

CHAPTER ONE

THE DAYS OF NOAH

"Between 3,500 and 4,000 churches close their doors each year in the USA."

- Dr. Woodrow Kroll,
The Vanishing Ministry.

"We are a society poised on the brink of self-destruction. Our culture is plagued with crime and violence, drug abuse, racial and ethnic tension, broken families and corruption."

- Billy Graham,
upon receiving the Congressional
Gold Medal from the US Congress
and President Clinton.

"Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

- Matthew 24:3.

The Disciples asked for a sign that would show how close we are to the end of the world. On two separate occasions Christ had cautioned them against speculating about the exact time (Matthew 24:36; Acts 1:7). However, He did give them a number of signs that would indicate its approaching nearness:

"When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

Since all the signs are currently visible on the world stage, it appears that we are now moving rapidly toward the end of history, and the close of this present age. Here are five of the most important signs:

- The reestablishment of Israel, with the Jews

returning to their God-given homeland, Luke 21:24; Matthew 24:32-34; Ezekiel 37:21; 38:8.

- The rise of the "Common Market," a coalition of nations in Europe, moving toward union, Daniel 2:40-45; Revelation 17:12.
- The increase of world-wide persecution against Christians and Jews, Matthew 24:9-10; Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 12:1.
- The increase of world-wide famines and imbalanced ecology, Matthew 24:7.
- The rise of apostasy in Christianity, II Thessalonians 2:3; Matthew 24:11-12.

The greatest sign, however, is given in Matthew 24:37-39, where Jesus said:

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

Dr. M. R. DeHaan, the late prophetic radio preacher, gave the following comments on those verses:

Jesus says, if you want to know the signs of My coming, study the days of Noah before the flood. When the conditions which existed before the flood are repeated, then know that it is near. This leaves anyone who has a Bible without excuse. Everything we know about the days before the flood is recorded in three chapters of the Bible (Genesis 4, 5, and 6). These three chapters can be read in thirty minutes...Since all we know about the days to which Jesus refers as the days of Noah is found in the

Bible, no one can plead ignorance. To understand Jesus' words concerning the sign of His return we need only to study the three chapters dealing with the subject (Genesis 4, 5, and 6).¹

Since the purpose of this book is conversion, we will examine the days of Noah from that perspective.

Genesis 4:26 tells us:

"And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then men began to call upon the name of the Lord."

Enos died in the year 1140 after the Creation, eighty-four years after Noah was born (1056 years after the Creation). Since people lived between eight and nine hundred years, many thousands of people who "called on the name of the Lord" in Enos' day were still living in Noah's day. It should be remembered that there were only two lifetimes between the Creation and the Flood.

Dr. Henry M. Morris indicates that "Adam lived until Lamech, the father of Noah, was fifty-six years old, and Noah was born only fourteen years after the death of Seth."² This means that there were many people still living who had "called on the name of the Lord" when the Flood came. If each couple had an average of ten children, that would mean that there were about eight million people on earth at the time of the Flood.

They Called on the Name of the Lord, Yet Drowned in the Flood

Genesis 4:26 says, "then *began* men to call upon the name of the Lord." The verse indicates that this "calling" continued for some time, which means that *a large number of those who drowned in the Flood had called on the Lord's name, but were not saved.* As God said later to the prophet Isaiah:

"This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me" (Isaiah 29:13).

This was the case in Noah's day as well.

Keeping in mind the fact that uncounted multitudes had "called on the name of the Lord" in Noah's day, and yet were drowned, the words of Jesus take on deep meaning:

"As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be...(they) knew not until the flood came and took them all away" (Matthew 24:37, 39).

The people of Noah's day had "a form of godliness" (II Timothy 3:5), but were destroyed in the waters of the Flood because they were unsaved:

for *all flesh* had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of *all flesh* is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth (Genesis 6:12-13).

Out of all the multiplied thousands who had called on the name of the Lord, only Noah and his family were saved.

(God) spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly (II Peter 2:5).

We conclude that those who called on the Lord, but were destroyed in the Flood, were unsaved people who went to Hell, since Peter calls them "the ungodly" in verse five, and gives them as an illustration of those who are reserved "unto the day of judgment to be punished" (II Peter 2:9).

Jesus said that these conditions would repeated at the end of this age.

A Repetition in Our Time

Today, millions of people have called on the name of the Lord and think they are converted. But many are not. They have not come into the ark of salvation. They are not in Christ. They are religious but lost.

God said of the people in Noah's day; "My spirit shall not always strive with man" (Genesis 6:4). The Hebrew word translated "strive" is "dîn." It

means "judge." Dr. H. C. Leupold pointed out that the Holy Spirit was "reproving and judging men."³ He went on to say:

This work of His had gone on until this point, aiming to correct and to check the strong propensity toward evil during the days of progressive degeneration. In spite of all the Spirit's corrective efforts "mankind" ('adham) had persisted in abandoning the way of truth and life...Man is no longer simply sinful, as he has been right along since the Fall; the race has also as a whole practically sunk to the level of being flesh (basar), just plain, ordinary, weak and sinful stock, abandoned to a life of sin.⁴

"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" (Genesis 6:5).

Leupold went on to point out that "Two significant instances have told the whole story: the Sethites had grown indifferent to their heritage; the Cainites had developed high-handed violence."⁵

Jesus said, "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37). The Sethites picture the evangelicals of our day who have "grown indifferent to their heritage," having given up the old way of conversion, held by Baptists and Protestants before Charles G. Finney ruined evangelicalism in the last century.

Over 3,500 U. S. Churches Close Each Year!

If it seems that our conclusion is too strong, consider the following statistics, given by Woodrow Kroll, the director of Back to the Bible, in his book, *The Vanishing Ministry*:

Many American churches are not healthy. It is estimated that 80-85 percent of American churches have plateaued or are declining.

The number of churches in America is not growing. ***In 1900 there were 27 churches for every 10,000 Americans. In 1985 this figure had declined so drastically that it is painful to report. There are now***

only 12 churches for every 10,000 Americans; less than half the former amount. Yes, this is the day of the super church, but even the phenomenon of the super church cannot account for this decline.

Add to this the number of churches that are now closing. There are over 66,000 closed churches in America. Another 62,000 are presently without pastors. *Between 3,500 and 4,000 churches close their doors each year in the USA.*

In 1900, 66 percent of the American population belonged to Bible-believing soul-winning churches. They all professed faith in Christ as Saviour. Yet it is predicted that *by the year 2000 there will be only 33 percent of the American population who belong to a church.*⁶

It should also be noted that the churches which do exist today are very often *not* Bible-believing. Many of them have become liberal since 1900. *The percentage of Americans who attend church has been cut in half since 1900, and many of the churches that still exist are not preaching the old gospel today.* This has happened, ironically, in a nation where the vast majority of the people claim to be saved.

Consider also the following poll, reprinted from the *Baptist Bible Tribune*:

**BORN AGAIN CHRISTIANS
IGNORANT OF FAITH⁷**

**Baptist Bible Tribune
April 15, 1996
page 28**

(Reprinted by permission from the Tribune)

**Survey Also Finds Hell's Description
Divides Americans**

GLENDALE, CA - The majority of born again Christians (87%) indicate their religious beliefs are very important

in their lives today. However, claiming that religion's influence is significant doesn't necessarily translate into a personal faith consistent with biblical teaching. A new national survey of American adults by the Barna Research Group found that eight in ten (84%) born again Christians hold the non-biblical view on at least one of eight statements of biblical teaching tested in the survey.

"Born again Christians" are defined as individuals who say they have "made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in (your) life today" and who chose one of seven alternatives posed regarding life after death. That alternative reads "when you die you will go to Heaven because you have confessed your sins and have accepted Jesus Christ as (your) savior." Respondents were not asked to categorize themselves as "born again."

Survey results

Born again Christians exhibit surprisingly high levels of ignorance on the following core Christian tenets:

- Eight in ten (80%) born again Christians agree with the statement, "the Bible teaches that God helps those who help themselves."
- Half (49%) agree with the statement, "the devil, or Satan, is not a living being but is a symbol of evil."
- By definition all born again Christians believe they, personally, will go to heaven because they have "confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their savior." However, four in ten (39%) of the born again segment also maintain that "if a person is generally good, or does enough good things for others during their life, they will earn a place in heaven."
- Three in ten (30%) claim that "Jesus Christ was a great teacher, but he did not come back to physical life after he was crucified."
- Twenty-nine percent contend that "when he lived on earth, Jesus Christ was human and committed sins, like other people."

- The same percentage (29%) assert that "there are some crimes, sins, or other things which people might do which cannot be forgiven by God."

- One-quarter (26%) disagree that "(they), personally, have a responsibility to tell other people (their) religious beliefs."

- Fifteen percent disagree that "the Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings."

Bible reading in the survey

The survey findings also highlighted patterns in the Bible readership of Americans. One-third of all Americans (34%) have read from the Bible in the last seven days. That figure is essentially unchanged from the 1995 level, but reflects a sharp decline from 47% in 1992.

More than half of all born again Christians (57%) had read the Bible in the last week. Even among born again Christians, Bible readership is a shade lower than the percentage measured in 1993 (58%).

Americans' views of Hell

The survey also found much disparity among Americans' views of Hell. Three in ten adults (31%) see Hell as an actual location: "a place of physical torment where people may be sent." Slightly more adults, nearly four in ten (37%), say "Hell is not a place, but it represents a state of permanent separation from the presence of God." Describing Hell as merely a symbolic term, not referring to a physical place was true for two in ten Americans (19%). Ten percent of adults were undecided on their views of Hell.

This survey presents a dark picture of the Christianity in our nation.

The Days of Noah

We do not profess to know how large or small the number of truly born again Christians may be. From the various statistics we have given, however, the number seems to be small:

"Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and should have been like unto Gomorrah" (Isaiah 1:9).

Many have noticed that the spiritual condition of our generation is comparable to the days of Noah, but few have understood how this great apostasy came about in history. How did so many denominations, which formerly preached the gospel, descend into apostasy in the last hundred years? How can such a large percentage of people claim to be saved today without believing the basic teachings of the Bible and without this having much of a positive effect on our crumbling society?

Churchill Saw Civilization Itself Crumbling

To answer these questions, we must go back in history. Winston Churchill, the British historian and statesman, had already noticed the decay of Western civilization when he made this statement during the "roaring twenties":

What a disappointment the Twentieth Century has been.
How terrible and how melancholy
is the long series of disastrous events
which have darkened its first twenty years.
We have seen in every country a dissolution,
a weakening of those bonds,
a challenge to those principles
a decay of faith
an abridgement of hope
on which the structure and ultimate existence
of civilized society depends.⁸

He was right when he said that back in 1922. By 1935, Hitler was

already on the march and Britain was suffering one humiliation after another. Churchill knew that Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin was too hopelessly weak to do anything about the growing Nazi menace. He recited in Parliament a poem from an 1883 edition of *Punch*, which he had memorized as a boy:

Who is in charge of the clattering train?
The axles creak and the couplings strain;
And the pace is hot, and the points are near,
And sleep has deadened the driver's ear;
And the signals flash through the night in vain,
For death is in charge of the clattering train.⁹

Prime Minister Baldwin was asleep at the throttle. A skeleton ran the train. And that's the way it is again, sixty years later. Our culture is still clattering toward destruction. No strong, sure voice is heard to guide us. Our churches have either frozen to death in cold orthodoxy or fallen in a mass of laughter to the floor in so-called "laughing revivals" and "Brownsville awakenings."

**Billy Graham Sees the Problem,
But Not the Answer**

Upon receiving the Congressional Gold Medal in May, 1996, Billy Graham correctly said:

We are a society poised on the brink of self-destruction.
Our culture is plagued with crime and violence, drug
abuse, racial and ethnic tension, broken families and
corruption.¹⁰

Yet Dr. Graham offers no solution other than yet another of his crusades, which, though given prime-time television exposure for close to fifty years, have contributed little to the solution, and are probably part of the problem.

Western culture is rapidly declining into uncivilized savagery, our actions primitive, caustic, cruel, and increasingly subhuman. Such a descent into barbarism did not come suddenly. We slid into it gradually over about fourteen decades. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones spoke of "The terrible apostasy that has increasingly characterized the church for the last hundred years."¹¹

The purpose of this book is to show how such apostasy came about and to do so in simple terms, understandable to the average man. Why is this important? Mainly because so many who think they are saved are actually going to Hell. Jesus said:

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
(Matthew 7:22-23)

So many today have done a "wonderful work" of one sort or another, and therefore proclaim themselves saved. But "wonderful works," whether they be lifting the hand during an invitation, or saying the mere words of a sinner's prayer, will not save a human soul. "Depart from me. I never knew you." These are the words that await many thousands of people.

The true task of a preacher is to unmask the "wonderful works" of men and to reveal to them the fact that they are hopelessly lost sinners. That sort of preaching has brought anger and even violence, as illustrated in the days of Whitefield and Wesley, even down to our own day, when men like W. P. Nicholson and Duncan Campbell exposed religious-but-lost Protestants for what they were: Sinners in the hands of an angry God.

The task of this book is to show how we got where we are and to give an answer in simple language. If we fail, we will at least have the consolation of having tried, which is far better than doing nothing in a day when "death is in charge of the clattering train."

FOOTNOTES

¹M. R. DeHaan, *The Days of Noah* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963), p. 20.

²Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1976), p. 154.

³H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1976), p. 255.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 260.

⁶Woodrow Kroll, *The Vanishing Ministry* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1991), pp. 31-33.

⁷*Baptist Bible Tribune*, April 15, 1996, p. 28.

⁸Winston S. Churchill speech, recorded by Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill, Volume IV, World in Torment, 1917-1922* (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1975), pp. 914-915. When Churchill spoke, he did not use notes. Instead, he read the entire text of every speech. These speeches were typed out in broken lines to aid in delivery. Lord Halifax, followed by Churchill's staff, called this his "psalm form," because it looked like it was set down for singing. See William Manchester, *Visions of Glory 1874-1932* (Boston: Little Brown, 1983), p. 32; Manchester, *Alone 1932-1940* (Boston: Little Brown, 1988), pp. 33-34.

⁹William Manchester, *The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill; Alone: 1932-1940* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1988), p. 148.

¹⁰*Los Angeles Times*, May 3, 1996, p. A-10.

¹¹D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Revival* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1987), p. 57.