence of these histories indicates the validity of the Genesis account. Secular history independently reveals there was a tremendous, global flood long ago that affected many cultures of the world.

There is abundant geological evidence - -

The Grand Canyon and many other spectacular canyons cover an area of a quarter of a million square miles, including most of Utah and Arizona and large segments of Colorado and New Mexico. Especially in the Grand Canyon, as far as the eye can see, thick, horizontal deposits of various types of sediments rest comfortably upon one another from the bottom of the canyon to the top. Such uniform levels over such great areas can only be accounted for by the rapid action of the flood of Noah's time. Evolution, with its billions of years, cannot account for the evidence of the rapid and catastrophic formation of these uniform deposits.

There is abundant fossil evidence - -

Creationist Ken Ham says that, if there was a global flood, you would expect to find billions of dead things laid down by water buried in rock all over the earth. What *do* you find? Billions of dead things laid down by water buried in rock all over the earth!

There is abundant evidence of every kind - - but scoffers choose to remain deliberately ignorant of it because they do not like to retain God in their knowledge.

Here is what happened. God broke up the fountains of the deep; then the vapor canopy surrounding the earth collapsed. Water from above and water from below met to cover the earth for 150 days; it took an additional 225 days for the waters to subside and for the land to dry. That world and all of its air breathing inhabitants perished except for those safe on the Ark. They were preserved by God.

Noah and His family were preserved according to the promise of God to do so:

Genesis 6:18 "But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark; you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you."

Noah and his family were preserved according to the power of God to do so:

Genesis 7:16 "...And the LORD shut him in"

Noah and his family were preserved according to the presence of God to do so:

Genesis 7:1 "...Come into the Ark..."

God invited them to share His presence on the Ark.

**\*\*God will preserve *you* according to all that He has commanded you.**

- - He will preserve you according to His promises to do so:

Jude 1:24 [God] "...is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy..."

- - He will preserve you according to His power to do so:

1 Peter 1:3-9 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith; the salvation of your souls."

- - He will preserve you according to His presence to do so:

John 10:27-30 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one."

## Conclusion

I do not fully understand the relationship between my perseverance and God's preservation. It seems to me that those who attempt to resolve the issue once and for all end up weakening either the exhortation to persevere or the encouragement of God's preserving you. I'd rather admit my ignorance than be adding to or subtracting from what the Bible teaches.

The exhortation is summarized by Peter; the encouragement by Jude. I'll put them side by side - -

2 Peter 1:10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble...

Jude 1:24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy...