

Life as It Was in the Days of Noah

By PAUL J. SCHARF

In recent days, we have watched as enraged hordes of rioters have engaged in looting and all manner of destruction.

Public and private buildings have been burned to the ground, businesses have been plundered and destroyed and monuments of incalculable worth have been grossly defaced, if not obliterated. Innocent people have been seriously injured, even killed.

Entire communities have been decimated, and people—many for the first time in their lives—feel unsafe performing tasks that were once a routine part of everyday life.

Those perpetrating this evil are acting with a form of self-deception that borders on insanity. The best historical parallel that I can find for their actions is found “in the days of Noah” (Luke 17:26). Christ commented upon that period within His prophetic Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:37-39)—showing further how it serves as an illustration of the coming tribulation, “in the days of the Son of Man” (Luke 17:26).

In these passages, Jesus emphasized the mundane nature of life before the flood—“eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage” (Matt. 24:38). In other words, it was life apart from any thought of God, focused only on surviving and enjoying this world’s offerings. In fact, “if in this life only we have hope” (1 Cor. 15:19), we will be much more inclined not merely to find our highest pleasure here, but also to seek redress from every grievance.

And this gives us insight into the philosophy and worldview that motivated those who lived in “the world *that* then existed” which “perished, being flooded with water” (2 Pet. 3:6).

Moses demonstrated how this line of thinking exhibited itself in Genesis 6:5:

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

To achieve such a thorough practice of depravity as this, men and women had to be demonically energized. In the normal course of life, almost all people subconsciously practice a doctrine that has come to be known as *common grace* (see Matt. 5:45).

But Genesis 6:11 further instructs us as to the state of the culture in Noah’s day:

The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

If you are stuck with car trouble on the side of the road and see a car pulling up behind you to stop, your first assumption is that they are coming to check on you or provide assistance—not that they will likely attack you and rob you of all that you have, leaving you in a pool of blood. The latter does happen, and when we see it on the news it still

shocks us. But we would all hate to live in a world where it becomes the normal expectation. But that was indeed the nature of the antediluvian world. The only recourse was the threat of impending judgment.

It strikes me that such judgment was to be exhibited, first of all, by the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit—in the sense that He would cease to “strive with man” (Gen. 6:3).

Being omnipresent as the Third Member of the Godhead, the Spirit could not leave the earth—but He could change His function among people. The Bible implies here that this would be the end of God’s inner conviction working within the hearts of men. Once that ceased, overt judgment would fall.

This certainly reminds us of the coming tribulation, when the work of the Holy Spirit will again change significantly (2 Thess. 2:7). The presence of the Holy Spirit indwelling the church will leave the world in the same way that it came, on the day of Pentecost (John 14:20). This will occur when the church is caught up to be with Christ in heaven (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Then judgment will fall on the entire world, just as it did through the flood.

On this Independence Day weekend, we must pray that our nation will regain its spiritual and moral sanity. Indeed, one of the highest ideals for government is to provide an atmosphere in which “we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence” (1 Tim. 2:2).

We must also continue to use all opportunities for spiritual advancement, even as Noah was “a preacher of righteousness” (2 Pet. 2:5) during that period “when once the Divine longsuffering waited . . . while *the* ark was being prepared” (1 Pet. 3:20). We may presume that he carried out this ministry with the grace which he had “found . . . in the eyes of the LORD” (Gen. 6:8).

We must also keep looking up. The last four months’ worth of crises certainly seem to offer a most opportune and dramatic scenario in which prophetic events might begin to unfold.

May God help us to be faithful until then, even in “*such* a time as this” (Est. 4:14).

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