

Modeling Noah's Ark

In 1609 – about the time of the first English settlement in Jamestown – a shipbuilder in Holland by the name of Peter Jansen had an idea after reading the biblical account of Noah's Ark.



He reasoned that if God had designed the Ark, it should be the ideal plan.

Genesis chapters 6-9 tell the story of how Patriarch Noah, following the Lord's instructions, built the vessel that saved him, his family, and a remnant of all the world's animals from the great flood. The waters that would cover the earth would be God's judgment because of mankind's evil deeds.

Jansen began his ambitious plan with a large-scale model of the Ark demonstrating its effective design and proportions. The result was a ship with more cargo space and less wind and water resistance than its ungainly predecessors of his day.

He built the vessel to the proportions of the Ark – 120 feet long, 20 feet wide, and 12 feet high (which approximated one-fourth scale). Biblical specifications, translated into modern terms, would have made the Ark 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.

Jansen's ship was found to behave so steadily in the sea and to have such ample stowage in relation to its weight that a number of similar boats were built. They fell into disuse only because of the difficulty of arranging for motive power and steering, which was less a problem with Noah's Ark on a shoreless ocean.

Though it was ridiculed while it was under construction – as Noah's project no doubt was – it was found after launching that it would carry one-third more freight, would sail faster, and was much safer than the old type of ships. Today, with but little variation, modern ships are built on the general plan of Noah's Ark.

We should not be surprised that Jansen's faith in God's design of the Ark worked. After all, we serve the Master Builder. He created the universe, planet Earth, and all that is within it. But we – male and female – are God's crowning creation. We are made in His image.

Further, our Lord prepared us with a plan in mind to accomplish His purposes.

And chief among them is serving others.

– Beecher Hunter