

"A Time Of Repentance"

"The Time Is Fulfilled, And The Kingdom Of God Is At Hand. Repent, And Believe In The Gospel." † Mark 1:15

LENT

- 40 Days Of Renewal -



Lent Is A Journey That Moves Us Toward The Cross

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and concludes either on Maundy Thursday or on Holy Saturday. The 40 days of fasting is meant to represent Jesus' wilderness temptation (Luke 4:1-12) or the supposed 40 hours He spent in the tomb. The number 40 may also be used

because it is an important number in the Bible for instance, the number of days of rain in Noah's Flood (Genesis 7:4), the amount of time Moses spent on the mountain with God (Exodus 24:18), and the number of years the Hebrews wandered in the wilderness (Numbers 14:33). If a Christian chooses to observe Lent, it should be out of a heart that yearns to truly appreciate the abundant grace of Christ's saving work on the cross. By reminding himself of his need and willfully submitting to Christ's authority, a Lenten observer prepares his or her heart to celebrate Easter with a renewed sense of joy and amazement. It is not six weeks of self-discipline to impress others or to impress God. Rather, it is a time of humbling oneself before God in a demonstration of dependence and thanksgiving.

"May His Spirit Inspire You To A Greater Commitment"

As we face the conditions of the world today, we see the same conditions that existed in the days of Noah. We realize that judgment is not far off. So let us pray that God will draw our hearts unto the things of the Spirit and free us from the bondage of corruption that holds the world in its grip. And let us pray—as God's people—to have a real heart and concern for our families and for our nation—for a spiritual revival in our land. As we see the deteriorating condition of the world around us, it should be a wake-up call for us to live godly, righteous, holy lives, placing our minds, hearts and priorities on eternal values. We don't know what 2018 may hold for us—joys, sorrows, victories or defeats. But we do know that the Lord has promised to be with us, and He's promised to help us. He has promised to guide us. So with this reminder, let us commit our ways to Him, knowing that He will bring to pass His perfect will in our lives. May the Lord be with you and bless you. May the Lord's hand be upon you to guide you. May His Spirit inspire you to a greater commitment to Jesus than you've ever had before, as we look forward to that glorious day of the Lord and the establishment of His Kingdom on the earth.



Jesus Christ warns us not to fall into the trap of the thinking of the people of Noah's day, who put God out of their minds until it was too late. At the time of the end God will be far from most people's thinking. Jesus Christ used the example of Noah's day to reveal the attitudes that would predominate near the end: **"But as the days of Noah were, so**

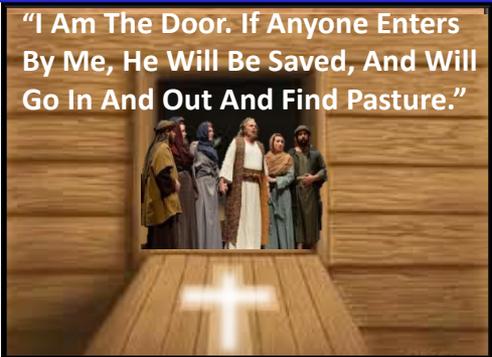
also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matthew 24:37-39) Here we see history and prophecy working together. The meaning is clear: The attitude of people in Noah's day would prevail again just before Christ's Second Coming. As in the former case, God would be deemed as far away, unconcerned about human activities on earth, with life appearing to go on as always (2 Peter 3:3-6) "First of all you must understand this, that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and indulging their own lusts and saying, "Where is the promise of His Coming? For ever since our ancestors died, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation!" They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the Word of God heavens existed long ago and an earth was formed out of water and by means of water, through which the world of that time was deluged with water and perished." Like before, people would be unconcerned as to their true spiritual condition and blind to God's impending judgment. The key to the example Christ gave is to understand that people can be so concerned about the cares of this life that they ignore their Creator (Matthew 6:33) **"But seek you first the Kingdom of God, and His Righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."** (Luke 21:34-35) **"Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth."** It happened before, and it is happening again.

"The Apostle Paul Similarly Foretold The Overall"

There will be a self-seeking mind-set that would dominate people's thinking in the last days: **"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come. "For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud,**

blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying its power" (2 Timothy 3:1-5) This perfectly describes the overall attitude and outlook of our age. Such thinking will prevent the vast majority of humanity from believing God and the biblical warning signs indicating Christ's imminent return. Like the people in Noah's time who laughed and mocked as he built the ark, the end of this age will come when the overwhelming majority are unprepared.

"The Door Of Salvation"



"I Am The Door. If Anyone Enters By Me, He Will Be Saved, And Will Go In And Out And Find Pasture." In the New Testament we read how Noah responded to the evil of his day: "By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." (Hebrews 11:7).

Noah's faithfulness in building the Ark and his trust in God give us an example of great faith, showing how his obedience to God actually condemned the rest of the world that had rebelled against their Creator. Noah built the Ark as God commanded, and then by faith he and his family went through the door of the Ark so they could be saved from the watery judgment. This can be seen as a picture of salvation—just as Noah and his family went through the door, so too we need to go through a "Door" to be saved. Jesus said, "I Am the Door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture." (John 10:9).

"Noah Is An Example For All Humanity"

Throughout human history there have been many evils committed. Why, then, didn't God punish every generation of humanity for its sinful behavior? One reason is that God is longsuffering and merciful to His creation (Exodus 34:6-7), not delighting in the destruction of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11). In His wisdom, sometimes God chooses to show mercy (Romans 9:15). Even though all people have sinned and do sin (Romans 3:23), only God can determine when an entire society or nation has violated His laws to a critical point where He will tolerate no more.

It was in God's perfect judgment that He destroyed the world during the days of Noah, allowing it to serve as an example for all mankind to learn from.

"There Is A Total Lack Of Fear Of A Holy And Righteous God"

We read in Genesis 6:11 that "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." Pick up the newspaper and you will see the hostility that fills the earth. Our nation's morality alone has sunk to the place where if God doesn't judge the world, He will need to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah! I would say that the world right now is very much like it was in the days of Noah. Jesus pointed out that in Noah's day, the people were totally oblivious to the coming judgment of God. They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. It was pretty much business as usual. There was no awareness that the judgment of God was about to fall upon them. They did not realize anything was wrong until Noah went into the ark and the rain began to fall. People today do not realize how ripe the world is for judgment. God is trying to shake us from our lethargy and wake us up. We are witnessing multitudes of disasters, earthquakes, hurricanes, fires, floods and famines. But try to suggest to a worldly person that these indicate the beginning of sorrows and God's judgment, and they will laugh at you. The world may acknowledge their belief in the existence of God, but they live as though God does not exist. There is a total lack of fear of a holy and righteous God.

"Will God Get Our Attention Before That Time?"



Noah, the prophet of God, was very likely mocked and ridiculed for preaching "Righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5). The Bible reveals that in the end time, prior to Christ's return, people will also ignore warnings to repent. As Peter notes, "Scoffers will come in the last days, ... saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming?'" (2 Peter 3:3-4)

Thankfully God is longsuffering, as we read in 2 Peter: "The Lord . . . is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9). But He is not going to stay silent forever. As in the days of Noah, the time will come when God closes the door of salvation and brings judgment to deal with mankind's rebellion.) Will God get our attention before that time? Will we repent of our sins and turn to God? And when Christ returns, "Will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). The Prophet Isaiah said, "Woe unto them who call evil good, and good evil" (Isaiah 5:20). Speaking of the future woes that are coming upon the earth, the angel proclaims in Revelation 8:13, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!" A day of reckoning is coming.