

February 14, 2021

Viewpoint from the **Valley Grove Church Of Christ**

Sitting Around On The Ark

by Jon Quinn

“**N**ow it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the water was dried up from the earth. Then Noah removed the covering from the ark, and looked, and behold, the surface of the land was dried up. And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. Then God spoke to Noah, saying, ‘Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons’ wives with you’” (Gen. 8:13-16). Imagine yourself in Noah’s place for a moment. You had boarded the ark with your family and all those animals a long time ago. A week later, the flood had come and the rain had fallen for forty days. Then, the waters had continued to rise for one hundred and fifty days. Finally, they had begun to recede. In the tenth month the first mountain tops had reappeared. It was forty days later that the first tentative tests had been made of livability outside the ark. This was done by the sending out a raven and a dove. The test had been made twice on a weekly basis until finally the dove had not returned. The cover had been removed and the land surveyed. The surface was dry! What do you do now?

Of course, the answer is obvious. You would shout for joy, call your family together and leave the ark. And the last one on board might find himself stuck with releasing the animals as well. Oh, those animals! It will be wonderful to breathe fresh air again!

But it was not that way at all. Read the text again, very carefully, and notice that there is at least a month of waiting around on board the ark after it was known that the land was dry! Why?

The answer is because Noah respected God very much. He was waiting for God to say, “Okay, you may leave now.” It was only when God said, “Go out” that Noah left. What does this have to do with us? Plenty!

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***Visitors — We pray that you benefit spiritually from our
worship together and hope to see you again.***

Respect for the Authority of the Word of God

“ . . . that in us you might learn not to go beyond what is written, in order that no one of you might become arrogant in behalf of one against the other” (1 Cor. 4:6). Noah was not so arrogant that he presumed to know the mind of God on a subject upon which God had not revealed his thoughts as yet. Many might assume that since God had not said not to leave the ark that it would be appropriate to leave whenever the notion struck. Noah did not look at it that way and that is in effect what Paul said to the Corinthians; “Do not presume” by going beyond what God has revealed to Christians in his written word, the Scriptures. Earlier Paul had explained that the only way we can know anything about what God thinks is for God to revealed it to us in words (1 Cor. 2:10-13).

What work does God want his church to be involved in? Evangelism? Recreation? Business? Edification? Benevolence? Politics? Social reform? First aid? Entertainment? Secular education? We must determine not to go beyond what is written!

How does God want us to worship him? Singing? Clapping? Dancing? Giving? Playing? Drumming? Praying? Teaching? Feasting? Supping? Animal sacrificing? Bead counting? Candle lighting? We must determine not to go beyond what is written!

What do we teach regarding points of controversy? Divorce? Marriage? Abortion? Homosexuality? Premarital sex? Husbands and wives? Parents and children? We must determine not to go beyond what is written!

Is Proper Doctrine Really That Important?

“Any one who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God, the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9). In our day, it is quite the thing to chart one’s own courses, especially when it comes to religion. The goal becomes to please self rather than to please God. The Bible is cast aside so conveniently whenever necessary in order to reach the goal of self-gratification. Any who would object by asking for Bible authority is labeled “legalistic” or “self-righteous” or worse. But when all is said and done, God has warned that when we cast his doctrine aside, we cast our relationship with him aside as well. No matter how gratifying a religion may be, it may tickle and comfort, excite and tingle, but if it harms my relationship with God then it is a tragedy and not a blessing! Though the thought of leaving the ark was certainly appealing, Noah would wait however long God determined. He had so carefully followed the Lord’s command up to this point it would make no sense to alter his course now. This careful attitude toward doctrine was neither “self-righteous” nor “legalistic.” It was simply saving faith (Heb. 11:7)!

There is a Pattern!

“... who serve as a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle, — for, ‘See,’ He says, ‘That you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you upon the mountain’ ” (Heb. 8:5). The point of this passage is that like Moses was warned to be careful to act only according to the pattern given him for the Mosical items of worship, which were shadows of the spiritual things which we have received, that we, too, must exercise the same caution! We, too, have a pattern to observe.

The New Testament is not just a hodge-podge of writings thrown together accidentally. It is our blue print. It is not a suggested plan of action, it is our “marching orders!” As Paul commanded by the Holy Spirit, “However, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained. Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us” (Phil. 3:16,17).

The same gospel was taught throughout the Roman Empire by every first century gospel teacher. This conformity in doctrine and practice would not have existed if there had not been a pattern to follow. Paul, for example, taught the brethren to do the same thing at Corinth as he taught the churches throughout Galatia to do (1 Cor. 16:1). If any refused, they would violate the pattern and in so doing jeopardize

their souls.

Establishing Bible Authority

“... though not being without the law of God, but under the law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law” (1 Cor. 9:21). Every professed Bible believer ought to have implicit confidence in the adequacy of the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16,17). Sadly, many do not. Many will claim to “believe the Bible” and yet not allow it to be their complete guide. As we have seen, it is a big mistake to minimize the importance of having scriptural authority for the things we practice and teach.

The New Testament authorizes practices by commands as well as examples. To illustrate, we have commands to partake of the Lord’s Supper — “This do . . .” (1 Cor. 11:25) as well as examples — “They came together . . .” (Acts 20:7). In the first century disciples throughout the world did so on the first day of the week. Paul, on a journey toward Jerusalem and eagerly looking forward to arriving there, waited a week at Troas so he could share the supper of the Lord with the Christians there. Why not gather together on Tuesday evening and partake so Paul would not have to wait as long? That would have been fine if there had not been a pattern to fulfill, but there was, and there is, and there shall be until the day when we need the memorial no longer because we see him as he is.

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Let us be like Noah; we will go when the Lord says “go” and not before. To have the same attitude toward the Lord’s word as did Noah certainly will secure victory over whatever may flood our lives, and it shall be appropriate to say that thus we did, “according to all that God had commanded” us, so we did (Gen. 6:22).

Quotable Quotes

“I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from The Savior of the world is communicated to us through this Book.” — *Abraham Lincoln*

“No educated man can afford to be ignorant of the Bible.” — *Theodore Roosevelt*

“A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education.” — *Theodore Roosevelt*

“Within the covers of the Bible are the answers for all the problems men face.” — *Ronald Reagan*

Study Your Bible

February Birthdays:

The 1st Roseanna Carter; The 6th Jay Stewart; The 11th Mary Lynn McCartney; The 17th Austin Hisaw; The 20th Shirley Pike; The 22nd Peggy Thomas; The 25th Don Haynes

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Sunday
Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.
Worship 10:30 A.M.
Worship 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday
Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

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