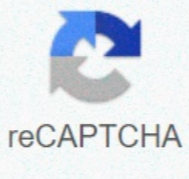




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## As it was in the days of noah scripture

After God finished giving Noah the instructions about the ark, the animals, and the food, it says: "Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him" (6:22). Then, Methuselah died! Now it doesn't say that here but that's what happened. Do the math - it works! Methuselah was 969 years old when he died. He was 187 years old when Lamech was born (5:25). Lamech was 182 years old when Noah was born (5:28). Noah was 500 years old by the time Shem, Ham, and Japheth were born (5:32). And 100 years after that, when Noah was 600 years old (7:6), came the flood. Thus, 187+182+500 +100 = 969 years. Methuselah was 969 years old - the oldest man who had ever lived. Perhaps the people thought Methuselah would never die and neither would they. Perhaps they thought that if he lived that long so would they. Perhaps they were putting their trust in the latest breakthroughs in medical science. Perhaps they counted on their inventions, their technical abilities, their scientific breakthroughs - I don't know. But I do know that just when Noah did all that God commanded him, Methuselah died! "What's so significant about that?" you ask. Well, Methuselah's name means, "When he dies, it shall come." His name spelled it all out. For 969 years, his name and his life had witnessed to some sort of impending catastrophic event. "When he dies, it shall come" - and he died. "Now what?" they must have surely wondered. "What will come?" Or, perhaps they just passed off Methuselah's death as old age; "After all, no one lives forever. It happens to the best of us." Methuselah's funeral must have been quite something. Perhaps Noah preached Methuselah's funeral message. You can imagine what he might have said: "Ladies and gentlemen, Methuselah is dead! Methuselah's name means, 'When he dies, it shall come.' So, the time has come, just as I have been telling you now for 120 years. The time has come; the flood is coming and the ark is ready. Enter the ark now so that you are safe." But nobody responded. No one believed him except his family. I can hear the response from the crowd as they jeered and hooted and ridiculed him. "What do you mean, judgement is coming? Anyway, just exactly what is 'rain'? You've never seen it: we've never seen it. There has never been any rain ever! So, who are you to tell us that a flood is coming?" So nobody responded to Noah's invitation that day. The subject of this sermon is: God's plan of salvation. And its thesis is that there is a finality to God's plan of salvation. God has always had a plan of salvation, a way of escape from his coming judgement. He did so in Noah's day of violence and corruption and he does so in our day. Just as it was universally available then, so it is universally available now. Just as God had a plan of salvation then, so he does today. God's plan of salvation for Noah was the ark. God's plan of salvation for us today is the sacrifice of Christ. And just as God's plan of salvation had a finality to it then, so his plan of salvation has a finality to it today. 1. God's Plan Includes A Final Invitation (7:1). Finally the time had come. Everything was ready - the ark, the birds and animals, the food. Noah's faithful preaching was complete. He had warned of coming judgement and he had offered full and free salvation. And now God issues his final invitation: "Then the Lord said to Noah, 'Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation'" (7:1). This is the same invitation God offers today - escape for your life; flee to Christ for security and safety; in him you have shelter from coming judgement. It takes a step of faith for the salvation God offers to be yours. You must respond in faith to the invitation to come into safety. One day the final invitation will be sounded for the last time, just as it did in Noah's day. "Come for all things are now ready" (Lk. 14:17). God's plan includes a final invitation. And... 2. God's Plan Includes A Final Instruction (7:2-4). "1The the Lord said to Noah... 2 Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, 3 and seven pairs of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. 4 For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground" (7:2-4). This seems to be a supplemental instruction to 6:19. There Noah was instructed to bring pairs of every living thing. Now, in addition to the pairs, he was to bring in clean animals in sevens. We're not going to have time to cover chapters 8 and 9, but in 9:20 Noah built an altar and offered a burnt offering there. That's what these clean animals must have been for. This scene is somewhat reflective of Gen. 2:19, where the animals were brought by God before Adam, the first head of the human race, for him to name them. Now they come before Noah, the second head of a redeemed race, not to be named but to be preserved. God's plan includes a final invitation, a final instruction, and... 3. God's Plan Includes A Final Response (7:5-9). Noah responded in faith and obedience. "Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him" (7:5). He not only trusted God, he also obeyed. His obedience was evidence of his faith - evidence to his household and to his society. And there was no doubt in his mind about it - "Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him" (7:5). So, for the next 7 days, according to 7:4, Noah and his family and all the animals and birds and cargo were loaded onto the ark (7:7-9). Can you imagine what those 7 days were like? For Noah those 7 days were the fulfillment of a life's work. This was it! What he had been predicting for many years was about to happen. But for the people, who had listened to Noah's message all those years, what were those 7 days like when they saw the animals filing into the ark, when they saw Noah's family enter the ark, when they saw Noah practicing what he had been preaching? Did they suddenly reconsider? No! Did they say, "Noah actually believes what he said. He must not be a false prophet or a con man?" No! Did they join Noah and his family, just in case it was true that a flood was coming? No! Undoubtedly the mockers of that society worked overtime despite the fact that God was giving them one last chance, seven more days to respond. The cynics probably said, "Don't be deceived. It's all a hoax. All things will continue as they have from the beginning." The jokers probably laughed and jeered, like so many today. People laugh and jeer at spiritual matters. They give no thought to tomorrow. They don't care about the future. They just live for today. They give no thought of God or coming judgement. They don't think there will ever be an end to the world. And they laugh and jeer at those who tell them the truth. Years ago I used to do some street preaching at the four corners of Parry Sound (a small town in northern Ontario) and also in Toronto at Queen's Park. People used to laugh and jeer. Passing cars used to honk their horns and squeal their tires. I'm sure it was the same in Noah's day (well, perhaps not the squealing tires!). Noah responded in faith and obedience but what about the people? This was their final opportunity to also respond in faith and obedience. But would they? Would they believe? Would they believe that Noah was telling them the truth? After all, history is littered with false doomsday prophets. Would they believe that it was going to rain? After all, they had never experience rain before - they didn't know what it looked like or felt like. Would they believe that the rain would cause a flood and that every air breathing creature that was not in the ark would drown? After all, what's a little rain? Can it really be that bad? Anyway, is it possible to literally flood the entire earth? Would they believe that the ark was able and sufficient to hold them all and to protect them throughout the flood? After all, that's a lot of animals! Would they believe that God's covenant with Noah would be fulfilled and that God would and could keep his word? After all, they had probably heard many promises before from false prophets. Noah had built the ark and preached to his doomed generation that they could escape God's coming judgement by simply entering the ark. And God still warns the world through his people today. He still issues a word of prophecy. He still extends an invitation. He still gives signs that his word is true. Signs of the times are all around and yet people still do not heed the warning, despite the fact that so many people today are saying, "I don't know how long this world can go on like this." Well, "just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man" (Lk. 17:26). The message had been published perhaps for the full 120 years. And for the last 7 days the final action had been taken - the animals and cargo were loaded and ready to go. And at a precise date in history, the 600th year of Noah's life, the 2nd month, the 17th day of the month, "Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood" (7:7). Whether others believed Noah or not, Noah believed God. He had built the ark according to God's instructions (6:15-16). He had gathered all the birds and animals according to God's instructions (6:19-20 and 7:2-3, 8-9). He had collected all the food they would need according to God's instructions (6:21). "Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him" (7:5). Do you see that there were two key ingredients to this plan of salvation? First, God's infallible word. Second, Noah's intrinsic obedience to God in faith. All those who believed God's word and obeyed it by entering the ark would be saved. It has always been this way with God's plan of salvation. It is this way for us today in God's marvelous plan of salvation. First, you need to believe God's word. Second, you need to obey it by repenting of your sin and trusting Christ as your Saviour. Christ is the ark of safety from the storm of God's wrath that is coming upon the whole world. He is the ark of provision for the needs of all inside. He alone can meet our every need for time and eternity. He alone can keep us safe throughout the storm. In addition to the physical reality of the ark it speaks of a spiritual reality. The spiritual reality for those inside the ark was that they were safe and secure. They had no fear of perishing. They had full assurance of ultimate salvation. No flood could penetrate the walls which were lined with pitch. The word for "pitch" (6:14) literally means "covering" (specifically, bitumen) and figuratively it means to expiate, placate, appease, ransom. Is this not a picture, then, of the covering of the mercy seat and, later, the covering that we have in Christ, our propitiation? So for those inside the ark, they were literally and spiritually safe and secure. The literal and spiritual reality for those left outside the ark was that they thought they were free but in fact they were prisoners doomed for destruction. They thought that this was one big joke as they watched the ark being loaded up to set sail. You can hear their shrieks of laughter, their shouts of scorn as they frittered away their last moments of opportunity to be saved. God's plan of salvation includes a final invitation, a final instruction, a final response, and... 4. God's Plan Includes A Final Judgement (7:10-24) "All the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened" (7:11). Rain came from the sky and water came up from the ground. You have to wonder how that day began. Did it begin like a normal day, perhaps with sunshine that gradually turned to clouds? We don't know. What must the people have thought when the door of the ark was shut and the rain began to fall? We don't know. Did they bang on the ark's door begging Noah to let them in? We don't know. What we do know is that "rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights (7:12). It began to rain: "13On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, 14they and every beast, according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, according to its kind, and every bird, according to its kind, every winged creature. 15They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. 16And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. And the Lord shut him in" (7:13-16). Noah followed God's instruction to the letter. He "did all that the Lord had commanded him" (7:5). He gathered in all the animals "as God commanded him" (7:9). Noah and his family entered the ark "as God had commanded him" (7:16). Noah followed God's instruction to the letter. Never a moment's hesitation in his obedience. Never a doubt in his mind. Just pure and perfect obedience. There was so much Noah could have questioned. Would God literally flood the earth or was that just a metaphor? Was God able to do such a thing? Why would a loving God wipe out every breathing creature left on the earth? Was it really that bad? Was God such a malevolent being? What kind of God would initiate such suffering and death? But Noah chose to act in obedient faith. "By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith" (Heb. 11:7). Here you see the seven key components of Noah's obedient faith: 1) He heeded the divine warning. He took God seriously; believed what God said; understood the seriousness of it; recognized the implications of it. 2) He believed without seeing - "things yet unseen." Jesus said to Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (jn. 20:29). That describes Noah who had never seen rain, never seen water rise from the foundations of the earth, never seen an ocean, never seen a ship much less an ark, never seen any blueprints of an ark. 3) He was motivated by "godly fear". He knew that God demanded obedience. He knew the consequences of disobeying God. He knew God in such a way that he lived in reverence and awe, the lesser worshipping the greater, the creature before the Creator. 4) He did exactly what God said - "constructed an ark." He didn't decide that he knew better than God. He didn't change what God said and instead of building an ark built a tree house. He didn't tell people to flee to the tops of the mountains to escape coming judgement. He did what God said. 5) He valued the safety of his family - "constructed an ark for the saving of his household." They were precious to him. He wanted them to escape the judgement of God. 6) He "condemned" the unbelieving world. By not heeding Noah's warning the unbelieving world was self-condemned. 7) He "became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith." He entered into all the blessings of the imputed righteousness of Christ. Such was the faith of Noah. And when they were all inside, the Lord shut them in. Perfect safety for those inside - certain doom for those outside. Absolute finality for everyone and everything. And then followed the flood. Notice the increasing intensity and scope of the flood: 1) "The waters increased and bore up the ark and it rose high above the earth" (7:17). 2) "The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth and the ark floated on the face of the waters" (7:17-18). 3) "The waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered" (7:19). 4) "The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep" (7:20). Thus the flood progressed from a general statement in 7:17-18 to the high hills being covered in 7:19, and the mountains in 7:20. Obviously this following the sequence of events as they occurred over the 40 days. It went from water raising the ark above the earth, to covering the high hills, to covering the mountains. But amidst all this, "the ark floated on the face of the waters" (7:18). While everyone else was perishing, even those who probably tried to escape to the tops of the mountains, those in the ark were safe: they rose above it all. Christians are divided about whether the flood was universal in scope or limited to the habitable part of the world at that time. The language used here indicates a world-wide catastrophic flood. The whole world was covered with water, even the tops of the mountains. Some scientists don't want us to believe that because it flies in the face of their atheistic, evolutionary theories and their interpretation of fossils (which tries to explain away the flood and support their theory that death occurred before Adam and Eve), all of which is patently untrue. Scientific evidence of a world-wide flood is abundant. Why, then, did it have to be universal and catastrophic? So that God's word would come true, that every breathing creature would die (7:21-27). "23He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, both man and animals, and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. 24And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days" (7:23-24). It rained 40 days and the waters remained on the earth a further 150 days, and it took a whole year for the waters to recede completely so that they could come out of the ark. Concluding Remarks I know that there are many people who think the story of the flood is a fairy tale. Sadly, there are professing Christians who believe that it is a fable or an allegory. They say that such accounts exist in other ancient civilizations; that these are merely mythical attempts to explain some sort of catastrophic event. Some of you today may be among those who smile condescendingly and cynically about the biblical flood. Well, I want you to know that there were some who lived during the flood, who also smirked and scoffed at the notion that a flood was coming. Just as there are those today who smirk and scoff that judgement is coming again. They say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." Well, remember, "just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man" (Lk. 17:26). And remember my thesis in this sermon: There is a finality to God's plan of salvation - a final invitation; a final instruction; a final response; a final judgement. It's my prayer that everyone reading this has responded appropriately to God's invitation to salvation and escape God's final judgement.

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