

The Faith of Noah¹

Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC

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Text: Hebrews 11:7

Purpose: Noah was a righteous man who warned others of the coming judgment, and was obedient to what he was told to do – even to the point of ridicule. His faith saved himself and his family, thereby preserving humanity with a new hope.

Three aspiring psychiatrists were attending their first class on emotional extremes.

"Just to establish some parameters," said the professor to the student from Arkansas, "What is the opposite of joy?"
"Sadness," said the student.

He turned and asked of the young lady from Oklahoma, "And the opposite of depression?"
"Elation," she said.

"And you sir," he said to the young man from Texas, "What is the opposite of woe?"
The Texan replied, "Sir, I believe that would be giddy up."²



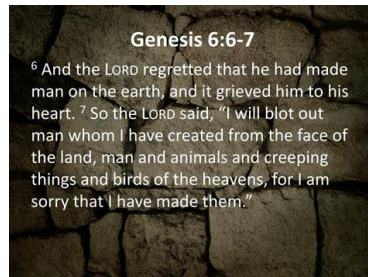
It would appear that the world in which Noah was living became filled with woe! And to all that woe, God told Noah, it is time for you to giddy up and build an ark.

It must have been awful during Noah's day. Darkness and woe everywhere. Genesis 6:11-12 says, "*Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become for all the people on the earth had corrupted their ways.*"



Maybe you have heard the saying, "Water, water, everywhere, and not a drop to drink." In Noah's day, it could be said, "Darkness, darkness, everywhere, and not a light to spare." But there was one bright spot on the horizon, that was the faith of Noah.

Genesis 6:7-8 says this about God's response to the darkness and this one bright spot. "*So, the Lord said, 'I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth – men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air – for I am grieved that I have made them.'* But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord." Noah was the only ray of sunshine in a world gone dark with sin and evil.



FAITH'S CERTAINTY

Faith must have something in which it believes in. In Noah's case, God told Noah of things that had not yet happened. God said He was going to destroy the entire world – animals, birds, plants, trees, and people by a great cataclysmic flood. God was sending his judgment by way of a flood.



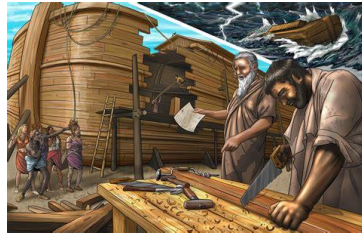
Prior to this flooding, the scripture does not even record it had ever rained. It may have, but the stories in Genesis indicate that a mist covered the earth and provided the necessary moisture for plant life.

Also included in God's warning to Noah were instructions to build a boat. This was not just any boat; it was a huge undertaking. This floating vessel which we call the ark, was to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. (Genesis 6:15) To get a visual illustration as to how big this actually is, it is one and a half football field's long, as wide as a football field, and about four stories high. I have not had the opportunity to go see it, but there is a replica of the Ark in Kentucky. Imagine the faith it took on Noah's part to believe God and then go to all the effort and energy to build something this large.



The opening verse in Hebrews 11 says, “*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*”

Noah must have gotten a clear vision of what could not be seen



in order to drive him to complete the task before him. The ark was to become the place of salvation for Noah, his wife, his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives. Eight humans were saved along with two of every animal on the face of the earth. This floating ark was the future for a world that would be destroyed and judged by water.

Noah believed God and acted on the certainty of that yet unseen future. Noah became the tower of faith. Faith is belief plus trust. R. Kent Hughes describes it this way. “Faith hears God’s word and believes with a profound certainty that makes the promise present so that the believer actually sees it and rests everything on God. Faith still requires that we believe God’s word and rest our lives on it.

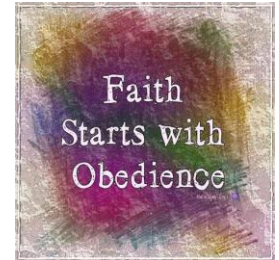
FAITH’S OBEDIENCE

The great thing about Noah was his obedience. He began to build the ark according to the direction and instruction of the Lord. “*By faith*

Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family.” There across the Fertile Crescent, probably far away from water, Noah began to lay the keel of that great ship.



His obedience was one of reverence. Noah obeyed because of a “holy fear.” I do not believe that Noah was scared of the coming judgment, but he was assured of the truthfulness of the coming flood and out of respect and reverence for God, Noah set about the task before him. He went about building the ark not out of fear of punishment, but out of the kind of fear that does not want to displease someone you love.



This “holy fear” is the same manner in which we need to come to God.

We need to have a life of obedience. If God has given clear instruction to us, then we need to cultivate a heart of obedience. The dark world, in which we live in today, needs a ray of light that demonstrates our obedience. Simply knowing what we should do is not enough. We need to do it. God told Noah to build an ark to save his family. And Noah did exactly what he was told. Genesis 6:22 says, “*Noah did everything just as God commanded him.*” He followed the blueprints implicitly.

Can you imagine all the questions, insults, and jokes Noah must have endured as he built this massive boat. Noah took 120 years to complete the boat. When it was completed, it laid like a massive coffin on dry land.

We need to understand genuine faith obeys. It obeys with a reverential heart. True faith acts upon what we are instructed to do.

FAITH'S WITNESS

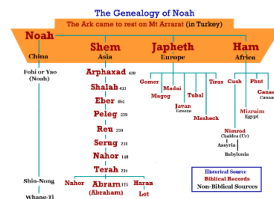
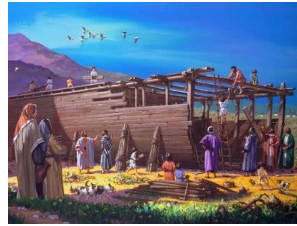
Our obedience to God produces a witness to the world. If we reject the things of God, then that is a witness of disobedience. If we are faithful in what God has instructed us to do, say, and believe, then that is a testimony and witness to the watching world. Faith involves a certainty of belief, this in turn produces obedience, which then produces a witness.

Noah's faith actually became the condemnation to an unbelieving, evil world. The scripture says, "*By his faith he condemned the world.*"

2 Peter 2:5 says this about Noah, "*and (God) did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly.*" What this means is that while Noah was

hammering away on the boat, pounding the wooden dowels in the wooden joints, he preached to the ungodly that would come and gawk at him. It could also mean that Noah took time to walk through the towns and villages, warning people of the coming judgment. His message was a call to faith in God, repentance, and righteous living.

Noah faithfully preached righteousness for 120 years! His life became a witness to a world that so desperately needed to repent. His life and faith condemned the world.



The scripture does not record one convert during that time! All the world perished except his family. By today's standard of evangelism, Noah would be considered a failure. But we need to accept and recognize, a true and faithful witness of God leaves the results up to God!

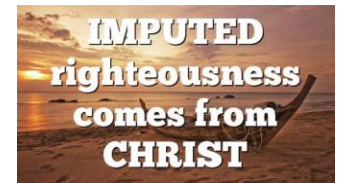
FAITH'S INHERITANCE

According to the scripture, Noah became "*heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.*" We need to understand that this "righteousness" that Noah inherited was not because of anything that Noah did to acquire it. It was given unto Noah as an inheritance because he exercised his faith.

By Faith Noah, When Warned
About Things Not Yet Seen,
In Holy Fear Built An Ark To
Save His Family. By His Faith
He Condemned The World
And Became Heir Of The
Righteousness That Comes By
Faith.
Hebrews 11:7

On several occasions Paul refers to this kind of righteousness as coming from God.

Romans 1:16-17 describes this righteousness as the "*righteousness of God.*"



Romans 3:22 says, "*This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.*"

In Philippians 3:9 Paul said that he might "*be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.*"

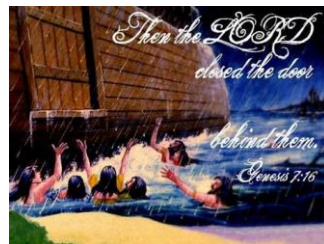
It is not our righteousness that enables us to be restored back into fellowship with God, it is actually God's righteousness that has been applied to us as we accept by faith the things of God and act in obedience to His revealed will. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "*God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*"

Self generated righteousness will never be enough to reunite us back to God. Only by Christ's righteousness can we be made justified before God. When we believe that Jesus died for our sins and trust Him alone for our salvation, then and only then can we be saved.

Last week we discussed Enoch and how he faithfully walked with God. Genesis 6:9 says this about Noah: "*Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.*" His walking with God included the same place, the same path, and at the same pace.

FAITH'S SALVATION

Noah was saved by faith and his faith led to his salvation.



Noah was obedient to every detail the Lord had given him. He collected his family into the ark. He brought seven of every clean animal, and two each of the unclean animals. And when they were all in, the Lord shut the door to the ark (Genesis 7:16). They waited seven days and then it began to rain.

The time of judgment had come and the people of the earth would be destroyed. Noah was 600 years old the year the flood came. The scripture says it was the second month and the seventeenth day when the foundations of the earth were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the flood waters lifted the ark up over the mountain tops. Noah had endured ridicule for 120 years, and now only he and his family were saved.

After five months, the waters receded enough for them to land on Mount Ararat. It took another seven months before Noah and his family would leave the ark and begin to settle on the earth once again. Through obedience and faith, Noah's family was saved.



But God is coming again to judge this world. He promised Noah and all of humanity that he would never judge the world by way of a flood again. He placed the rainbow in the sky as a promise to us that the rains may come, but world-wide destruction would not occur like that again.

Jesus said this about our coming judgment...

"As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood

came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.” (Matthew 24:37-39)

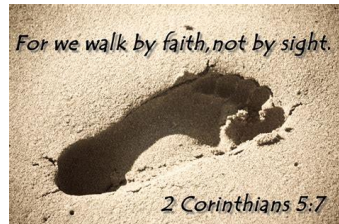
While there was time, Noah prepared and exercised his faith. He was obedient long before the coming judgment. Those that ignored the warnings were consumed in the flood. Jesus has promised us that He WILL return one day and He WILL judge us all. We will not have time to respond at the last minute – it will be too late.



The scripture tells us *“Today is the day of salvation.”* Repent, turn from your sin, accept Christ as your Savior, while there is still time. We live in a dark world. But faith is the light that pushes away the darkness. To all the woe in the world, we need a “giddy up” attitude and move forward with God by faith.

Habakkuk 2:4 says, *“The righteous will live by faith.”*

Are you walking by faith?



LET US PRAY

Notes:

¹ Outline from R. Kent Hughes Commentary on Hebrews

² Mikey’s Funnies, August 17, 2008