

## “Sunday School Legends” Regarding Noah and the Ark

When we teach the Bible it's important to be accurate! The story of Noah has accumulated many details that have been repeated from generation to generation, but which aren't Scriptural. Here are three:

1. That Noah was building the ark for 120 years (derived from God's statement in Gen. 6:3).

This can't be what the 120 years are referring to because:

a. Noah was 500 years old when he had sons:

And Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Gen 5:32).

b. Noah was 600 years old when the flood came:

Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth (Gen. 7:6).

c. All three sons were married when God told Noah to build the ark:

And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth....And God said to Noah,...“Make yourself an ark of gopherwood....But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark -- you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you” (Gen. 6:10,13-14,18).

Therefore, the maximum time to build the ark was 100 years minus the number of years it took from the time Noah was 500 until the last son was married -- thus, considerably less than 100 years.

Since none of the sons had children until after the flood, and since it was unusual for couples to go childless for long periods after they were married, and since we know Shem had his first son 2 years after the flood at age 100 (Gen. 11:10), it is likely that the last son to get married did so not long before the flood came, leaving at most a few years to build the ark.

2. That the people around scoffed and laughed at Noah for building the ark.

This is pure speculation without one word of support in the Bible!

3. That there was opportunity for others to come into the ark.

God repeatedly declared that His intention was to physically destroy all mankind, except for Noah and his family:

So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD (Gen. 6:7-8).

And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth" (Gen. 6:13).

"And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die" (Gen. 6:17).

And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive (Gen. 7:21-23).

God never invited anyone into the ark except Noah and his family:

Then the LORD said to Noah, "Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation" (Gen. 7:1).