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Christ as the Ark of our Salvation

'By faith Noah prepared an ark'.

Hebrews 11:7

Noah's ark is a beautiful type of Christ as the Ark of our salvation. The world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. The waves and billows of the Flood are typical of the wrath to come. Without Christ, we are lost, and the wrath of God abides on us (John 3:36). Only in Him we are safe from the waters of judgment, for Scripture tells us "there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

Christ shelters us from judgment. The waters of death have gone for good, now that He has brought us into a new world, where we stand before God on wholly new ground – on resurrection ground. This is also expressed in baptism: the washing of water which speaks of death on the one hand, but of new life in Christ on the other hand (Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Pet. 3:20-21). We were buried with Him through baptism into death, in order to reach a wholly new position and a walk in newness of life.

Something similar can be seen in the life of Moses. He was 'buried' in the waters of the river Nile in an ark of bulrushes and in this way he was saved through water, drawn out of the waters of death. Genesis 6 and Exodus 2 use the same Hebrew word for Noah's ark and the ark of bulrushes by which Moses was saved.

Please note the following details of the description of the ark in the book of Genesis and their typological meaning:

- (1) Noah's ark was a huge wooden chest of three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high (a cubit is about half a metre). It had three decks

with compartments or rooms which served as living quarters and storage rooms. It had an entrance in its side, a door that was closed by God Himself (Gen. 6:16; 7:16). It also had a window on top, which was later opened by Noah to send out the raven and the dove (Gen. 8:6-8).

- (2) Looking at the ark as a type of Christ, the true Ark of salvation, the wood as the fruit of the earth speaks of His true humanity (cf. Isa. 4:2; 53:2). There is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5).
- (3) Noah had to cover the ark inside and outside with pitch. These two cognate words in Hebrew are rendered “(to make an) atonement” and “ransom” in the rest of the Old Testament. So the pitch is a picture of the value and the atoning power of Christ’s blood and death. This covers our sins, makes us acceptable to God, and shelters us from judgment.
- (4) The door in the side of the ark reminds us of Christ’s pierced side, which opened the way of salvation to sinners (John 19:34-35; 1 John 5:6-9). Christ is the Door. If anyone enters by Him, he will be saved (John 10:9).
- (5) The rooms or cells (lit. “nests”) in the ark speak of the protection and the security that are shared by all those who are in Christ: “And now, little children, abide in Him” (1 John 2:28). In this way He will be as a sanctuary (Isa. 8:14). We recall that Solomon’s temple also had rooms in three stories, just as in the ark (Gen. 6:16; 1 Ki. 6:4-5). In God’s house there are many mansions, there is room for all the saints.
- (6) The ark also had a window, an opening for light. In the same way Christ revealed divine truth, light from above in a scene of darkness and confusion (John 1:9; 3:12, 31-32). We have heavenly light in our dwellings as Christians.
- (7) Finally we have the preparation of the ark. The ark of Noah teaches a practical lesson to Christian parents. Just as Noah prepared an ark for the saving of his household (Heb. 11:7), so we should lead our children to Christ and bring them to the only place of safety in this world of sin.

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