

Noah and the Ark

NOAH

As far as spiritual representation and significance is concerned, among those who took God's way of life, Noah was the continuation of Enoch. Just as Enoch walked and lived with God, so also did Noah (**Gen. 6:8-9**). However, Noah took a further step—he worked with God to build the ark according to God's revelation for the preserving of the purified human race and the various living things on earth that God intended to keep (**Gen. 6:14-16, 19, 21-22**).

- **Gen.6: 9** These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generations; and Noah walked with God.
- **Gen. 6:14-16, 19, 21-22** (14) Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make rooms in the ark and shall cover it within and without with pitch. (15) And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. (16) You shall make an opening for light for the ark, and you shall finish it up to a cubit from the top; and you shall put the entrance of the ark in its side; you shall make it with lower, second, and third stories. (19) And of every living thing, of all flesh, two of every kind you shall bring into the ark to preserve them alive with you; they shall be male and female. (21) And for your part, take some of every kind of food that is edible, and gather it to yourself, and it will be for food for you and for them. (22) And Noah did this; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.

Inheriting Spiritual Blessings from His Forefathers to Maintain and Extend God's Way of Redemption and Life

Noah was born into the human race that was corrupt to the uttermost, and he lived among that race. At that time, men abused their fallen bodies and became flesh. They were full of lusts (**Gen. 6:3a, 5**). As a result, the fallen angels joined themselves to man through illegal marriage, so that the human race was no longer pure but became a mixture of the human nature with fallen spirits (**Gen. 6:2, 4**). That was the most evil thing in the eyes of God, and He could not tolerate it. But Noah found grace in the eyes of God (**Gen. 6:8**). Born into a godly family (cf. **Gen. 5:4-29**), he inherited the spiritual blessings from his forefathers and took God's way of redemption and life, including Adam's way of salvation, Abel's way of offering, Enosh's way of calling, and Enoch's way of walking with God. Moreover, by faith he became a righteous man in God's eyes and a perfect man who walked with God in that generation (**Heb.11:7; Gen. 6:9**). Therefore, he maintained and extended God's way of life so that God could carry out His plan on the corrupted earth according to His desire.

- **Gen. 6:3a, 5** (3a) And Jehovah said, My Spirit will not strive with man forever, for he indeed is flesh...(5) And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
- **Gen. 6:2, 4** (2) The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair; and they took wives for themselves from all whom they chose. (4) The Nephilim were on the earth in those days - and also afterward - when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they gave birth to children to them; these were the mighty men who were of old the men of renown.
- **Gen. 6:8** But Noah found favor in the sight of Jehovah.
- **Gen. 5:4,6,9,12,15,18,21,25,28-29** (4) And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years, and he begot more sons and daughters. (6) And Seth lived one hundred five years and begot Enosh. (9) And Enosh lived ninety years and begot Kenan. (12) And Kenan lived seventy years and begot Mahalalel. (15) And Mahalalel lived sixty-five years and begot Jared. (18) And Jared lived a hundred sixty-two years and begot Enoch. (21) And Enoch lived sixty-five years and begot Methuselah. (25) And Methuselah lived one hundred eighty-seven years and begot Lamech. (28) And Lamech lived a hundred eighty-two years and begot a son. (29) And he called his name Noah, saying, This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands, which come because of the ground which Jehovah has cursed.
- **Heb. 11:7** By faith Noah, having been divinely instructed concerning things not yet seen *and* being moved by pious fear, prepared an ark for the salvation of his house, through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.
- **Gen.6:9** These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generations; and Noah walked with God.

Working with God to Accomplish the Salvation That Was Being Carried Out by God

At a time when people on earth were corrupted to the uttermost, God was still able to find Noah, one who took His way of life, to cooperate and work with Him for the accomplishing of the salvation that was being carried out by Him for those who took His way of redemption and life. The ark, which Noah built by working with God and into which he entered, signifies God's salvation. Noah was saved before he began to build the ark, but he still needed to be saved further, from that corrupted world. The ark that he built terminated the old age and ushered in a new age. That ark was the salvation that Noah built, which saved him not only from God's judgment but also from that crooked and perverted generation. This corresponds with **Philippians 2:12-16**, where Paul said, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure....that you may become blameless and guileless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation." This kind of salvation not only is prepared by God, but also is worked out by those who take God's way of redemption and life, through their cooperation with God.

Becoming the Representative of All Those Who Work with God

Noah built the ark for God at God's command and according to God's revelation. This shows that in order for God to work on the earth according to His economy, He must gain some who will walk and live with Him and who will cooperate, coordinate, and work with Him on the earth. As the mighty God (**Isa.9:6**), He alone completed the work of creation, for He spoke, and it was done, and He commanded, and it stood fast (**Psa. 33:9**). However, for the carrying out of the work of building, He must gain some who will work with Him. The principle is the same in God's building of the tabernacle, in His building of the temple, and in His recovering of the temple. In building the tabernacle, God found Moses to cooperate with Him (**Exo. 25:1, 8-9**); in building the temple, He found David and Solomon to coordinate with Him (**1Chron. 28:2; 2Chron. 3:1-2**); and in recovering the temple, He found Zerubbabel and Jeshua to work with Him (**Ezra 3:8**). In the New Testament age, it is the same with the building of the church. God must find those who will walk and live with Him, such as the apostles, to coordinate and work with Him (**1Cor. 3:9; 2Cor. 6:1**). It is only in this way that His divine building can be accomplished. Therefore, Noah too is a model in God's way of life. He represents all those who walk and live with God, who are found by God to work with Him on the earth, and through whom God may carry out the salvation that will accomplish His economy.

- **Isa.9:6** For a child is born to us, A son is given to us; And the government is upon His shoulder; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.
- **Psa.33:9** For He spoke, and it was; He commanded, and it stood.
- **Exo.25:1,8-9** (1) Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, (8) And let them make a sanctuary for Me that I may dwell in their midst. (9) According to all that I show you, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its utensils, even so you shall make it.
- **1Chron.28:2** And David the king rose to his feet and said, Hear me, my brothers and my people: I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah and for the footstool of our God, and I prepared materials for building it.
- **2Chron.3:1-2** And Solomon began to build the house of Jehovah in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where He had appeared to David his father, at the place that David prepared, on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And he began to build on the second day of the second month in the fourth year of his reign.
- **Ezra 3:8** Now in the second year after they came to the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak and the rest of their brothers, the priests and the Levites, and all those who came out of captivity to Jerusalem began by appointing the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to have oversight over the work of the house of Jehovah.
- **1Cor. 3:9** For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's cultivated land, God's building.
- **2Cor.6:1** And working together with *Him*, we also entreat you not to receive the grace of God in vain;

Representative of Those Who Become Loose and Thereby Falling into Evil after Receiving God's Blessing

After the flood God made a covenant with Noah, promising that He would never again destroy the earth by a flood, that the earth would remain to supply man's need, and that Noah's whole family would live on the earth peacefully (**Gen. 8:20-22, 9:1-2, 9**). Noah experienced great success and became the leader on the new land and the father of all mankind. Under such a blessing from God, Noah was at ease and became loose. He began to be a farmer and planted a vineyard (**Gen.9:20**) to produce grapes, from which he would make wine. Then, because of his drunkenness he became naked within his tent (**Gen.9:21**) and lost his covering in the eyes of God. His son Ham saw this and told his two brothers outside (**Gen.9:22**). Because Ham exposed the failure of the head of the family and the leader of mankind, he and his descendants received the curse (**Gen.9:24-25, cf. v. 18**). Out of Ham's cursed descendants men like Nimrod were produced (**Gen.10:6-9**). The tragic result was that they fell into all kinds of evil, such as rebellion against God, opposition to God, and the bringing in of idols. This matter is a negative model, signifying that throughout the ages those who seek after God and take God's way often become loose and thereby fall into evil after receiving God's blessing. What Solomon did in his old age is a strong example of this. When he was young, he was the wisest of all men, he built the temple, and he had great honor and glory. Yet in his old age he succumbed to the temptations of his Gentile wives to such an extent that he followed after other gods and built high

places, provoking God to anger. This eventually created the tragedy of division and confusion among God's people and led to the fall of their nation and to their captivity in a Gentile land.

- **Gen. 8:20-22, 9:1-2, 9** (8:20) And Noah built an altar to Jehovah and took of every clean beast and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. (21) And Jehovah smelled the satisfying fragrance; and Jehovah said in His heart, I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I ever again smite everything living as I have done. (22) Throughout all the days that earth remains, Seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, And summer and winter, and day and night Shall not cease. (9:1) And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. (2) And the fear of you and the terror of you shall be upon every animal of the earth and upon every bird of heaven, on everything that creeps on the ground and on all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered. (9) And I Myself now establish My covenant with you and with your seed after you
- **Gen. 9:20-22** And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. And he drank of the wine and became drunk. And he uncovered himself inside his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside.
- **Gen. 9:24-25, cf. v. 18** (24) And Noah awoke from his wine and learned what his youngest son had done to him. (25) And he said, Cursed be Canaan: A servant of servants Shall he be to his brothers. (18) Now the sons of Noah who came forth from the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan.
- **Gen. 10:6-9** And the sons of Ham: Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan. And the sons of Cush: Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabtechah. And the sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan. And Cush begot Nimrod: He began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before Jehovah; therefore it is said, Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before Jehovah.

THE ARK

The Ark Built by Noah Being in Contrast to the City Built by Cain

Before He destroyed the entire human race, which was corrupted to the uttermost in the godless culture invented by Cain and his descendants, God gave a revelation to Noah. In that revelation He told Noah to build an ark for Him so that He might carry out His salvation for the preserving of mankind and all the living things that He intended to keep. The ark that God wanted Noah to build was in contrast to the city that Cain built for self-preservation. The city was built by Cain himself for self-preservation, because man had lost God and all the blessings that come from Him, had taken the way of death, and had completely lost his sense of security. But the ark, which Noah built by working with God, was for the accomplishing of God's salvation in His economy, because man possessed God and the spiritual blessings that come from Him, took God's way of redemption and life, and walked and lived with God. The city Cain built could protect him and his descendants, but it could not safeguard them from God's judgment, which would destroy mankind and the whole earth. However, the ark was able to save Noah and his whole family out of God's judgment.

The Building of the Ark Signifying the Building of Christ

The ark, which God revealed to Noah that he was to build, is a type of Christ (**1Pet.3:20-21**). The spiritual implication of this is that if anyone walks, lives, and works with God, whatever he does must be, in principle, the building of Christ. The tabernacle built by Moses, the temple built by Solomon, and the temple recovered by Zerubbabel and Jeshua, also are types of Christ. Therefore, the work that they did in coordination with God was, in principle, the building of Christ, whom God intends to build in His economy. In particular, the church that is being built today by those who work together with God is the practical building of Christ, that is, the building of Christ's Body as God's habitation (**Eph.4:12; 2:22**), with the essence and element of Christ's riches as the building material. This building is also the working of Christ into people to build them together by Christ that they may become God's manifestation in the flesh (**1Tim.3:15-16**).

- **1Pet.3:20-21** Who had formerly disobeyed when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared; *entering* into which, a few, that is, eight souls, were brought safely through by water. Which *water*, as the antitype, also now saves you, *that is*, baptism, not a putting away of the filth of the flesh but the appeal of a good conscience unto God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
- **Eph. 4:12** For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ.
- **Eph. 2:22** In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
- **1Tim.3:15-16** But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth, And confessedly, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angles, Preached among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

C. The Ark Being a Symbol of the Salvation Accomplished in God's Economy

The city built by Cain is a symbol of the godless culture invented by fallen men who are far away from God, whereas the ark built by Noah is a symbol of the salvation accomplished in God's economy. The city in the godless culture caused man to suffer God's destruction, whereas the ark in the salvation in God's economy caused man to be preserved by God. Even among the people on earth today, these two things are still in contrast to one another and are still going on. Those who refuse to take God's way of redemption and choose the way of death are building the city in the godless culture, which will be consummated in Babylon the Great (**Rev.18:2**) and eventually will be consumed and completely destroyed by the burning fire (**Rev.18:8, 21**). But those who take God's way of redemption and life are building Christ, who is in the salvation in God's economy, and their building work will ultimately be consummated in the New Jerusalem (**Rev.21:2**), which is the mingling of the Triune God with His redeemed ones. Such a building is mysterious, divine, and glorious, and it will remain for eternity.

- **Rev. 18:2,8,21** (2) And He cried with a strong voice, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great! And she has become a dwelling place of demons and a hold of every unclean spirit and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird; (8) Therefore in one day her plagues will come, death and sorrow and famine, and she will be utterly burned with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong. (21) And a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, Thus will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence and shall be found no more at all.
- **Rev. 21:2** And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

QUESTIONS

1. Briefly describe how Noah inherited the spiritual blessings from his forefathers.
2. Briefly describe how Noah became the representative of all those who work with God.
3. Why did Noah fail after receiving God's blessings, thereby causing his descendants to fall into evil?
4. How was the city built by Cain in contrast with the ark built by Noah?
5. Briefly state the significance of the building of the ark.
6. Briefly describe how the ark is a symbol of the salvation accomplished in God's economy.