

## **God's Ark**

History's most famous boat is always referred to as "Noah's ark." After all, Noah built it. But the truth of the matter is, it was not his; it was God's ark. God commissioned it. "By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household . . ." (Hebrews 11:7). And God designed it. He told Noah, "This is how you shall make it . . ." (Genesis 6:15), followed by a list of specifics.

Human wisdom might have called for some changes to God's plan. "Cover it inside and out with pitch" surely did not produce a very aesthetic vessel. One door would never meet modern fire codes. And how could one window provide sufficient ventilation for a zoo full of animals? Perhaps it was a really lonnnnnng window!

If any of these alterations occurred to Noah, he did not act on them. To the contrary, the Bible says, "Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did." In fact, for emphasis, it says that twice (Genesis 6:22; 7:5).

Had Noah changed any of God's specifications, then it truly would have been "Noah's ark." He might have still called it "God's ark," but it would no longer be God's. And it would have floated about as well as a bottomless bucket!

Noah had too much integrity to tinker with God's will. He built by faith, which comes from hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). And he built in reverence, a respect for God that knows His way is always best, regardless of whether we see why. Noah simply obeyed.

Modern man needs to learn the lesson of God's ark. When we change God's blueprint, the result is our product, not His.

People have taken God's plan for the church and altered it in every way imaginable: its purpose, its work, its organization, its worship, its entrance requirements, etc. They still call it the Lord's church, but it isn't even a distant cousin to the church you read about in God's word. The same thing is true of marriage, baptism, and a number of other divine provisions.

In the days of the flood, disobedience characterized the lost, not the saved. That hasn't changed.

- by *Frank Himmel*

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## **Foolish Disregard**

To dismiss God from our decisions is a most foolish thing to do. The reality of God is the most massive truth we'll ever encounter, and the most consequential. It is folly to omit this truth from our thinking, as if we expected it to move out of our way.

Some individuals disregard God by adopting the intellectual position that He does not exist. These have thought the matter through and come to the conclusion that there is no God. In their conduct, they may live as if there were a God and may even adhere to a certain spirituality, but their position, at least philosophically, is that a personal God does not exist.

If God does exist, such a denial is obviously unwise. But many of us disregard Him in a way that is no less foolish. We do this when we simply conduct our lives without taking God into serious account. This is a more practical kind of atheism. We pay lip service to a God who "perhaps" exists, but we believe that this God can be safely set aside in the actual conduct of our day-to-day affairs. He has no real impact on our lives. In Psalm 14:1, it is this kind of "fool" who is described. He says "There is no God" not so much by his dubious philosophy, as by his disobedient lifestyle.

There is a sense in which this kind of atheism is more arrogant than any other. In Psalm 10, for example, we are shown how PRESUMPTUOUS it is to disregard God: "The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts" (v.4). "He has said in his heart, 'I shall not be moved; I shall never be in adversity'" (v.6). "He has said in his heart, 'God has forgotten; He hides His face; He will never see'" (v.11). "He has said in his heart, 'You will not require an account'" (v.13).

When we live in this manner, we trivialize God in the most blasphemous way. Unlike the atheist who believes there is no God to be dealt with, we believe that we don't really have to deal with the God who does exist. We think that, for all practical purposes, He can be ignored. But if God is our Creator, our disregard only shows us to be foolish. It does nothing to diminish Him.

- by Gary Henry

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### **"Full of Dead Men's Bones"**

News reports told of a discovery of an elderly blind woman slumped over in the doorway of her home. She was "confused and weak" and weighed only between 65 and 70 pounds. Closer investigation found that she was living among rotting garbage and large rats. The report said that "several dogs and cats were observed running loose through the house ... rats were eating the body of a dead dog inside the house ... the woman appeared to have flea and rat bites over her body ... there were no lights or water in the house, and the heat inside was so intense that the smoke alarm had been activated".

We're sickened and upset - how could this happen? Some additional information may provide the key. City codes enforcement officers examined the house and reported that, on the outside, the house was "very well kept, complete with a new paint job, a new roof, and a new electric meter center". One inspector said, "The house would be fit to rent to anybody right now based on what it looks like from the outside." The problem, obviously, was not with what was visible from the outside, but with what was not seen on the inside.

All of this put us to thinking about eternal things. We're concerned that many people have spiritual houses that are in this same shape. They make a pretense of religious service, but inwardly there is all manner of filth and corruption. Jesus spoke of some who "on the outside appear beautiful, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness" (Matt. 23:27).

What about you? What shape is your "house" in?

- by Greg Gwin