

Gen 8: 16

GO OUT & FACE the FUTURE

PRELIMS. These words were spoken to Noah as he stood on the **threshold** of the Ark facing an **unknown** world and future. All he could see, yes, was **chaos**! Debris and disorder! (2) He must have been filled with **fear**! There was **no escaping** from the **events** and **consequences** of the past few days! They were **devastating**! There was much **pain/confusion/uncertainty**! He could not have been anything but **fearful**! (3) There were many things about the past few weeks that he would want to **forget** – he would want to put out of his memory many of the sad and bad things in the **past**! (4) One **concern** was: he was **now in charge** of **everything**! Where would he begin? (5) But God had a clear **command** “*Go out*”, face the future!

All that has an **application** for us today. For us, **some** of us more than others, the past year and the past days have been devastating and everything may seem in chaos, but it is not. The future may be fearful and we may not know what to do or where to turn. But **God** has **called** in these sad circumstances to go out in faith and to trust Him for everything in the future!

For **all** of us, we face a new year, a year we have never had before. There have been crises of many kinds over the past year which has **assured** us of the **instability** of many things we **assumed** were **safe/stable**. So, **we too**, each one of us, do not know what the future holds – but we **know God** is **faithful**. So, we need to **pray** and **commit** ourselves into God’s hands and **trust** Him for the future! In one sense, next year is **no different** from other years – for we need God **every** day of our lives.

All we have enjoyed and received in past years have been from God. Whether we were **aware** of it or not, we **were** entirely **dependent** on God! He alone was the **Provider** of all that was good to us in the past and He will be the Source and Provider of all that will be good in the future. As for every year in the past, so for this coming year, we all are **dependent** on God’s grace!

Each of **us** are **called** to face the future in our **present circumstances** in the assurance that God reigns and God knows the plans he has for us “*to give us a future and a hope*”[Jer 29:11]

LESSONS

(1) Believers are God’s Appointed Means for Rebuilding Society! God did not want to **destroy** and **demolish** the earth – he wanted to **renew** and **rebuild** it! He wanted it to bring glory to Him – to **exult** in glory. The earth actually, even in its sinful state, still brings glory to God! Isaiah said “*The whole earth is full of His glory*”[Isa 6:3]. God is glorified in all that happens, but there is a glory that **excels/surpasses!** [2Cor 3:10] God had, and still has, great **plans** for the earth. But at the time of Noah there were no believers to carry out His orders -except **one** – and that one was **commissioned** to **renew** the earth and carry out the dominion charter and cultural mandate!

When Jesus said to His disciples “*you are the salt of the earth ...the light of the world*” He **meant** it! He meant that they were to make the world a better place by **incorporating** Xn principles and Biblical doctrine. The world **needs** help and the Xns are the **only** ones who can really help it, because **only** they have **true knowledge!** The world, this world, will never be able to sort out all the problems with its **own human** philosophy.

Philosophy is not an evil. Xnity is a philosophy. It is having the right philosophy that’s vital! Paul warns the Colossians “*See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ*”[Col 2:8]! The world do not have the right understanding of **Truth/Reality!** They **think** and **believe** they have, but as Solomon says “*There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death*” [Pro 14 & 16] If we **deny** the **reality** of Jesus, our thinking is wrong “*many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in*

the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist”[2J1:7]

So it is only believers who can really help the world – and we, as believers ourselves are under orders to do so. We are not to opt out the world and wait until Jesus comes! **Engagement** with the world, **involvement** in society – as Jesus did – in order to enlighten them in the principles of God’s Word/Truth.

It is God’s Word which guides and directs us. It is not our own ideas that guides us but the established Word of God. God has given us the Scriptures as a Manufacturer’s Handbook to tell us how the universe ‘works’ and how to correct it when it goes wrong! The Bible is not simply for interest but for **instruction!** The Bible not only makes us wise for salvation but also is *“profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work”*[2Tim 3:16]!

We will not be able to ‘cope’ with the future ‘on our own’ – we will need to be guided and directed by God’s Word and Truth! Many of those we read of in the media who have experienced **tragedy**, speak of needing **direction!** They do not know what way to turn. But the Psalmist did: *“Hold up my goings, Lord, me guide in those Thy paths divine, so that my footsteps may not slide out of those ways of Thine”*[Psa 17:5] He said ‘from the womb, My God and guide art Thou’ [Psa 22:10]!

A Second great Lesson: **We Cannot Live on Past Glories!** Noah could not live in the past, it was all so different. He was facing a new world – the old world was gone for ever! 2009 will not be like any other year for any of us. Noah might have felt and said ‘Things can never be the same again!’ Maybe you are saying that? Well, that is certainly true for all of us. But God’s plan for Noah, as for all His people and for Israel was for something far, far, **better!** *“I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope”* Then: *“When you seek me with*

*all your heart, I **will** be found by you, declares the LORD, and **I will restore your fortunes**”[Jer 29:11-14]! Isn’t that lovely!*

We must have a **positive** perspective of the future “Remember **not** the **former** things, **nor** consider the things of **old**. Behold, I am doing a **new** thing” says the Lord![Isa 43:18] And he said it in **connection** with our **vision** of the **future**! We must **not fear** or **dread** the future – that is **unbiblical** thinking. God is going to do **new** things – and He will be with you if you believe Him! “But one thing I do: **forgetting** what lies behind and straining **forward** to what lies **ahead**, I press on toward the goal”[P3:13]

But, we need to **profit** from the past – we need to **learn** lesson from the past. God **promises** to be with believers and that the best is yet to be! Remember Haggai’s ministry “*the glory of the latter house will **be greater** than the former*”[Hag 2:9] The people were looking at the **unfinished building**, at the **outside**, forgetting it was the **spiritual blessing** that was important! “These things were written for **our** learning”[Rom 15:4] All our experiences are **calculated/designed to teach us** something

What was the **first** thing that Noah did? He **worshipped God**! “Then Noah built an **altar** to the Lord...and offered burnt offerings”[8:20] He would have **thanked** God in the midst of tragedy, there was mercy and hope. He would have **asked** God for wisdom, strength, vision, perseverance and success.

APP Have **you** an altar somewhere? Somewhere where you meet with God **regularly**? **What faith** it took for Noah? Just think of it, How many sheep did he have? Two! How many bullocks? Two! Was he going to offer the **best meat** available for feeding his family? **APP** Whatever it **cost** us, we must **never stop** worshipping God! True worship will cost us in some way. We will have to make some sacrifice, however small, in our time and in our resources in order to manifest that our hope and faith is in God and no one else!