

## **SERMON: THE OLD SHIP OF ZION**

### **Genesis 8: 1-4**

**(1) And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth and the waters assuaged; (2) The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; (3) And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of hundred and fifty days the waters were abated. (4) And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.**

### **Introduction**

It has been said repeatedly that the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. Some say, you can find Jesus and His saving blood on every page of the Old Testament. This is found through the study of types and foreshadows of our Savior. A type is a person, object, or event that precedes a similar, greater person, object, or event. For example, if you had a picture of someone before you met them in person, the picture would have been a type of the person. A blue print of a building is a type of the physical building. A musical score is a type of the actual performance of the music. If you were to stand with the sun at your back, your shadow would physically be in front of you. A human shadow around a corner can be a visual alert that someone is coming toward you-hopefully a friend. The types and foreshadows in the Old Testament were to alert us- in a positive way- of the coming of our Savior.

Noah's ark is a type or foreshadow of the church. Our fore-parents realized this without question. Now let's talk about our fore-parents. Those that survived the Middle Passage had hopes that one day another big ship would come and take them back to Africa. Even abolitionists advocated this, but could not make it a reality. After several generations of living in America, the idea of returning to Africa to live was abandoned. In spite of the racism, America was now their home. They called the church the Old Ship of Zion. It would take them, not back to Africa, but to heaven to live with the Lord. They employed "voice merging" and created a theological quilt as they saw the church, the Old Ship of Zion, very similar to Noah's ark. To them, the church provided the same assurance and safety that the ark provided for Noah and his family. As we celebrate one hundred fifty-two years of Antioch-Lithonia's existence, let's remember that everything true about Noah's ark is true about the church, The Old Ship of Zion. Let's explore.

## **Exposition**

**1. The Ark Was Built According To Divine Specifications.**

**2. The Ark Required Much Sacrifice In Its Construction.**

**3. The Ark Saved Everyone On Board.**

**4. The Ark Landed On High Ground.**

## **Closing Thoughts**

I will close with excerpts from the well-known spiritual.

“Tis the old Ship of Zion, Tis the old Ship of Zion,  
Get on Board, Get on board.

There’s no danger in God’s water, There’s no danger in God’s water,  
Get on board, Get on board.

She has landed many-a thousand, She has landed many-a thousand,  
Get on board, Get on board.

King Jesus is the Captain, King Jesus is the Captain,  
Get on board, Get on board.”

Give God Glory! Give God All The Glory!

## **End Note**

The songs of our fore-parents, like *The Old Ship of Zion*, came from their experiences. There is another song that comes to mind: *If I Have My Ticket, Lord, Can I Ride?* I tell everyone it’s great to sing spirituals and other traditional genres, but please understand the social context out of which they emerged. Most of the time it “ain’t” pretty, but “the truth is the truth.” During the era of segregation, there was a white section and a colored section on trains and buses. If the white section overflowed because of overbooking or last minute requests, then some of the colored section was taken to accommodate the white passenger or passengers. Even if the ticket had been purchased well in advance, the black passengers could still get bumped to accommodate the white passenger or passengers. A black person could miss an important event such as a wedding, a funeral, a graduation, or the inaugural sermon of a family member because they got bumped. Remember, trains and buses did not run as frequently as they do now. It could be another week or several days before the train or bus went to the desired destination. To make matters worse, blacks could not sit on the same row with a white person, so the white passenger could be sitting by adjacent empty seats. To sit on the same row was a sign of equality. Let’s get this straight; the black passengers with a ticket got

bumped so a white passenger could ride and the seat the white person was occupying was adjacent to empty seats. Back to the song, which is a rhetorical question: Lord, if I have my ticket can I ride? In other words, will I get bumped? The answer is clear. You may ride; you will never get bumped. The ticket is salvation by the blood of Jesus. The fare has already been paid. Please get on board the Old Ship of Zion. You will never have to worry about getting bumped. Once saved, always saved!