

船

Boat... what is it?

Everybody seeks to be happy, and at the end of all the festivity and merriment of the Lunar New Year, we must finally ask ourselves if we are truly happy. True happiness is when we have had refuge in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Ark of our salvation, a refuge that comes about because we have trusted in the work that Jesus Christ has done on the cross, trusted in that He died for your sins.

'Boat' (船)

The word 'boat' (船) comprises three characters, an iconographic record of God's preservation of eight souls - Noah's family - safe in the Ark.

船 = 八 + 口 + 舟
boat eight person craft

Genesis 6:10, 7:1 says, 'And *Noah* begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. ... And Noah went in, and his *sons*, and his *wife*, and his *sons' wives* with him, into the *ark* ...'

From 4,500 years ago, the Chinese script told the story, a silent witness to the Flood event: God's salvation through the earth-destroying Flood was by a *craft* containing Noah's family of *eight persons*. Astonishing! Incredible! Fact is stranger than fiction!

Ark as Refuge

In the earth-destroying Flood everything was swept away when in the seventeenth day of the second month '... all the fountains of the great deep [were] broken up and the windows of heavens were opened' (7:11), and the torrential '... waters which were above the firmament ...' (1:7) came crashing down from above the atmosphere. Nothing could stand in the path of the terrifying deluge; only Noah's Ark came through unscathed, preserved by God's almighty hand.

During the watery judgement, the only place of refuge was within the shelter of the Ark. No mere man could have conceived of the size and structure of the Ark. The dimensions dictated by God to Noah resulted in the construction of a craft with sufficient room to house and keep alive the thousands of kinds of air-breathing creatures during the Flood. Consider how big the Ark was. It had a total floor space of approximately 8,900 square meters. This would be equivalent to 80 five-room HDB apartments! A whole point block! The Ark was thus not a small family-sized boat for Noah and his family, but a large sea-worthy vessel, the size of a large Star Cruise ship. Thank God for the Ark, and thank God for Noah's obedience in the building of the enormous ten-thousand-ton boat.

But wait a minute, you may say. Isn't 几 the character for 'some'? That is different from the character for 'eight' (八). These are the words 'boat' from the time period between 1100-207 BC, indicating that the character for 'eight' (八) evolved into the current structure of 几.



Jesus as Refuge

Just as the shelter of the Ark was the only place of refuge during the watery judgement, Jesus Christ is our only refuge from God's just wrath. He is our Ark of salvation.

We are subject to the wrath of God as sinners. God is holy and will not tolerate sin. He is righteous and hence must punish sin. Before the all-seeing God, we are all condemned.¹ This condemnation is to die physically and spiritually, here on earth and then in hell - a death with weeping and gnashing of teeth, a death of everlasting torture in the Lake of Fire.²

How are we to escape this great terror? Christ has fulfilled the justice of God on our behalf by paying the penalty for sin with His blood. In trusting in the work that Jesus Christ has done on the cross, trusting in that He died for your sins, you have a refuge from God's wrath. Charles Wesley wrote in a hymn, 'Other refuge have I none, Hangs my helpless soul on Thee.' In another hymn, *How Firm a Foundation*, it says, 'What more can He say than to you He hath said - To you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?' In yet another hymn, *He Hideth My Soul*, it says, 'He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock.'

We also remember the way in which the eighteenth-century preacher and songwriter Augustus Toplady handled it in what has since become one of the best-known hymns in our language - *Rock of Ages*. Like the writers of the three songs we saw earlier, Toplady praised the same reality when he prayed,

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.

Have you had a refuge from the just wrath of God in God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you 'in Him'? Are you protected in the cleft of that Rock? It is far more important for you to discover that refuge than to escape your earthly enemies.

If you do not have a refuge from God's just wrath in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray that you would discover that refuge by the end of this day.

Red for Happiness!

This red packet contains no money but something far more valuable - the message of salvation. The red of the packet may be likened to the crimson blood of Christ, shed to purchase the eternal happiness of sinners.

May you be a new creature, with a new life in Christ this Lunar New Year!

Blessed Lunar New Year

1. *John 3:16-18*

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

2. *Revelation 20:13-15*

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

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