

## **AS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH...SIGNS OF THE LAST DAYS**

By Lorraine Porter Lascelle

### **Why the flood?**

Have you ever wondered why God flooded the earth in the first place? What was it like in Noah's day? Why was there a need for such severe judgment? In Genesis, Chapter 6:5-22 we read that there was great wickedness in the earth and that every imagination and intention of mankind's thinking was continually on evil. Obviously sin was rampant, so much so that God said He regretted making man and that His heart was grieved. While the biblical account does not go into detail on the kinds of sins, it sums it up by saying that except for Noah and his family, the rest of the world was degenerate, debased and vicious. Humanity had become corrupt and the earth was filled with violence and lust for power. Noah was described as a just and righteous man, blameless in an evil generation and one who walked with God in continual fellowship. God said He would make an end of all flesh by flooding the earth, destroying land, beasts, creeping things and birds of the air. Then He gave Noah specific instructions on how to build a great vessel that would be used to save Noah and His family. He told him to bring into it males and females of each kind of bird, beast and creeping thing as well as a storage of food supplies. Noah believed God and did all that God told him to do, so that he was prepared when the flood came upon the earth.

Noah came from a godly heritage. His father Lamech acknowledged the living God as did his grandfather Methuselah. Methuselah's name means judgment will not come until he is gone. Literally, on the day Methuselah died, the flood began.

Lest we are tempted to think that the account of Noah and the flood is just a fable, we need to remember that Genesis was not the only book that recorded this event. In Matthew 24:38, Jesus Himself said:

**“For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark,<sup>39</sup> And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”**

Jesus spoke of this event as literal and used it as a comparison to the days of His return. Any time Jesus was making a story to explain things, He went on to explain the meaning of that story or parable. In this case, He spoke of the flood of a historical event.

The flood is also mentioned in Luke 17:27:

**“People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.”**

The writer of Hebrews also talked about the flood of Noah’s time. Reading from Hebrews Chapter 11:7:

**“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”**

In 2 Peter 2:5, Peter refers to the flood as a real event, as a warning of future times:

**“And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly”**

There was also great detail given about the ark, its measurements and the types of wood that should be used for construction. Certainly, with so much detail and so many accounts of this event, one cannot say that this was mere allegory or symbolism. The description is from Genesis 6:14-16:

**“Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou**

**bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.”**

Translation: The ark was 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, 45 feet high (3 stories), and had a capacity for 125,000 sheep sized animals. Gopher wood was covered with pitch, a glue like substance made from resin that made the ark totally waterproof.

These were very specific instructions for something that was a very real event. There is no doubt in my mind that the flood of Noah's day was a reality and while I don't like to think about it, the world is quickly meeting the criteria that will warrant another equally catastrophic event. The wonderful thing about all of this is that God never intended for anyone to have to experience His judgment. He made a way out then with the ark and He has made a way out now, through Christ, our Savior. If we reject such salvation, we are left to go through the most terrible times the world has ever seen. The bible says that the times that are coming are worse than any other time in the history of the world. In 2 Peter 3:3-9, the Bible says that many will scoff at the idea that Jesus will return and that there will a coming judgment. They will go on living in their sinful ways, unaware of what is about to take place. God is patiently waiting because He wants everyone to repent and escape punishment. This will not be a judgment by water, but by fire, one in which everything on the earth will be burned up. In 2 Peter 3:10, Peter writes:

**“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”**

Do we have reason to be concerned and how can we prepare for such days? I doubt anyone would disagree that we are living in days like the days of Noah, full of violence and evil of every sort. Every day the news is brimming with more and more stories that are disheartening and frightening. Reports of war, murder, rape, abuse, child pornography, sex slavery, rampant immorality, riots and terrorism top the headlines of newspapers and magazines as well as radio, television and internet news. Its seems that the stories get more and more shocking and hard to believe.

How can people be so vile? Are these stories true? Unfortunately, there is a danger in hearing it so often that we can become numb to the reality, blindly hopeful that somehow things will return to the normal we once knew. Many today are filled with despair and fear, uncertain of what the future will bring. Anxiety and depression drugs are prescribed more than anything else in these last several years. People are looking for something or someone to fix it all, but no-one except God can fix the condition of the human heart. Sin is in our DNA, from birth. It is a spiritual condition that has been passed down from generation to generation. You don't have to teach a child to do wrong but to do right. We have a fallen nature that is bent on pleasing itself rather than following the ways of God. We can be wonderful looking on the outside and rotten on the inside. Jesus called the religious leaders of His day "white washed tombs" for this reason. They ritually went about their religious duties but inwardly had evil and cold thoughts, dead to the will and mind of God. Man looks on the outward person, but God looks on the heart.

In 2 Timothy 3:1-5, Paul described the days leading up to the return of Christ. He said:

**“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men will be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”**

Sadly, he was speaking of the condition of the church, not the world. Many of us have witnessed some of these things in the church and some have turned away from God because of it. They do not understand that all who call themselves Christian are not truly followers of Christ, but are those with a form of religion as Paul described. Unfortunately, those who have witnessed this kind of so-called Christianity have a bad view of church and of God Himself. All of us are made of flesh and blood and have a tendency towards sin, which is part of our fallen nature, and mere religious activity cannot change us. Only when the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in those who are truly His will we have the power to live as Christ lived. If we submit to the will and leading of His Spirit, it should lead to a holy life, a repentance

from sin and obedience to God's commands. In Luke 6:46, Jesus Himself questioned some of His followers who were living a double life by saying:

**“Why do you call me Lord, Lord and do not do what I say?”**

In John 3, Jesus was speaking to a very high ranking religious leader named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. Jesus explained that without the Spirit of God, no one can see or enter the kingdom of God.

**John 3:3: “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”**

**John 3:5,6: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”**

The Spirit of God has the power to transform a person's life and give them the ability to see and understand the things of God. Religion cannot change one's heart but merely one's activities. Jesus was revealing the spiritual need of mankind. The Pharisees had religious activity down to a science, performing all the rituals and abiding by all the many religious laws and yet Jesus called them snakes and vipers, sons of the devil! John the Baptist would not baptize the religious people until they could show him fruit of their repentance. Today, people are baptised as part of a religious duty or in hopes that it will ensure salvation, with little to no understanding of what it symbolizes.

Who is at fault for this seeming lack of knowledge? The bible lays most of the responsibility on pastors and teachers and other church leadership. They are supposed to be doing God's will of training up disciples, teaching them God's word and modelling a holy life. While communion and baptism are ordinances that were given by God to be practiced by the church, it wasn't for the purpose of just fulfilling some command or religious duty. Rather, these ordinances are meant to be symbols of something that has happened first in our hearts. They represent an acknowledgment of the sacrifice of Jesus by communion and a dying to self and living for Christ by baptism. The early church was instructed to not take communion unless this was understood and practiced, otherwise it could lead to sickness and possibly even death. Today, we see multitudes of people go through these rituals without having truly believed in the One whom these practices represent and in whom they do not truly follow in their daily lives. They

make common the things of a holy God. Granted that many of them do these things in ignorance, which is why they are not dead, but sadly many will live a spiritually dead life and think that they are going to heaven because they have participated in some religious activities.

Unfortunately, sin and repentance aren't at the top of the list of most preached sermons any longer. Heaven and hell aren't listed there either. Talk of the cross and blood are too graphic and disturbing to most it seems, even though they will gladly watch violent movies and play video games full of graphic killing. Today's hot topics are self-improvement and self-empowerment, prosperity and well being. Is it any wonder that the church culture has begun to look almost identical to the rest of the world. We can attend church, sing in the choir, do some good deeds, give money and time and perhaps even read the Bible, but if we aren't changed on the inside, submitted to the will of God, Jesus says He is truly not our Lord. Religious people do some of those things and yet many live like the world the rest of the time.

The bible says we are to be separate from the world, and that friendship with the ways of the world make us as His enemies. I think that Christians should take seriously how they live in light of statements like that. Churches give way to worldly entertainment and feel good messages to try and keep people coming, but if people aren't changed by turning to God and turning away from sin, they are not true converts to Christ and will not make heaven according to the Bible. Pastors will be held responsible by God Himself for not warning people of the consequences of sin which is separation from God. Jesus talked about hell frequently, more than he talked of heaven. He described it as a real place where devils are punished and where people who turn away from God will spend eternity. He said His followers must take up their own cross and follow Him, which means to lay down their old lives and take up their new ones. He said our lives must be living sacrifices, that we must die to our old nature and live by God's Holy Spirit leading. He called us to be holy as He is holy. While we know that in this life none of us will live perfectly, we are to strive for perfection with all the strength we have. Our good works and holy living do not save us, but they are evidence that we have a changed heart. The bible calls this fruit. If we have no fruit, it is evidence that we do not have God's Spirit living in us. It is pretty simple math. Either we have God or we don't. We are saved or lost, spiritually alive or spiritually dead. The evidence is in the fruit.

In Galatians 5:22, the fruit of the Spirit is described as:

**“Love, joy, peace, patience, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self control.”**

Further to this, we read in verse 24,

**“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”**

Some of the behaviors God condemns are described a few verses earlier in Galatians 5:19-21 and are referred to as works of the flesh, our fallen nature:

**“adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like, of which I tell you before, as I have told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.”**

If these are the sins which will keep people out of heaven, we should be hearing about these things from our pulpits rather than the warm fuzzy, politically correct sermons that are so popular today. As Christians, once we are aware of what God’s Word says about such things, we should also be warning people that they won’t make heaven, unless they turn away from these lifestyles. We may lose some friends and family over it, but it is our responsibility to tell them of the danger of continuing in things that God clearly condemns. If they don’t listen, the consequences are their own fault but if we don’t tell them, God will hold us responsible.

I think one of the problems is that we all want to be liked by others. That is evident in this facebook, twitter, media driven society where everyone puts their pictures and personal comments all over the internet, hoping to rack up a bunch of “likes” from their “followers”. It is truly alarming that we are looking for so much applause from people, even strangers, who comment on everything from our hair-do to our opinions. As Christians, our motives should be to please God, not men. We are to look for His praise and approval, not the praise of people. If we are overly concerned with the opinions of mankind, we will compromise our values to be popular or to avoid confrontation and ridicule.

Are we willing to stand for what we believe even if it means we suffer for it? Jesus said that if we attempt to live our lives like He did, we will be hated like He was hated. Noah had to be extremely strong in His faith to stand against the multitudes of people who were living in what God called total degradation. I'm sure that there must have been some temptation, in 120 years of building that ark, to give in and find some comfortable spot to fit in. Instead he chose to face the mocking from sinful people day in and day out, trusting and obeying God right until the end. That is what we as Christians must do as well. Jesus said, only those who endure until the end shall be saved. Tragically, He also said that near the time of His return many would fall away from their faith in Him. People will chose the ways of this world and their self serving passions over following God's will.

Another evidence of our narcissistic society is the skyrocketing number of selfies that people take and send. It is such a popular practice that almost every new phone and camera now has a selfie or camera reverse mode. We are consumed with ourselves in this day and age and consumed with the pleasures this life can bring, with barely a thought for our eternal state. Going to a church which might tell us something "negative" or listening to preaching about sin and repentance isn't very uplifting and certainly does not appeal to this modern age of self indulgence and self importance. Most will search out pastors and teachers who will tell them what they want to hear and many pastors who themselves want to be popular and crowd pleasing will give people what they want. After all, they need the people in the seats to keep the money coming in and keep the doors open, with little or no concern for their souls. Paul said that in the last days, things would be just like this. He instructed Timothy in 2 Timothy Chapter 4: 3-4:

**“Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”**

As we have discussed in previous sessions on this subject, the bible says there will be a great falling away just prior to Christ's coming to rescue His true followers. This is called the apostacy, which means that there will be many who once followed Christ who turn away from Him and the truth of the Bible. This is happening in unprecedented ways and in unprecedented



numbers within most of the main line church denominations, as false teachers arise and teach many heresies and draw people away from the truth. Some church leaders are even endorsing new age practices and rituals that stem from the occult world. Sadly, because many Christians do not have a sound understanding of the Bible, they follow along like sheep heading for the slaughter. Just as the scriptures say, the blind are leading the blind and they both fall into the ditch. In addition, many of the Bible colleges are being infiltrated with professors who are not teaching the truth of the bible but rather discrediting it in some ways and turning out students who no longer hold to the doctrines of the faith. They in turn become pastors and leaders of churches. You can see why our churches are dead spiritually or led into error. It is more important now than ever before for all of us to search the scriptures for ourselves, to test the spirits to see if they are of God and to adhere to the pure Word of God and not entertain false teachers.

Some in the pews prefer not to hear the truth, because they are living in sin and do not wish to change their ways. They will go about looking for someone to tell them that all is fine and that God accepts them as they are, that there is no need to change their ways. They will gladly pay large amounts of money to pastors who will give them this false assurance and many false teachers are all too happy to take their money and get rich by being politically correct rather than teaching the truth which is so unpopular these days. People like Oprah have influenced millions across the globe with her new age philosophies that she dresses up as some form of Christianity. While she may be helping people by giving them material things that pertain to life now, what good will that be in the end if she has led them astray and their souls are lost for all eternity? She is deceived herself and is deceiving others who want to hang on her every word. The Bible says that it is of no use if we gain the whole world and lose our soul.

The new emphasis these days is on the love of God. While God is love, He is also just and holy, something not mentioned much anymore. I once said that if sin is of no great consequence, why did Jesus have to die for us in the first place? Sin brings penalties, just as broken laws in society have penalties. How is it that we demand justice from others, but we don't think God has a right to demand justice from us. Thankfully, God provided a way out of the penalties for our sins, through the cross. Jesus paid the price for all mankind, taking the wrath of God for us, and God was satisfied with His sacrifice. If we come to God through Christ, and follow in His ways, we are

saved. If we choose not to come to Christ, we are left to pay the penalties of our sins on our own. Since separation from God is the penalty and an eternity apart from His Kingdom, the only other kingdom is the kingdom of darkness where the devil and his demons will spend all of eternity. God loved us enough to send us His remedy for our sin sickness, but He does not force us to take it. That is our choice.

Another problem in the church is that we then move to a condition sometimes referred to as sloppy or greasy grace. People teach that Jesus paid the price for us, so we are saved from our sins. While that is true, it is only half of the equation. Repentance, a turning away from sin, is part and parcel in coming to Christ for salvation. If we continue in our sinful ways, the bible says we are not truly saved. Many pastors and teachers do not teach repentance from sin and therefore multitudes believe that simply making some kind of verbal confession will suffice, without the need for a changed life. This is clearly not the message of the bible, but is a false gospel which will lead many into thinking they are saved and finding out that they are not.

With all of that in mind, if the church has lost its way, we can only expect that the unbelieving world will take the same condemned practices to an even greater level, just as we have seen in the last few decades. Everyone is doing what is right in their own eyes, opening rejecting the authority of God's Word and its moral standards. Those who stand for what is right are seen as wrong and those who stand for what is wrong are seen as right. Just recently, in a march by a women's rights group that was promoting abortion, someone held up a sign that said "if Mary had had an abortion, we wouldn't be in all of this trouble". It is so hard to believe that anyone would say such a horrible thing but even worse that it would be applauded by such a large group of people, including celebrities who spewed out other such filth, cheered on by their followers. They defiantly mock God, proudly displaying their lude behavior in public and label people intolerant who hold to a view of absolute morality based on biblical values. It is exactly as God foretold. He warned that as things neared the end, things would get more and more corrupt as His coming came closer. He also comforted us by saying that when these things begin to happen, we should look up because our redemption from this world was coming near.

I used to wonder why God gave us free will in the first place. Wouldn't it have been better if He made it impossible for us to sin, and not given us the

choice to rebel against Him? I suppose in my limited understanding it would have been a better solution, however that would mean that we would be like mere robots, unthinking, without reason and without emotion. We would be like puppets on strings rather than people who can enjoy a relationship with God and others. He wanted a people for Himself who were loyal to Him, not being forced into submission to His will. Even angels were given free will and some of them were forced out of heaven for their disobedience. The bible says they now roam around seeking whom they can deceive and destroy, and they have the ability to take on the appearance of light, possess willing or uncontrolled subjects and even do supernatural things. The doctrines of God's Word is our measuring stick by which we can know what kind of spirits we are dealing with or following, good ones or evil ones.

Some say that He is cruel for sending people to hell, but the bible says that hell was created for the devil and his fallen angels, not for us. The problem is that there is only two places one's soul can go after death, heaven or hell. If we reject the salvation that God offers, we have made a choice for hell ourself. We cannot blame God if we end up there. He has given us the free gift of salvation through Christ but we have to choose to accept it and live accordingly.

I liken it to being on the Titanic after it hits the iceberg. The captain tells the crew to notify the people aboard that they are in great peril and have a limited time to get to safety. Some of the crew obeys the captain's commands, quickly rounding up the people, telling them that they need to prepare themselves to exit the ship. They know that there is no other way of escape except to get the people into one of the ship's lifeboats. The other members of the crew accept bribes from the rich and quickly hurry them to some of the lifeboats, blocking the poorer clients from getting into line. Some people scoff because they don't believe it is possible for such a great ship to go down into the frigid waters and so they continue on with their partying. The selfish upper class travellers who paid to get the first boats paddle away before the seats are filled lest they have to share the space with lower class folks. Others say they will take their chances and wait it out on board to see if the ship indeed will sink and then they will look for a way of escape. The captain stays aboard out of guilt and shame for allowing such a thing to happen and feels unworthy of being rescued. The musicians play happy music so as to give a feeling of peace and security while the ship cracks and breaks apart and many slide into the icy waters.

Those in the lifeboats have plenty of room to spare but are unwilling to go and rescue those floating in the water. More concerned about their comfort than for these dying souls, these selfish saved sit and watch as hundreds succumb to their icy grave. Only a few risk their lives to try to save the perishing, some giving up their own life jackets. The Titanic goes down, with many still aboard going down with it as the rest watch in horror and disbelief. The cries for help fade and the night grows eerily quiet. Just moments ago, things seemed to be fine and now something unimaginable and unbelievable has happened, something no one thought possible, even though they were warned that it was imminent.

Tragically, just as in this historic event, many today will not heed the warnings that these are the last days and that they need a Savior. Some scoff and others take their chances that all will work out ok. Many pastors will only cater to the rich while others will risk their lives to reach out to all those who want to be saved. Most of those who are saved seem to be more concerned with the comforts of their lives and are unconcerned that so many are perishing, leaving only a few to rescue those that are lost. Some believe the devil's lie that they are not worthy enough to be saved. Sadly, the bible says that there will be many on the road that leads to destruction and that few will be on the road that leads to eternal life. Most will reject the message of salvation and will be left to face the judgment that will come upon all those who are left upon the earth. Those of us who have believed God's message and received His salvation through the finished redemptive work of Christ will be safely taken out of the way, an event known as the rapture, a sudden removal of those who have put their faith in Christ and in whom the Holy Spirit of God dwells.

For believers, this is a welcome end, because it is a time when we will be leaving this corrupted world and going to be with the Lord in our heavenly home. Then, after God's judgment of this wicked world, Christ will set up His everlasting Kingdom of righteousness and peace. For unbelievers, it will be a horrific and frightful time of great tribulation during which the anti Christ will deceive people into submission by a false peace agenda and then become a tyrannical world dictator for 7 years. After that a final war that the Bible calls the battle of Armeggedon will take place, where the enemies of God will be defeated by the armies of God. There will be a great loss of life as the world at that time comes under the terrible wrath of God, a judgment from which there is no escape, just as in the days of Noah.

## **Conclusion:**

What does this mean for us? I believe that we need to know what we believe and make sure that we are born again by the Spirit of God, not merely involved in religious activities. If we are unsure, we can go to someone who has a personal relationship with God for help and prayer. If we have never done so, we need to pray for His forgiveness of any known sins and ask Him to come and be Lord of our lives. We then will have His help in turning away from things we know are wrong.

We need to know the Bible, so that we can recognize when something false comes along. The last days will be marked by many false teachers and false gospels who are deceived and going about deceiving others. We cannot afford to believe every spirit that claims to be of God, but rather we must test their words against the Word of God. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us into all truth and be sensitive to His promptings and His warnings.

Jesus said that the days before His coming would be as they were in the days of Noah, which means there will be violence, wickedness and every sort of corruption. We need to examine our own lives and ask the Lord to identify areas in our lives that are not pleasing to Him. We must be willing to be in continual submission to His ways, by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead our lives. We are to stand against and separate from the things around us that are wrong, even if it means suffering loss or being ridiculed. When we have sinned, we simply come to Him and ask Him to forgive us, wash us clean and help us to become more like Him.

Finally, we need to be concerned for the souls of others and take the message of the gospel to anyone who will listen, warning them of the times that are coming, and praying that they will open their hearts to God before the door to their salvation is shut, just as in the days of Noah.

After doing these things, in the words of Paul the apostle, in 1 Thess.1:10:  
**“...wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”**

Look up, for our redemption draweth nigh!!

## **Prayer**