

Rebuilding After The Flood

Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided.

-Genesis 8:1

As we have been talking about in the last couple papers, the coming of the flood represents primordial chaos coming upon the earth and destroying all established order from the world. While this was literal in Noah's case, it can be felt just as acutely by us when we go through a period of extreme transition, especially when that transition is a result of our own personal failure. When this happens, we are flung into a state of uncertainty, and we need some sort of assurance to provide us with a foundation that we might rebuild upon. And what these next few chapters of Genesis teach us, is how to rebuild after a "flood". While the state of rebuilding is going to look very different depending on the particular "flood" that we might face, what Noah's story teaches us is how to orient ourselves properly towards God so that we can move on after tragedy.

Peace With God

"Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done."

-Genesis 8:20-21

The beautiful thing about Noah is his heart to honor God. Even after the destruction of everything that he had ever known, and with the daunting task of having to restart human civilization and preserve his family. The first priority that he had was to take some of his own, very limited sustenance, and sacrifice it to God. From our human perspective, we would see this as very foolish. It would make more sense to us that Noah would prioritize his family and his resources, and not sacrifice some of the few remaining animals to God. But this small gesture shows us clearly why Noah found grace in God's eyes, and why he was chosen to preserve the human race.

We have to remember that the first step towards corruption was Cain offering unworthy sacrifices to God in Genesis 4. But, instead of trying to rectify his behavior and approach God in a worthy manner, he instead built in his heart a murderous rage towards his brother who was offering sacrifices that were acceptable to God. Cain's line clearly never learned this lesson and continued to live lives of corruption in which they

would not give to God what He was due, and instead gave their hearts to demonic entities who corrupted their souls and their societies. Noah on the other hand had learned this lesson well. He knew that if he was to rebuild society, the priority was to make sure that he was properly oriented towards God.

“Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.”

Psalm 127:1

There are numerous reasons why this is so important, but let's focus on just a few. First, by seeking God's favor first, Noah was given the ability to recover from the cataclysm that destroyed the world. Second, by doing this, it prepared Noah to maintain peace with God and to avoid the mistakes that caused the flood in the first place. And finally, sacrificing to God reminded Noah that his greatest need was in God Himself.

Recovering After A Flood

Because this story is so short and familiar, it is very easy for us to overlook the emotional toll that this event would have on Noah and his family. Even though the world that they inhabited was terribly corrupt, it was the only world that they had ever known. We also have to remember that Noah was not a violent revolutionary who hated his world, but instead was a “preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5). This signifies that Noah was not someone who wanted to see his world fall, but was wanting to preserve as much of his world as he could, which turned out to only be his family and the animals. These factors help us understand the kind of grief that Noah would have been experiencing, and might give us a little grace for Noah's actions in Genesis 9:

“And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent.”

-Genesis 9:20-21

Although these facts can't excuse Noah's actions here, they can give us a helpful framework where we can see Noah as a grieving man, instead of a wanton degenerate. This also gives us a hint as to what it takes to rebuild after a flood comes. As we talked about in the last paper, “floods” come in many shapes and forms throughout our lives, but they signify a cataclysmic transition. An end to a current order so that a new order can be established. These can be for good purposes, such as a new career, a marriage, starting a family, and so on. Or they can be for bad purposes, like losing a career, sustaining an injury, experiencing an untimely death, going through a divorce, etc. These same transitions can happen at a societal level as well, like the aftermath of a

war, a new cultural movement, a new technological development, or even like Noah's society, extreme moral collapse. However, regardless of what these transitions look like, or what caused them, major shifts like this represent both new opportunities, as well as profound loss that we need to know how to recover from before we can move forward.

"How do you pick up the threads of an old life? How do you go on, when in your heart you begin to understand... there is no going back? There are some things that time cannot mend. Some hurts that go too deep, that have taken hold."

-J.R.R. Tolkien - The Return of the King

This quote is spoken by Frodo at the end of the very popular "Lord of the Rings" trilogy. At this point, Frodo is trying to come back to his childhood home after surviving the traumatic events of his adventure. But when he returns home, he realizes that he can't really come home, that some innocence was stolen from him by his adventure. And because he can't recover that innocence, he can't fully return. This inability to reconnect with his old life, prevents him from ever moving on and he ends up having to permanently leave the Shire. This same thing can happen to us very easily after we survive a major shift within our lives.

While it wasn't fully effective for Noah, his turning immediately towards God as His redeemer and sustainer gave him the ability to reset his soul and move forward after the terrible events of the flood, and we must learn to do the same thing. Unfortunately, many people never fully recover from loss, and therefore never learn to build a new life. Instead, they are consumed with the grief of their loss, and either spend the rest of their lives wallowing in grief, or they turn jaded and cynical as a result of their loss.

"Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted."

Matthew 5:4

The beautiful thing about our God is that He is One who is acquainted with grief and sorrow, He is One who understands our loss even better than we do. This gives Him the unique ability to provide comfort and grace to those who mourn, which is exactly what we need to move forward. Comfort can provide understanding and assistance in the mourning process that allows us to avoid becoming jaded. But it also helps bring closure to our pain so that we can learn to move on, and not wallow in perpetual sorrow. It is this comfort that Noah is accessing before God, as God receives from Noah his sacrifice, and responds with wonderful assurance towards him and his family.

Maintaining Peace With God

“Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, “I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.”

-Genesis 8:20-21

When Noah sacrifices to God, we are told that God actually smells the aroma of the sacrifice and responds to this act with a promise that God will not flood the earth like this ever again. One thing that is hard for us to accept in our current culture is God’s role as judge of the earth. We can easily accept God’s role as our Savior, and the One who loves us unconditionally, but even Christians wrestle with the fact that God is judge of the earth and is sovereign over all things. We instead tend to labor under the illusion that we are in control of our own lives and that we can prevent all tragedies through wisdom, right living, and hard work. When a major transition happens to us, we are reminded of how little control we actually have over our lives.

Noah may have had a similar thought as he lived with his family in the old world. But when the flood came, Noah was shown in no uncertain terms how powerful God is, and how supreme God’s will was. All the systems that were in place, all the power structures that would have seemed so immovable from Noah’s perspective were brought to nothing in a matter of weeks through God’s sovereign decree. With all the lives around him being extinguished so quickly, Noah would have to wrestle with the fragility of life in a new and powerful way. It is in moments like this that we can finally *know* the authority of God, and how important it is to be at peace with God.

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

-Romans 5:1-5

In this passage, the early Christians were facing extreme persecution from the Roman government, and it would have been very easy for them to assume that God was against them. The apostle Paul is comforting them, not by promising them deliverance *from* the suffering, but like Noah, Paul promises that they will be preserved *through* the suffering. Because we have peace with God through faith in His Son, we can be

assured that God is for us in all circumstances, whether those circumstances are prosperous or painful. Even if our current pain is due to our bad choices, we know that God is still for us, and His hope is for the current trial to act as discipline for us that will shape our character and move us in our love and obedience towards Him. It is only through this assurance that we can seek to rebuild after a flood.

Without this assurance, we would have no confidence to try to rebuild. If we were in any way unsure of God's favor, we would never attempt to get back on our feet, as we would always be afraid that another tragedy would undo whatever we accomplish. This fear would paralyze us, and many people live in this unfortunate paralysis after a tragedy.

God, not wanting Noah to go through this, gives him several signs to assure Noah of his favor. The first we have already seen, that is His reception of Noah's sacrifice and His verbal assurance, the next is in God giving a new law to Noah and his family, and the final one is given in the sign of the new covenant between God and man signified in the rainbow.

The Law

“So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. “And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. “But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. “Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man. “Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man. And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; Bring forth abundantly in the earth And multiply in it.”

-Genesis 9:1-7

After the flood wiped out all societal order, God needed to re-establish order for Noah and His family by giving them a new law that they might organize themselves around and serve God with. The first part of the law is a reiteration of what God had established with Adam and Eve, namely that Noah should be “fruitful and multiply” and that he should exercise good stewardship over the world. This is important because, as we talked about in the last paper, when a period of transition happens, it is easy to get rid of everything that came before and enter into uncharted territory without a solid map. But worlds don't tend to start out corrupt, instead they tend to start right and degrade over time. This means that we should do our best to go back to foundational principles in order to move forward.

To use a specific example to make this point more clear, let's take a couple recovering from an affair. When an affair happens, the entire relationship is thrown into chaos, and this chaos doesn't just affect the relationship, it actually threatens the souls of the one's involved. Over time, a person's identity is shaped by their marriage, to the point where, when the affair happens it doesn't just threaten their trust towards their partner, it actually threatens their very sense of self. This event can be so catastrophic, that someone can lose sight of themselves, and be pulled under by their grief and uncertainty. It is this "submersion" of their identity that will make any hope of healing impossible, even if their partner is completely repentant.

In order to move forward, they have to re-establish their marriage on firm ground. This involves reminding themselves of why they married their spouse in the first place, and aiming at recovering as much of that original relationship as they possibly can. What I always tell couples in this circumstance, is that an affair is such a catastrophic event, that a full recovery of the original marriage is not possible, since the original marriage was based on a commitment to faithfulness that was broken. You can't really recover your previous marriage, but you can recover enough of it to act as a foundation that you can build a new one upon.

Most people don't understand this though and they either try to forget the past and act as though nothing happened, or they will hold the infidelity over their partner's head for the rest of their lives. Recovering the foundation of the marriage allows for someone to accept the reality of the affair, and therefore seek restitution based on real, observable repentance. But this also gives the impetus for the one who was cheated on to actually forgive the infidelity so that the foundation of the marriage can be recovered. A marriage can't possibly be built upon a power dynamic where one member can replay an old offense as a trump card in disagreements. For trust to be re-established, there needs to be demonstrable faithfulness on the part of the one who cheated, and this faithfulness needs to be received and responded to with renewed trust by the one who was cheated upon.

But moving on like this is very difficult, the major temptation for us is to keep recalling and denigrating the past. But doing this locks us in the past and precludes us from moving forward in any meaningful way. This principle helps us understand an odd event that happens at the end of Genesis 9. Towards the end of the chapter, as we have already discussed, Noah has a moral failing in which he got drunk and passed out naked, and his son Ham saw him:

And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness. So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. Then he said: "Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brethren."

-Genesis 9:22-25

This story might seem odd to us in isolation, but in the context of the story, it makes a lot of sense. Noah was able to preserve his family from the flood, while this was a very good thing, the temptation of his family would be to completely disregard the past and develop a moral arrogance over all that came before them. And so when Ham sees the disgrace of his father, he responds by mocking his father and wanting to make his shame a public spectacle. But Noah's other sons resist this urge by covering the shame of their father.

Many people in our culture, especially with the advent of social media, make it a regular practice to display the shame of their ancestors. This could be in the form of someone mocking the past moral failings of their country, or someone constantly gossiping about the moral failings of family members. While there are times to confront the evil of the past, this should be done soberly and with respect, not with public scorn and mockery. If we truly believe we can learn nothing from our past, that arrogance will not give us a firm foundation to build upon.

By reciting the original laws given to Adam and Eve, God is recovering the foundations of His original relationship with mankind and allowing for that to be the basis of man's new civilization. He doesn't ignore the past evil, the whole point of the flood was to wipe out that past evil, but He also doesn't dwell on that evil. He salvages what He can from the previous world, so that Noah and his family can move on, and not perpetually ridicule the failures of the past. But God doesn't stop there, He also gives new rules to provide a new structure for after the flood. Just as the couple recovering from an affair can't behave as though the affair didn't happen, and will need to construct new boundaries to prevent the same thing from happening again, God develops a new law to provide for mankind's new society.

The first new law that He gives has to do with eating animals. It is a little ambiguous if man was already eating animals prior to the flood, but what is clear is that God is telling man to not eat animals with the blood in them. Meaning that they have to cook their meat and not eat it raw. God seems to institute this prohibition in order to instruct the conscience of man to consider blood, a symbol for life, to be sacred and belonging to

God. This principle is a little vague for us today, but back in pagan cultures, there was an understanding that animals were “burned” as an offering to their gods. This doesn’t mean that they burned all their animals, but instead that they cooked their animals as a sacrifice to their gods, allowing the gods to “consume” the blood and fat of the animals leaving the meat for the people. There was one sacrifice in the Old Testament in which the whole animal was offered to God called the burnt offering, but all other offerings functioned in this same way as the pagan sacrifices, albeit, before the true and living God as opposed to false pagan gods.

The reason for this, beyond the practical hygienic reason, was an understanding that nature was not in our control, that all life ultimately belonged to the gods, and so when we eat animals, we must give tribute to the gods who had formed these animals and given their bodies to us to eat. However, the pagan tribes saw the gods themselves as being bloodthirsty, and so they actually believed that the gods were eating the blood of their sacrifices. This explains why they maintained bloody rituals in which they would consume raw meat and drink blood. One such ritual was practiced by Greeks in the worship of Dionisius, a particularly depraved cult which included wild orgies, brutal, violent activities and consumption of raw meat. Commenting on a particular ritual to Dionisius, Romanian religious historian Mircea Eliade says this:

“The Dionysiac ecstasy means, above all, surpassing the human condition, the discovery of total deliverance, obtaining a freedom and spontaneity inaccessible to human beings. That among these freedoms there also figured deliverance from prohibitions, rules, and conventions of an ethical and social order appears to be certain—which explains, in part, the mass adherence of women. But the Dionysiac experience touched the deepest levels. The bacchantes who devoured raw flesh reintegrated a behavior that had been suppressed for tens of thousands of years; such frenzies revealed a communion with vital and cosmic forces that could be interpreted only as a divine possession.”

-Mircea Eliade - “A History of Religious Ideas Volume 1”

This is a clear, gross inversion of what God is establishing with Noah. Our God is not bloodthirsty, He does not consume meat and blood as the pagans believed their gods did. Instead, God demands sacrifice of these things to show the sacredness of all life and His role as the God of all flesh. So when the Jews were sacrificing their animals to God, they were reminded of God’s provision, and the morality that bound them all together before God. Even in our Christian sacrament of communion, we are partaking of the flesh and blood of Christ, not in an animalistic way of literally consuming flesh and blood. But instead participating in the sacrifice of Christ through a ritual that allows for

us to immerse ourselves in the truth of what Jesus did for us. This should make us more obedient to the dictates of God and thankful for the provision of God.

For the pagans, the gods were brutal and lived above all laws and conventions of man. So in order to “commune” with them, they had to throw off their humanity and engage in rituals of depravity that made them more like animals than men. We don’t know for sure, but since this seems to be a universal practice within demonic pagan beliefs, it would be a safe assumption that this was a widespread practice in the world that God had to wipe out.

This practice had an effect on the conscience of ancient man, as they disregarded the value of animal life, it seemed to affect the way they viewed their fellow man. This is why practices of consuming blood and flesh of animals, also coincided with the universal ancient practices of human sacrifice and cannibalism. This also affected the perspective of bloody conquest and slavery that permeated human culture for the first millennia of human history. What God was trying to communicate to His people through His prohibition of consuming animal blood was the sacredness of life, especially human life. That is why He reiterates to Noah that all human life was made in His image and therefore that human blood must be avenged.

This is a bit of a departure from what happened in the previous culture. After Cain murdered Abel, God actually forbade the avenging of Abel’s blood by human society. This seems to have been an attempt of God to avoid a never-ending practice of vengeance by the early culture of man, but now God sees the need for human culture to establish a governmental system, or sorts, that could administer capital punishment. This wasn’t meant to communicate to man that we have ultimate power, but instead it was to give governments a sense of humility, understanding that the decisions that they make affect human lives, and they will have to give an account to God for any blood that they shed, or that they fail to avenge.

This may sound irrelevant for our modern culture, but it actually does affect us. Because we are not merely free floating spirits in flesh, nor are we flesh alone, but instead embodied souls, what we do in the body has significance to what we believe in our souls. The ease by which we buy and cook meat can give us a real arrogance and casual view towards life. It is no mistake, that as man becomes more “civilized” the amount of life taken by governments has not gone down, but up. The 20th century alone is responsible for more organized human extermination than all other centuries of human history combined. Even looking at the ease by which abortion or euthanasia can be conducted, we can see that by making human butchery more sterile, we have merely made it more efficient and palatable.

For the purposes of our discussion of recovering from a “flood” in our personal lives, what we can glean from the giving of the law is the need for constant veneration for God and thanksgiving for His provision.

“For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.”

-1 Timothy 4:4-5

Part of the reason why people can't move on after a transition is because they have their eyes fixed on the past. Because of this, they are completely blind to the opportunities that are in front of them. The only way to overcome this hazardous blindness is to develop a practice of thanksgiving in our lives, especially when things are hard. Many in suffering and turmoil don't practice thanksgiving because they don't believe they have anything to be thankful for.

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”

-Philippians 4:8

The apostle Paul wrote this while he was imprisoned by Rome. It would have been easy for him to wallow in self pity and fixate on all the things that he was suffering at the time. Instead he spent his time in prison writing letters to the church, evangelizing the Roman guards, and studying. I'm sure it was a daily temptation for Paul to be submerged beneath waves of despair and self-doubt, but, by disciplining himself to focus on God and His transcendent goodness, Paul was able to maintain order and purpose within his life, even life in prison.

The same was true for Noah and his family. They were thrust into an entirely foreign world with all of their friends and, most of their family members wiped out by the flood, they found solace in the constancy and faithfulness of God. These extreme examples can show us that even in the aftermath of the most cataclysmic transitional periods, the word of God and structures of God remain an ever present hope and source of stability for us to build upon.

The Covenant

“Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” And God

said: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: "I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. "It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; "and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh."

-Genesis 9:11-15

"Covenants" are a very important thing in the Bible, but unfortunately, since this is a term that we don't use too much today we can miss this significance. In essence a covenant is a binding contract enacted by consenting agents. But unlike modern contracts, they rarely had any written components, but were instead acted out, and symbolized in visual ways. You can see this more plainly in passages like Genesis 15, when Abraham enters into a covenant with God through a dramatic ritual in which he cuts in half numerous animals and creates an aisle that he and God would walk through. The symbolism is pretty clear, the severed animals are a vivid image of the commitment level of the covenant. He and God were proclaiming that they would rather be sawn in half than go back on the terms of their agreement.

Other covenants had visual reminders of the agreement, like that of circumcision in the Old Testament or even wearing wedding rings after marriage. But no matter which one you are looking at, these covenants were supposed to be dramatic signs and seals of the agreement that was being made. Throughout the Bible, God increases the importance of the covenants that He makes with His people. In this passage He makes a generic covenant with mankind to not send a world destroying flood, later in Genesis He makes a covenant with Abraham to bless his offering, then He makes a new covenant with Jacob to be the God of his offspring, He then makes that covenant more pronounced in the wilderness of Sinai with Moses and the nation of Israel after they are delivered from Egypt, until He makes His final covenant with man through His Son.

"For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Matthew 26:28

This means that the peace that the Christian has with God is the most complete covenant that God has ever made with His people. And the most amazing thing, is that this covenant was signified, not through a sign in the heavens, but through the blood of the only begotten Son of God. And it wasn't purchased through our mutual faithfulness towards God, but instead through the perfect faithfulness of God towards us that we can access through our faith in Him. This truth should give us amazing assurance of the

peace we have with God, but let's apply this understanding to the covenant that Noah received from God.

In order to provide Noah with assurance, God gives a sign in the heavens for him to look at in the form of the rainbow. This doesn't mean that rainbows didn't exist before this time, only that God is giving Noah a new way to interpret this sign. So why did God choose this sign for Noah? I will give three primary reasons here. The first is fairly obvious and is because a rainbow signifies the end of a storm. The second has to do with the name itself. And finally, the significance comes from what rainbows symbolized to ancient man.

The term "rainbow" actually doesn't appear in this passage, although it is translated that way in English. Instead, the word that God uses here is simply the generic word for "bow", as in an archer's bow. What God is pointing out is that when Noah and his descendants stare at the rainbow, we are to see a picture of God laying down His "arms" towards mankind. He has given us a heavenly sign to show us that He is foregoing His right to judge the evil of man by wiping us out. He does this not because He is ignoring our sin, but instead because He has provided a way for us to have our sins forgiven. And for us that have received this gift through Christ, we can look at the rainbow as a sign of the perfect peace that we now enjoy with God. Which is why appearances of God usually contain a rainbow, like in Ezekiel 1, and Revelation 4. But for those who will not receive this gift, God will eventually take back up His "bow" and He will perfectly judge the sins of man.

The final significance of the rainbow is seen in how ancient man understood the rainbow, which the artist and theologian Matthieu Pageau points out in his book "The Language of Creation":

In the story of the flood, the rainbow symbolizes the covenant between heaven and earth that God communicated to Noah. In this narrative, the rainbow should be interpreted as a bridge between heaven and earth. It should also be seen as a bridge between flooded land and dry land because it appears in moments of transition between rainy and clear weather.

-Matthieu Pageau -The Language of Creation

When ancient man saw the rainbow, they didn't actually see a traditional "bow", but instead a type of "bridge" to the heavens. We see this most pronounced in Norse mythology with what they called the "bifrost", which was a rainbow bridge that connected Asgard to this world. What Matthieu Pageau is pointing out in the above quote is that God also intended this interpretation for Noah and his family. Whenever

Noah, or any of his descendants look up at the rainbow, they are supposed to see the truth that the way to heaven has not been sealed up for us. When the sun peeks out of the clouds and refracts its perfect white light through the water, we are to see the faithfulness of God to shine His manifold goodness down on us, and to be faithful to lead us back to heaven.

Although Noah could have never understood this in his day, this acts as the perfect metaphor for the cross. Just as the sun is covered by the clouds, so Jesus was covered by the grave. And just as the sun is revealed again as the clouds part, so Jesus was revealed as the Son of God through the resurrection and now has taken His place back at the right hand of the Father as the supreme judge of the world. While Noah was able to receive this sign as a beautiful symbol of his covenant with God, we perceive through this symbol the fullness of God's faithfulness to us, and in its beauty we have the confidence to know that there is no tragedy too great for us to recover from.

If God could overcome the greatest obstacle in the universe to bring us back to Him, no obstacle in our lives, no matter how daunting, can prevent us from being faithful to God in our circumstances, and to see His faithfulness towards us in practical ways. This gives the Christian the assurance to rebuild our lives, knowing that we are doing this hard work unto a God who is with us and for us.

"...that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil..."

-Hebrews 6:18-19