

The Ark: A Type of the Church

TEXT: Hebrews 9:9, 23; 10:1; Matthew 24:36-39.

THESIS: To note significant similarities between the ark and the church by which we can learn something about the church.

INTRODUCTION:

1. The Old Testament contains types of the ark.
 - a. A type is a “representative form” or “characteristic” of something else.
 - b. The ark is a type of the Lord’s church.
2. In the Old Testament, neither Patriarchy nor Judaism were ever intended by God to be his final revelation to man.
 - a. The Hebrew writer said about these ages, that it, “*was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;” (Heb. 9:9)
 - b. “*It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.” (Heb. 9:23)
 - c. “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins” (Heb. 10:1-2).
3. The point is this: the shadow is not the real thing; it is only an imperfect reflection of the real thing.
 - a. This was the law of the Old Testament.
 - b. It and its sacrifices for sin were only a shadow of better things.
 - i. For example, the law and its sacrifices did not possess the perfection or power necessary to forgive sins.
 - ii. But they did reflect and point to the perfection and power that was to come in the Lord Jesus.
4. Likewise, Old Testament types perfectly fit the New Testament church and its doctrine and it is no different with the ark.
 - a. We can certainly learn something about the Lord’s church by examining this Old Testament type.
 - b. However, it is impossible to learn anything about manmade churches from these types because types confirm the church of the Bible to be the fulfillment of the longstanding will of God (Eph. 3:10-11), but accuses denominations as mere imitations of the real thing, God’s church.
5. So, let’s consider the ark.

DISCUSSION:

- I. CIRCUMSTANCES TODAY ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE EXISTING IN THE WORLD

PRECEDING THE UNIVERSAL FLOOD

- A. The world was and is laden with sin.
1. Most of mankind was soaked up with sin in Noah's day.
 - a. For, "GOD 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. 6:5)
 2. Most of mankind was engulfed in sin during the period of Judaism and Jesus found the same degree of sin during his earthly ministry.
 - a. In fact, Paul proclaimed in Rom. 1:29-2:1 that, "They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things."
 3. You know, a great deal of sin persists among men today, during the Gospel age.
 - a. In 2 Tim. 3:1-5, Paul mentions that the world is really godless.
 - (1) Their self-love sets them up like a god and feels that nothing matters more than pleasures for themselves.
 - (2) They love money because of what it buys and what it allows them to do, and they will covet more and more.
 - (3) They are boasters who pretend to be wise or more healthy or more spiritual than others.
 - (4) They are proud people who appears quiet and humble, but within their hearts, they secretly feel better than others.
 - b. Paul said that these people have a powerless religion.
 - (1) And what's worse, is there are those who might even claim and profess godliness, but their worship will be only a form, only an outward profession, only an appearance of godliness.
 - (2) They deny the power of God, they deny the power to deliver men from the bondage of sin, they deny the power in Jesus who has the power to save people from perishing.
- B. Now because of sin, God did purpose and has purposed again to destroy the world.
1. In Gen 6:7, "the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."

2. In 2 Pet. 3:7, 10, we read that in the day of the Lord, he will come as a thief and the heavens will pass away with a great noise, elements will melt and the earth will be burned up.
 - a. God, the Supreme Intelligence and Force of the universe will destroy the universe by simply commanding a universal atomic explosion to take place.
 - b. All God has to do is speak the Word and all the atoms throughout the universe will burn up in a chain reaction.
 3. Now, as the destructive deluge or flood of Noah's time came suddenly, so too will the unquenchable fire at the end of time come.
 - a. Jesus said in Matt. 24:36-39, "But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."
 - (1) Those in Noah's day were living sensual lives, eating, drinking, marrying, divorcing, and remarrying time after time, refusing to heed righteousness and the coming judgment.
 - (2) The people had the testimony of Noah's life and his belief in God's Word as a warning, a warning that man was responsible to live righteously and that judgment was coming.
 - (3) They saw Noah building the ark. I mean, how could you not see it?
 - (4) They saw the ark sitting there, yet they rejected Noah's message and testimony.
 - (5) They went on living in worldliness, in their eating and drinking and in pursuing their own lustful desires, and they did so right up until the very day that "Noah entered into the ark."
 - (6) Then suddenly, unexpectedly, their world was shattered.
 - b. Jesus shows us that the coming of the Lord will be sudden—unexpected—will completely shatter the world of the unbeliever who is busy eating, drinking, marrying, who is close minded and ignorant.
- C. Now, God's Spirit strove and still strives with men today.
1. In Gen. 6:3, "the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years."
 2. Jesus strove with sinful men.
 - a. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 23:37)
 3. God continues to strive with men through his Word.

- a. “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
 - b. “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2).
 - c. “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48)
 - d. “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:” (Jn. 16:8)
- D. God provided the ark for salvation from the flood and God provides the church for salvation from the fire to come.
- 1. See Genesis Chapters 6-8.
 - 2. Salvation is in and heralded by the Lord’s church.
 - a. Paul said in Eph. 3:8-11, “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:”
 - b. The saved are the church (Acts 2:47).

II. COMPARE THE ARK AND THE CHURCH

- A. First of all, there was one ark and there is one church.
 - 1. “And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” (Eph. 1:22-23)
- B. There is one door into the ark and one door into the church.
 - 1. In John 10:1-9, we see where Jesus claims to be the only door of the sheep.
 - 2. He is the way into God’s presence, into salvation, into the church, into the kingdom of God, into eternal life.
 - 3. And therefore, if a man wishes to enter where God is, he must enter the Door of Christ.
 - a. A man enters God's sheepfold only through the Door of Christ, for Christ is the only Door into God's presence.
- C. There is one window in the ark and one source of light in the church.
 - 1. “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” (John 3:19).

- a. The life of Jesus Christ now stands in the world to give light.
- b. Any man therefore who does not turn and walk in the Light is naturally in the dark.
- 2. Christ is the light because he suffered for us, “. . . and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.” (Acts 26:23)
- D. There was one family in the ark and there is one family, the church.
 - 1. “Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,” (Eph. 3:15).
 - 2. And, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12).
 - 3. Thus, the Bible records that there were those who, “departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.” (Acts 5:41)
 - 4. And, these “. . . disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.” (Acts 11:26)
 - a. But, not all would be in this family for, “Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.” (Acts 26:28)
 - 5. “Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf” (1 Pet. 4:16)
 - 6. And, “Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.” (Rom. 16:16).
- E. When we consider the ark, the saved were on the inside of the ark. Likewise, the saved are on the inside of the church.
 - 1. The Scriptures states that, “. . . the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47)
 - 2. “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.” (Eph. 5:23)
- F. Also, the souls on the ark were saved by water. And, souls in the church were saved by water.
 - 1. The apostle Peter penned, “Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:” (1 Pet. 3:20-21).
- G. It was the humble and obedient souls that entered the ark just as it is the humble and obedient souls that enter the church.
 - 1. James tells us to, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.” (Jam 4:10)
 - 2. “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:” (1 Pet. 5:6)
- H. All the needs that man needed in the days of the flood were supplied inside the ark just as all needs now are supplied inside the church.

1. For, “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:” (Eph. 1:3).
- I. But, just as the ark saved, the lost were outside the ark. So it is today, the lost are outside the church.
 1. John penned, “For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.” (Rev. 22:15)
 2. There are those who will be rejected by the Lord, who will not be allowed to enter the heavenly city of God.
 3. But, who are they you ask?
 - a. They are those who do not confess Christ because they fear what others might say; those who are afraid to give up the world and deny self; those who fear taking a stand for Christ; those who fear to fellowship or become identified with Christian people. (Rev. 21:8)
 - b. They are those who do not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of the world; those who reject Him and His death upon the cross; even those who profess Christ, but live hypocritical lives, who show by their sinful behavior that they do not really believe Him. (Rev. 21:8)

CONCLUSION:

1. There is a great deal that we can learn from the ark.
 - a. Without doubt, the New Testament church alone is the ark of safety that can bear us safely across a sea of destruction and sin, now and in judgment.
 - b. But, everyone outside the church (our ark of safety) is lost and in danger of perishing.
2. Invitation:
 - a. You must believe that it is necessary for every soul to enter and remain within the safety of the church (our ark).
 - b. Non-Christians must search the Scriptures to discern the Lord’s church and obey the scheme of redemption revealed by God, namely, HEARING, BELIEVING, REPENTANCE, CONFESSING CHRIST and BAPTISM FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS (Rom. 10:17; Acts 17:30; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 2:38).
 - c. Erring children of God need to repent as publicly or privately as they have sinned (Acts 8:22).