



Light from the Word

The Faith of Noah

Theme verse: *“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.”¹*

Imagine being warned by God of inconceivable destruction coming upon the earth and instructed to build a huge odd-looking vessel to save yourself and your family. In obedience, you sacrifice decades of your life, preaching righteousness to unbelievers who scoff at your words and ridicule your work. Few of us endure such fiery trials of faith. Yet all of us are called to walk faithfully with God and maintain our belief in Christ regardless of our circumstance. We can find great encouragement and inspiration from Noah's journey and victory of faith.

We might think of Noah's faith as being shaped by his experience building the ark. But in reality, he was chosen by God to build the ark because of his faith. When Noah was five hundred years old, *“God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth,”²* and decided to destroy His creation from off the face of the earth.³ And yet one man and his wife and family stood apart. God saw that Noah was a righteous man and blameless, and Noah *“...found grace in the eyes of*

the LORD.”⁴ This same Lord sees us and likewise knows our faith, *“for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.”⁵*

How was it that Noah was able to resist the temptations all around him? How did he find the wisdom to train his children to serve God amidst a corrupt society? In Genesis we read a simple, profound answer: *“and Noah walked with God.”⁶* What a beautiful way to live! We can envision Noah communing often with God, his character being molded over time to be more like God, so that he naturally eschewed the ways of the world. We can experience this same transforming power of walking with God as we fulfill his instruction to *“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”⁷*

How did Noah come to such a walk of faith? Perhaps he was impacted by the account of his great-grandfather Enoch, who also *“walked with God”⁸* and pleased the Lord to such a degree that God took him directly to heaven.⁹ We likewise are given impactful examples and can be *“followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”¹⁰*

When Noah was warned of God, he could have either obeyed or ignored God's direction. But

true belief, obedience, and trust are inseparable: if he truly believed God, the only viable path was to build the ark. He could have been skeptical and thought ‘surely God will never destroy the world.’ He could have questioned ‘What is rain?’ or ‘Why an ark?’ Instead he was motivated by faith and reverent fear, not understanding exactly how the world would be destroyed or how the ark would save him, moving forward in obedience and trust to save his family.

We too are warned of destruction to come and taught the way of escape. We may not fully understand how judgment will unfold, or how and why it is that we are saved by grace through faith¹¹. But just as faith and obedience were inextricably linked for Noah, so it is for us. If we believe God's Word, we will follow Christ's teachings and rest in his promises. How blessed we are to be moved to obedience not only by fear, but even more so by love – God's perfect, life-giving love, manifested in Jesus Christ.

As Noah labored decade after decade, he could have lamented, ‘this isn't what I expected’ or ‘this is just too much.’ He could have asked ‘why do I have to endure this?’ or ‘Isn't there an easier way?’ We too can find ourselves asking very real and difficult questions,

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desiring relief from our burdens and trials. But as Noah pressed forward in faith, may we also “hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering,”¹² knowing that “Faithful is he who calleth us, who also will sanctify and preserve us blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.”¹³

Those around Noah surely thought he was foolish and ridiculed his tireless labor as they continued to enjoy the pleasures of life. Similarly, the choices we make in serving God may seem foolish to those around us. We like Noah are called by God to serve Him faithfully “in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.”¹⁴

Even in the midst of ridicule, Noah had a heart for the unbelievers. As a preacher of righteousness,¹⁵ he warned the ungodly of God’s wrath to come. Sadly, none but his wife and family believed. We too may be discouraged when others disregard the gospel message, but we must never cease to share the truth, constrained by the love of Jesus Christ.

When the time finally came to enter the ark, Noah and his family must have felt untold emotion as they left behind their homes, land,

cousins, and friends. We likewise are called to forsake all and follow Christ. Noah must have been tremendously thankful to journey with seven other believers, just as we can be thankful we have our church family and all fellow believers to encourage and comfort us.

As the flood came, Noah trembled in God-fear and awe. Day after day the waters rose. Month after month they floated, perhaps wondering, ‘How long can we endure the animal stench? Will the food last? Has God forgotten his promise?’ In patience they persisted, until finally the great day came to step onto dry ground. Noah rejoiced and offered sacrifices in thanksgiving, praise, and worship to God. He had believed and obeyed unto the end to the saving of his household.

Similarly, we may feel our faith running thin and our confidence in Christ fading. We may wonder if it’s really worth sacrificing the pleasures of this life or enduring pain and suffering for months or years in hope of a reward we’ve never seen. We as Noah are called by God to “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”¹⁶

After the flood, God put a rainbow in the sky and made a covenant with Noah and his seed; never again would he destroy all living creatures from the earth by a flood. We are the recipients of a better covenant, established on better promises through Jesus Christ¹⁷, and like Noah have become heirs of the righteousness which is by faith, believing to the saving of our souls.

Regardless of our circumstance or the corruption around us, we can take courage from God’s love and provision for Noah, trusting that the Lord sees us and “knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations.”¹⁸

EndNotes:

¹ Hebrews 11:6

² Genesis 6:5

³ Genesis 5:7-8

⁴ Genesis 6:9

⁵ 1 Peter 3:12

⁶ Genesis 6:9

⁷ Galatians 5:16

⁸ Genesis 5:24

⁹ Hebrews 11:5

¹⁰ Hebrews 6:12

¹¹ Romans 11:33

¹² Hebrews 10:23

¹³ 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

¹⁴ Philippians 2:15

¹⁵ 2 Peter 2:5

¹⁶ Hebrews 10:35-36

¹⁷ Hebrews 8:6

¹⁸ 2 Peter 2:9