

ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS

“WEEPING MAY ENDURE FOR A NIGHT, BUT JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING.” PSALMS 30:5

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Winter 2012

THE HIDDEN MESSAGE BEHIND NOAH AND THE GREAT FLOOD

“But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” — Matthew 24:37

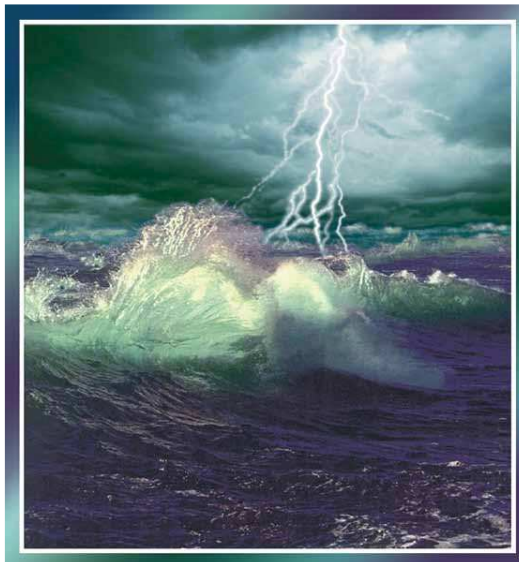
Most Christians today sense that we are living in the prophetic *end times*. This is for good reason, because Jesus gave his disciples a hidden message in Matthew 24 about *the days of Noah* which provides Scriptural confirmation that we are, indeed, living in the *last days*.

In fact, Matthew 24:37 is but one of many symbolic prophecies with hidden meanings for those who are diligently seeking truth. The comparison between the *days of Noah* to that of the *coming of the Son of man* is what is termed a *type* and *antitype*. The term *type* can best be understood by looking at a rubber stamp. The stamp can be considered the *type*, and when ink is applied and pressed upon paper, the image left behind is called the *antitype*—a representation of the original. Comparing *Noah's day* with the prophetic second advent of Jesus Christ is just such a *type* and *antitype* which reveals a fascinating *hidden message* to Christ's followers.

“THERE WERE GIANTS IN THE EARTH”

Because Jesus gave to his disciples this parallel of the *days of Noah* as a prophetic evidence of his return, it should motivate all of his followers to review the conditions that existed in Noah's day, over four thousand years ago. Knowing exactly what happened then will help in understanding how Jesus was applying this picture to his second advent. The conditions of *Noah's day* are found in Genesis 6:4-8: “*There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And 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. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And 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. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”



This description of the *type* portrays a time when the *sons of God* left their position in heaven as angelic beings and took women of Adamic stock as wives. Moreover, the children born of these angels were a *hybrid race*—different from Adam's family. They were *giants* both physically and mentally—*men of renown* also known as *Nephilim*. (Genesis 6:4) Because of their superior stature, they became tyrants over the human race, and wickedness filled the earth to the point where God saw that if He did not intervene, there would

be no hope of saving the human race from self destruction.

ANTITYPICAL GIANTS OF THE LATTER DAYS

Of Noah's day, God said that “*evil and violence filled the earth continually.*” And is it not so today? There is such a thirst for evil, violence and self-gratification, that, if it is not actually happening on the face of the earth, the entertainment industry will create it to feed the depraved imagination. The Scriptures declare that this evil will increase to an unparalleled climax: “*...a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation... the wicked shall do wickedly...*” Daniel 12:1, 10

It was the improper blending of the spiritual with the natural that brought into being the giants of olden times and their corruption throughout the earth. And in this we find a remarkable *parallel* in our time. Are there not amongst men today giants of a different sort of almost unlimited power? Do we not see increasing protests against the political, social, financial and religious princes of the earth who have become too greedy, too powerful? Christian nations, blessed with greater spiritual enlightenment, have had a greater responsibility to exercise the principles of righteousness.

However, the improper blending of this enlightenment with the spirit of greed has brought about giant institutions which are oppressing the poor. *“Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”* Ephesians 6:12 (NAS)

This spirit of selfishness has brought violence and evil to an unprecedented level throughout the earth. And, as a consequence, a deluge of another sort is about to overwhelm the tyrannical political, social, financial and religious institutions of this present time.

REVEALING THE HIDDEN MESSAGE

Noah's day covered a period of 120 years—a period of preparation, building the Ark and preaching righteousness. (Genesis 6:14-22) As Noah was **present** for a considerable time before the flood, so it will be in the *antitype*—Christ will be **present** for a period of time before the climax of this age—engaged in preparing his *ark of safety*.

Another key in understanding the hidden message is having an accurate translation of the Greek words in Matthew 24. Poor translations have misled Christians into thinking that the conditions we see in the earth today are only *leading to his coming*. In Matthew 24:3 and 37, this word *coming* in the Greek is *parousia*—*para*, meaning beside or along side of, and *ousia*, a form of the verb *to be*. Instead of the KJV wording: *“so shall also the coming of the Son of man be,”* the thought should more properly be translated: *“so shall also the presence of the Son of man be...”* As Noah was *present* in his *day*, it would then be logical to presume that Jesus would also be *present* in his *day*. But this concept totally overturns traditional Christian teaching. How can those looking for a future *coming* of Christ accept that he could already be here?

In 2 Peter 3:10 the Apostle Peter explains exactly how this is possible: *“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...”* Just as Noah was ignored by the people of his day, so too, the second advent of Christ will be unseen as he arrives as a *thief in the night*. The first stage of his *coming* or *presence* will be invisible, unseen, thief-like, and the work he will be doing will parallel that of Noah's work. Therefore, the many signs of *his coming* in Matthew 24 are actually the *signs* of Christ being *present*—already here, setting things in motion that will eradicate the corruption that is in the earth.

SCOFFERS IN THE LAST DAYS

The prophetic signs given in Matthew 24 were given to encourage and enthuse Christians, but they have an opposite effect upon the world at large. When Noah was building the ark in preparation for the flood there were *scoffers*—those who

ridiculed Noah and his work. Likewise today, many are rebuffed who rejoice to see the *presence of the Son of man*. *“There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming [parousia/presence]?’*

“ (2 Peter 3:3-4) As conditions in Noah's day blinded the people to his work and purpose, likewise those living today are so caught up in their busy lives that they lack the awareness of Christ's work and purpose. “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, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming [presence] of the Son of man be.” (Matthew 24: 38, 39) Thus, it was not the flood, but the presence and work of Noah before the flood which prefigured the return of Christ at his second advent.

Not only is Jesus' return spoken of as being secretive and thief-like, but it is also spoken of as *a snare upon the world*. (2 Peter 3:10; Luke 21:34-35) As life continues its hectic pace—*eating,*

drinking, and marrying—it is a temptation for the Christian to be swept along with this rapid current of life and to become numb as to the reality around them. *“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”* 1 Thessalonians 5:6

RAINBOW IN THE CLOUDS

Connected with the Matthew 24 prophecy is Jesus' statement that His second coming would be *seen* in the *clouds*. This is another symbolic statement. The Scriptures use the term *clouds* to picture trouble, and we certainly are living in troublous times, with every eye beholding this condition throughout the earth. Zephaniah 1:15 verifies what these *clouds* represent: *“That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress...and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness...”* The world is experiencing trouble, because Jesus is shaking up and tearing down this old order which will culminate in the *great tribulation* of Matthew 24:21. See also Isaiah 13:13

Returning to the *type* of Noah's day, when the rain began to stop, the sun shown through and created a rainbow. It was *after* the flood that God made what is known as the *rainbow covenant*. (Genesis 8:20-21; 9:11-13) *“I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off... This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth... I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake... neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.”* This unconditional covenant was a promise, and the rainbow was a *token* or a *sign* of that covenant. Even today it is a constant reminder of God's faithfulness.

Understanding the *antitype* of this covenant is critical. The promise was made to *all flesh*—not merely to the human race.



God's promise was that He would never again destroy *every living thing*. The purpose of *Noah's ark* was to preserve life—to carry with Noah the *seeds* for a new world—not a new planet—but a new civilization upon the earth.

Jesus confirmed this beautiful rainbow of promise in Matthew 24:22 when he said: “*and except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved...*” What does this imply? God will not permit the trouble to go so far as to destroy *all flesh*—there will, indeed be flesh saved. This is a very important distinction between the *type* and the *antitype*. In Noah's day all flesh that was not in the ark was destroyed. By contrast, in Jesus' day all flesh will not be destroyed. This is a distinction that makes a big difference to the world of mankind. Luke 9:55, 56

THE ARK OF SALVATION

In the *type*, Noah and his family prepared an ark—a means of salvation for the human family and for the preservation of the animal kingdom. So, too, in the *antitype*, Christ is doing a preparatory work for the salvation of the world. Even now, we see the evidence of that work which started with the regathering of the Jews to their homeland. This critical *sign* in context with Jesus' work at his return is shown in Matthew 24:32 where Israel is described as *budding forth* as a *fig tree*. Fulfillment of this prophecy is evident as Israel has taken its place among the most productive and stable nations of the world. Amos 9:14

Yes, as Noah's ark was for the purpose of saving life, so the *antitypical ark* that Jesus is preparing is for the purpose of saving life. After the flood, Noah and his family were given the important work of replenishing the earth. After the *great tribulation* of our day, the *antitypical* Noah and his family (Christ and his faithful church) will also have a special work to do. Their work will be to restore life and the paradise that was lost in the Garden of Eden. Acts 3:19-21 assures us of this work associated with the second advent of Christ: “*...the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*” This beautiful prospect is also confirmed in Revelation 22:17, which speaks of the work of Christ and his church: “*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*” Here we see that Christ and the church call to the inhabitants of the earth, inviting them to *hear* the words that will bring them life—not the life that ends in death as we see it now, but life everlasting.



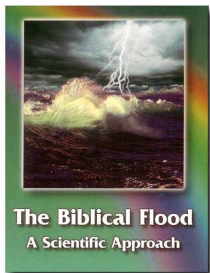
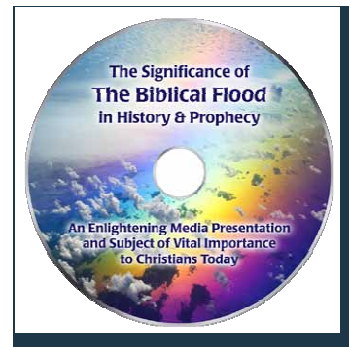
In the *type*, it was *after* the flood that the *rainbow covenant* was made with Noah. Likewise, it is after the *great tribulation* that Christ will make a *new covenant* with *all flesh* through the nation of Israel. Call to mind God's description of this same great event. After telling that the whole earth will be devoured with the fire of His jealousy, he adds, “*Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.*” (Zephaniah 3:8, 9) Thus we are shown that the fire which shall devour the whole earth will not be a literal one, but symbolic, for although the social structure will be entirely consumed, the people will remain. Then God will give unto the people His message of truth in its purity. “*The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings,*” and “*the earth shall be full with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the great sea.*” (Malachi 4:2; Isaiah 11:9) This will be the beginning of the *new heavens and the new earth* spoken of in 2 Peter 3:13 and the last three chapters of Revelation.

CLOUDS WITH A SILVER LINING

If we recognize that we are in the *last days*, then we should rejoice in the prospect that this will bring about a new start—a *new heavens* and a *new earth*. We can be thankful that this is not just about saving ourselves alone. The loving plan of God is broader than just a handful of Christians who accept His Son now. It goes back to the promise given to Abraham that in his *seed*—Christ and his church—*shall all families of the earth be blessed*. (Galatians 3:29; Genesis 22:17, 18) We know that this is a prophecy of a future time, for *all families* have certainly not been blessed as yet. In the *type* of Noah and his family, salvation meant the beginning of a new world. In the *antitype*, it is much broader than that. The ones who are saved in this *antitypical ark*—the church—are the ones who will bless the remainder of *all flesh* in due time. This is the *gospel*—*the real good news!* By God's mercy, this poor, deluded world will then have the opportunity to be brought back to all that was lost when Adam sinned—human perfection and everlasting life in a paradise restored—Jesus' life being the ransom price to accomplish this. 1 Timothy 2:3-6; 4:10

This is the *silver lining* to the clouds of trouble. And, as the sun shines through the rain and creates the rainbow, we can also see beyond the clouds this beautiful token of God's love and promise to provide, protect and prepare the world for an eternity of future blessings. The storm clouds of the great tribulation do not signify the end—they forecast the beginning of the *times of refreshing which shall come from the presence of the Lord!*

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