

Noah – A Preacher of Righteousness

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Hebrews 11:7)

The name “Noah” is said to carry the meaning of “Rest”, or “Comfort”, referring to how through him comfort would be obtained: “he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which Yahweh hath cursed” (Gen. 5:29). In our considerations today, we shall consider Noah as one who saved his house by faith in action and thus provides a wonderful example of loyalty for us to emulate.

Our opening citation essentially has 6 aspects, which we shall consider in turn:

1. By Faith
2. Moved with Fear
3. Prepared an Ark
4. Saved his house
5. Condemned the world
6. Was an Heir of righteousness by faith.

1. BY FAITH

We shall consider this aspect further in our consideration of point 6, but a few observations seem to be relevant here: The Genesis account testifies to the character of Noah:

“These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a **just man and perfect** in his generations, and Noah **walked with God**” (Gen. 6:9).

To “walk with God” implies a union of mind and purpose, for how “can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3). Micah also describes this immense privilege:

“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Yahweh require of thee, But to do justly, and to love mercy, **and to walk humbly with thy God**” (Mic. 6:8).

To truly walk with God implies a great humility: “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, With him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit ...” (Isa. 57:15). It is a great condescension indeed for the Almighty to allow His servants to walk with Him, and it is to those “just” men and women, who “love mercy” and who walk in humility, that he will extend such a privilege.

2. MOVED WITH FEAR

It is written that “there is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love” (1 Jno. 4:18). But the fear here is a terror, as distinct to a healthy reverence towards God. It is this reverential fear that Noah had, and which must exist in us also:

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably **with reverence and godly fear**” (Heb. 12:28).

We must not live in a state of being terrified by a fear of God, but rather have “reverence and a godly fear”. If we walk with Him in love, there is no need for terror, but there is always a need for reverence in the presence of the Almighty Creator. There must be no over familiarity in our speech when we pray

to Him, but a constant recognition of His Greatness, Power and Majesty.

3. PREPARED AN ARK

The Ark that Noah built under Divine direction was the ultimate visual aid. His labours testified to his conviction that the judgments of God were about to commence, and were a sign to those around him. Genesis 6:12 informs us that:

“God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt for ***all flesh had corrupted His Way*** upon the earth” (Gen. 6:12).

The purpose of the Ark was to save from the corruption of the flesh, and the judgments which were to be brought about because of it. In a similar way, the believers are described as “having escaped ***the corruption*** that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:4), through the principles of salvation directed by God. The means by which that salvation might be brought about are not left to human caprice, but is as specified by Divine Revelation. Only by obeying the Divine Command was Noah able to save his household.

4. SAVING HIS HOUSE

Peter also describes this aspect of Noah’s work:

“... when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water” (1 Pet. 3:20).

Although the world was ripe for judgment, God “waited” whilst the Ark was made ready – so that just 8 souls could be saved from destruction. But notice that Peter writes that the 8 were saved “by” water, not saved “from” water. Although it was certainly the case that this faithful family were saved from the waters of destruction, being lifted up by the rising waters they were also saved from the corruption that was in the world through lust (as per above).

Noah saved his house through his faith in action. The principle is that exhibited in the proverbs:

“the wicked are overthrown, and are not but the house of the righteous shall stand” (Prov. 12:7).

We also see a case in point in the example of Rahab: “By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace” (Heb. 11:31). But she also saved her household:

“Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and ***thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father’s household, home unto thee.*** And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him” (Josh. 2:18-19).

Rahab’s house literally stood when the wicked were overthrown (Josh. 6:22), and so saved those who were in it. In a similar fashion the Ark survived the pouring out of Divine judgments, and so saved those who were in it. Sometimes the question arises as to whether the Lord Jesus Christ had a personal need for salvation – and the case of the Ark is helpful. Did the Ark also have to be saved in order to save those within it? Of course! Even so, Messiah saved himself in order to save those whose are constitutionally in him. Like Noah, he saves his household through faith and obedience.

5. CONDEMNED THE WORLD

Here is an illustration of the purpose of preaching. Not only is it necessary to provide salvation, but it is also to reprove the world by the exhibition of Divine standards. The purpose of the Holy Spirit given to the Apostles was to “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (Jno. 16:8). The believers, as well as preaching the glad tidings of future blessing must also give reproof: “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11). There is another day of judgment soon to come upon the earth, and it is the responsibility of Messiah’s brethren to sound the warning. By so doing they shall not be condemned with the world (1 Cor. 11:32), but will survive through the antitypical ark. They look forward to the future in hope “to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1 Thes. 1:10).

6. HEIR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

The example of Noah demonstrates faith in action. James exhorts: “be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (Jas. 1:22). Had Noah not built the Ark, there would have been no salvation, and no hope for his family. It was necessary for Noah to demonstrate his trust in the warning of God by constructing the Ark. He had faith that Yahweh would bring him through the stormy weather, to a new age beyond. The Lord Jesus Christ speaks of those who obey his commandments thus:

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock” (Mat. 7:24-25).

Survival during a raging storm can only be accomplished by doing the commandments of Christ. Just as Noah was saved when the rain fell, and the fountains of the deep were opened up, even so those who build upon the rockbed of Scripture will be saved when the winds of adverse circumstances come. But for those who built upon sand – their house fell: “and great was the fall of it” (vs. 27). The lessons are there for our learning and admonition.

The faith of Noah was counted to him for righteousness (Heb. 11:7, cp Rom. 4, whole chapter). It was not his obedience that counted him righteous – for he could not earn salvation by works. He had no intrinsic “right” to be saved, but by Grace it was so: “Noah **found grace** in the eyes of Yahweh” (Gen. 6:8). He was saved by faith through Grace, providing he did what was commanded of him, to the saving of his entire household of 8 persons.

A PREACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Peter describes how that 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” (2 Pet. 2:5). He built an ark designed to float on water in the middle of dry land – something which would, doubtless, bring scorn and derision upon him. Virtually all around him disregarded his message and paid no attention to his preaching. Jesus himself compared the situation with the day of his own “coming”:

“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” (Mat. 24:37-39).

What is particularly notable, is the description that they “knew not until the flood came”. But how is it that they did not know? Noah was preaching to them – and that with a very dramatic visual aid! But the point is that they blundered on through life disregarding the warnings of an eccentric crackpot (so they thought), so that the day of judgment came upon them by surprise: they “knew not”. Even so it

was in the Lord's mortal ministry. Men continued as if all things were going to remain the same, eating, drinking, marrying and conducting their affairs as if nothing was going to happen. Even so it will be when Messiah comes again: our words of preaching and reproof will go unheeded for the most part, not being taken seriously by the hearers.

But there were three individuals who did listen to Noah. In due time, his sons married three women, who thus became part of the small family of believers:

“in the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, And Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and **the three wives** of his sons with them, into the ark ...” (Gen. 7:13).

These comprised a family of faith, who would look beyond the day of ridicule and derision, to the day when they would emerge from the ark into the beginning of a new age and world.

A NEW AGE

When Noah and his family finally left the Ark, they were the only remnant left of the entire human race. For the first time, the world was populated only by faithful men and women – and thus foreshadows the day when once again the earth shall be judged, and will be populated only by those who found refuge in the Christ-Ark. But this harmonious situation was soon sullied by the unsavoury events described in Genesis chapter 9. Sin in the flesh remained strong within even those who were faithful, and so there was another fall from grace, which tarnishes the record of this faithful family which held together for so long whilst the ark was under preparation.

In the life of Noah and his family, we can discern many points of instruction for ourselves. Despite their small number, they remained faithful amidst a crooked and perverse generation. They kept themselves separate from the excesses of the world around them, even though they were disbelieved, and few took them seriously. But they trusted in the Lord's power to save them from their untoward generation, and from the wrath of God to come upon it. When the rains fell, and the fountains of the deep were broken up, there may well have been many who protested that they led good lives, and did not deserve to die. But the point was, they were not in the ark. The day of opportunity had come to an end, and the door was shut. The world of the ungodly was swept away, and only those who had chosen to embrace the appointed way of salvation were saved. This is “the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us” (1 Pet. 3:21). We cannot plead our own righteousness, but must instead submit to the way of salvation ordained by God. If we are not in the Christ-Ark, there is no other means of salvation. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jno. 3:16). What scope is there for a greater love than that? The Lord has graciously extended an arm of salvation (Isa. 63:5) through the provision of His Son, but unless we grasp hold of it, it will not save us.

It is written that “the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgement to be punished” (2 Pet. 2:9). Whilst we live in a world where men's hearts are failing them for fear, the true believers look forward in hope and anticipation. All that is in the world shall soon come to an end, as the dawning of a new age shall follow the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. We must consider our own standing in relation to these things – and take heed to the example of a small family who held fast to their hope, and were saved by the grace and mercy of their Lord.

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