

'IN THE BEGINNING'

(The Origins of Everything Coming to Pass in These Last Days)

Studies in Genesis 1-11

'The Love Boat'

(Comparisons of being 'in the ark' and being 'in Christ')

Noah's ark was a *one of a kind* ship. Nothing like it has ever been built by man. There's really no need to construct such a vessel ever again. It was huge – 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high! Without portholes or decks with swimming pools, water slides, jogging paths, and lounge chairs, it was no luxury cruise ship for pleasure and enjoyment. Nor were there military weapons like a battleship would have. It wasn't even built to carry cargo like a container ship. The ark had one purpose – survival!

According to the Scriptures, Noah's orders from God were to build a huge barge-like vessel without sails, rudders, or any of the amenities of usual ships. Inside were 3 levels for animals of every kind, food supplies for them and Noah's family to last a little more than a year at sea. It had to be super sturdy to endure the pounding 40-day downpour from above and 40 days and nights of explosive upheaval geysers from below. God's plan was simple – hundreds of *spaces* (literally '*nests*') for all the different sized creatures, one opening at the roof for light and ventilation, one door in the ark's side and water-proofing *pitch* (*tar-like substance*) inside and out to seal the ark from any seepage.

Every part had theological meaning as well as practical function. To be in the ark was to be in the only safe place on earth from God's storm of judgment, just like being '*in Christ*' for true followers of Christ, is the only place of safety from the coming wrath of God. But the ark itself was a doctrinal study to ponder then and now, for passengers blessed to be a voyage of God to a fresh, new world order.

The 3 interior floors of the ark remind us that Christ was '*the fullness of God*' (**Colossians 1:19, 2:9**), and that being '*in Christ*' is to belong to the Triune Persons of God – The Father '*calls*' us to come to Christ (**Ephesians 1:4**); the Son's crucifixion paid our debt (**Ephesians 1:5-7**) and the Holy Spirit '*seals*' us '*til the day of redemption*' (**Ephesians 1:13-14**). The single opening at the top, looked out and up toward God the Father in heaven, away from the death and devastation of the world below (**Colossians 3:1-2**). The one door pictured Jesus as the '*one way of entry*' into salvation (**John 10:9, 14:6**). The voyage was a one-year theological experience of faith and growing in grace:

***"By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen
moved with godly fear prepared an ark for the saving of his household,
by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness
which is according to faith" (Hebrews 11:7).***

In New Testament times, we Christians are blessed to compare the rescue ship, *Noah's Ark*, with the spiritual rescue vessel of *The Body of Christ* in these days before the coming global wrath of God storm, called the Tribulation Period (**2 Peter 3:7-15**). As the worst ever thunder storm lashing the ark with waves pounding its sides with vengeance, all aboard the ark could *rest* (*meaning of Noah's name*) assured they were safe and secure from the wrath of God outside. Similarly, Christians in these last days, before God's wrath again blasts the earth with Tribulation judgments, can feel peace and calm '*in Christ*', as the Tribulation storm clouds gather.

It would do Christians well to also remember that the modern-day ark of deliverance '*in Christ*' is not a pleasure cruise liner, full of entertainment, relaxation, and leisure on the way to heaven. It is a spiritual rescue ship for souls we need to encourage to *come aboard* while there's still time. It isn't a cargo ship to load up with all the earthly material possessions we can acquire. God's *S.S. Body of Christ* is a rescue vessel to save lost souls drifting hopelessly toward a Christ-less eternity. Christ, the Captain of our faith, is calling '*all hands on deck*'! We are now sailing into the tempest tossed days prior to the coming Tribulation. It's time to be busy winning souls to the Savior, serving with all our strength and pondering the wonderful spiritual features of this tremendous vessel of salvation '*the Body of Christ*' (**Ephesians 1:22-23**). **PtL**

Under-Water World (God's Rescue Vessel to His New World Order) Genesis 7-9

'The Ark' (Pictures of Christ)

"Then the LORD said to Noah, "Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that **you are righteous before Me in this generation**. You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female ... to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth. For after seven more days, I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made. And Noah did according to all that the LORD commanded him. Noah was 600 years old when the floodwaters were on the earth." So Noah, with his sons, his wife and his sons' wives went into the ark because of the waters of the flood." 7:1-7

- Discuss the spiritual similarities of 'being in Christ' to being physically on the ark.
- Why was Noah 'righteous' before God? Why was this beneficial to his family?
- Share lessons for believers in these last days prior to the end of the Church Age?

'The Flood' (Pictures of Judgment)

"...all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights. On the very same day Noah and Noah's sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, they and every beast after its kind ... And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two of all flesh in which is the breath of life. So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him and the LORD shut him in. The flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased, lifted up the ark and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed (22 feet) upward and the mountains were covered." 7:11-20

"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 ... the rain from heaven was restrained. And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the 150 days the waters decreased. Then the ark rested in the seventh month the seventeenth day of the month on the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the 10th month...the tops of the mountains were seen. So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made." 8:1-6

The global flood will be repeated with a 7-year global tribulation after the rapture.

- What do you think those on the ark did for that 'over a year' confinement period?
- The 'body of Christ' will still be the only safe place during the Tribulation.
- What hope is there for unbelievers who refuse to repent and trust Christ now?
 - What is the danger in waiting too long to be saved (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12)?

'The Rainbow' (Pictures of Covenant)

"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. While the earth remains: seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, day and night will not cease... And God said: "This will be 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..." 8:20-9:17

- Talk about the new word God uses after the flood 'covenant'. Why is it so special?
- When Noah, his family and all the animals left the ark, it was the start of a whole new world order, just like the Millennial Kingdom after the coming Tribulation era. Not only was it a whole new world, the passengers were different too and ready to start over again at living for God and righteousness in the world.
- How is this like us after we have been through challenging times and stormy seasons in our life?

Some day in the Millennial Kingdom we will be part of God's new world order.

- How will some of the tests and trials of being a Christian in a fallen world be helpful then?