

THE ARK, A TYPE OF CHRIST

"Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch." Genesis 6:14.

Noah was one of the most remarkable men in the world's history. Of him we read in the Word, "Noah walked with God." Genesis 6:9. He is one of two men of whom this statement is recorded. It implies both friendship and fellowship. And he walked in this manner at a time when the world was exceedingly corrupt. God's revelation was despised and rejected. His repeated warnings were flouted. Men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. And God had forewarned the people that His Spirit would not always strive with man.

It certainly required courage for Noah to walk with God in the environment in which he lived. Because of his devotion to Him, God told Noah what He was going to do. And Noah was the only one who received this advance information as to the divine intention. God told Noah that the earth had become so corrupt, so full of violence, and so sodden with evil that necessity dictated its final destruction. He had decided that the best way to deal with this hideous and rampant wickedness was to sweep it away. Thus, as God's Word says, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Noah, being a man with an implicit faith, believed that there was to be a great flood just because God had said there would be.

Having revealed to Noah His purpose, God commanded him to build an ark. He said, "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch." Genesis 6:14. Promptly and faithfully Noah followed the instructions which God gave him. He did not make any suggestions to God as to how to improve the ark or how the world might be saved in a better manner. He simply did as God commanded him. Concerning his thorough obedience we read, "And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him." Genesis 7:5.

It is encouraging and inspiring to observe his ready obedience and minute performance of every command of God in the construction of the ark, in spite of all the artillery of sarcasm and ridicule which was turned upon him. Fun was poked at him and his ark. He was probably the most laughed-at man of his generation. Perhaps some may have called him "the most absurd visionary in the history of Mesopotamia." No doubt many referred to his ship as "Noah's Folly." In spite of the shower of fun, sarcasm and ridicule which fell upon his head, he worked faithfully at his task and built the ark. In his prompt and meticulous obedience we have one of the greatest examples of faith recorded in the Bible.

When Noah told his people that a flood was coming, they laughed at him. They said that they did not see any signs of a flood. They contended that they were going to do as they pleased, and would not permit anybody to interfere with them. They inquired, "Where is God? We do not see Him. Where is His anger? We do not see it. You must be going crazy." To Noah, however, only one thing mattered, and that was the doing of God's will.

When Noah had completed the ark, many came to look, to wonder and to laugh. One beautiful day, when there was not a cloud in the sky as big as a man's hand, God called to Noah and said, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." Genesis 7:1. No greater test of a man's faith can be imagined. When he walked into the ark that day he was the laughing stock of the world. They made fun of him for taking the animals into the ark, along with the members of his immediate family. Such loyal unswerving obedience should be an inspiration to every child of God today.

Surely Noah felt sad at heart that not a single person, outside his own family, to whom he had preached so faithfully and earnestly, had heeded his warning and entered the ark with him. But Noah was safe because he had entered the ark and the Lord had shut the door behind him.

The ark, which was built by Noah according to divine directions, in which he and his house, together with representatives from the lower creation, found shelter from the storm of God's wrath, is one of the clearest and most comprehensive types of the believer's salvation in Christ which is to be found in all the Scriptures.

What are some of the things about the ark which make it a marvelous type of Christ?

I. The Ark Was Divinely Planned.

God did not leave anything to human devising. He knew exactly what was needed and what would be adequate to survive the floodtide of judgment that was to strike the earth. God told Noah to make an ark of gopher wood. After giving him the command, God revealed His plan to His servant. He said, "And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of." Genesis 6:15.

II. The Ark Was Divinely Provided.

Before the ark was constructed or the flood came, there existed in the mind of God a means of escape for His people. He did not provide an ark after the waters had begun to descent.

Neither was the Saviourship of Christ an afterthought of God, when sin had blighted His creation. The plan of redemption was conceived in heaven and not upon the earth. Christ's coming was in accord with the will of the Father. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

It is significant that the ark was not built out of iron. It was not made of steel like the modern "dreadnoughts," but of wood. The truth which this fact is designed to teach is that life comes out of death, that life can be secured only by sacrifice. Before the ark could be made, trees had to be cut down and fashioned into the construction of it. Even so, before sinners could be saved, Christ had to be sacrificed. "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8.

III. The Ark Was A Refuge.

Three arks are mentioned in the Bible. Each of them was a shelter and a place of safety. The ark of Noah was a refuge for those who were in it from the out-poured wrath of God. The ark of bulrushes (Exodus 2:3) protected the young Moses from the murderous designs of Pharaoh, who was a type of Satan. The ark of the covenant sheltered the two tablets of stone on which were inscribed the holy law of God. The ark of Noah was prepared for all who would enter it for refuge.

IV. The Ark Was A Safe Refuge.

Noah was commanded to make an ark of the best wood, gopher; and, lest there should be a leak in it, he was commanded to "pitch it within and without with pitch." There was never any sign of a leak about it. It was a perfect shelter. No matter how hard it rained or how high the waters rose, all inside the ark were safe. Noah did not have to take care of himself, after he had entered the ark. God was responsible for his preservation.

As Noah was in the ark, so the Christian is "hid with Christ in God." Collossians 3:3. So it is with those who have fled to Christ for refuge, they are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." I Peter 1:5.

Just as none perished in the flood who had entered the ark, so none who are in Christ Jesus will ever be lost. Those who are in Christ are sheltered safely from every storm. They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hands. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1.

V. The Ark Was The Only Refuge.

It was the only place of safety against oncoming judgment. The flood waters could not touch those who were in the ark. Every living creature was involved in one common doom, except those who were preserved alive in the ark. Not only was the ark God's provision for a condemned world, but it was His only provision. Some people have the mistaken idea that there are a number of ways to be saved. Some think it does not make any difference what you believe just so you are sincere. But God has never promised to save anybody because of his sincerity. It is the great atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross that protects against the flood of divine judgment. Nothing less will do. Souls are safe only as they depend on the efficacy of Christ's atoning blood. Just as there was no other means of deliverance from the flood except the ark, so there is no plan of salvation except by Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of sinners. "In Christ" is the only safe place for any soul. Everyone outside of Christ is going to hell.

VI. The Ark Had One Door Only.

There was only one door into the ark, and all who escaped from drowning in the flood entered that door. Even so, there is only one way of escape from eternal death, one way of deliverance from the wrath to come, one entrance into heaven. Concerning it, Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." John 14:6. Just as one had to enter the door of the ark in order to escape the flood, so one has to be in Christ in order to escape hell.

VII. Multitudes Refused To Enter The Only Door.

The time came when it was too late for anybody to enter the ark. And all who refused to enter perished. "And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth; and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark." Genesis 7:21-23.

What a pity that multitudes today refuse to accept Christ, who is the only safe and adequate refuge for the souls of men! Since He is the only Saviour, believe on Him and thou shalt be saved now. The time is coming when it will be too late for you to accept Him and be saved. He loves you and longs to save you; then, let Him do so now.