

GOD AND NOAH
September 1, 2014
Genesis 6-9

“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

Noah's life is a record of God taking special interest in one man, and that man responding with faith-filled obedience. By this means, humanity survived the judgment of the flood.

We cannot fully judge the state of one's relationship with God. It is immeasurable, unobservable; a matter of spirit and of heart. We observe perceived symptoms only. But Scripture provides God's observations, and in the case of Noah illustrates what it is to be “a just man and perfect . . . [who] walked with God” (Gen. 6:9).

Multiple attributes of God were exhibited in the flood. It showed that He is absolutely sovereign. “The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all” (Psa. 103:19). “All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou? (Dan. 4:35). “O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonor? (Rom. 9:20, 21).

The flood also exhibited God's might and His governance over the forces of nature, using them to accomplish His purposes. As a judgment for sin, it shows God's holiness, His hatred of sin and the certainty that He will judge sin.

In the midst of this astonishing judgment, the grace of God was shown, for “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Gen. 6:8). God favored Noah and his family in a manner shown to no other human beings. Still, “God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing” (I Pet. 3:20), holding off the judgment (II Pet. 3:5-9), so that men might repent and be delivered. But he warned, “My spirit shall not always strive with man . . . yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years” (Gen. 6:3).

Noah's relationship to God was one of faith: he “became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Heb. 11:7). Several elements of his faith comprise an example for all who profess to have faith in Noah's God.

Noah was “moved with fear.” “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant” (Psa. 25:14). “Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy” (Psa. 33:18). “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them” (Psa. 34:7). “O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him” (Psa. 34:9). How powerfully these truths were demonstrated to Noah! All who profess faith in Noah's God ought also to be “moved with fear.”

Noah “prepared an ark to the saving of his house,” “being warned of God of things not seen as yet.” There had been no rain prior to the flood (Gen. 2:6). Having never seen rain, and therefore never witnessed any flooding, Noah believed God’s warning with such conviction as to begin building the ark. This underscores obedience as a strong evidence of faith. God has provided the ark of safety from judgment that is yet to come. Jesus Christ is that ark, and preparation for judgment is made by entrusting our life and eternity to His keeping. Such trust will be demonstrated by obedience.

Noah persevered. Construction of the ark was a major undertaking. Noah could not do it alone. Doubtless he hired builders and purchased large quantities of materials. All of this was done in the sight of people who had never seen rain; people who undoubtedly rewarded Noah with one of life’s greatest torments: ridicule. Yet Noah persevered because he believed God more than man. He trusted God more than he trusted his own experience and judgment. He lived the admonition, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil” (Prov. 3:3-7).

Noah was “a preacher of righteousness” (II Pet. 2:5) during the time the ark was being built. Surely his preaching warned of the coming judgment, vocally articulating the sermon that was illustrated by the developing ark. Both preaching and ark-building proclaimed that Noah believed God’s warning. He must also have believed that God would be gracious to others if they gave heed to the warning he preached. Why else would he have preached? It is the pattern of God always to warn of judgment before inflicting it. Whereas the preaching of judgment may produce great anxiety, it is also the means to greatest comfort. Such preaching testifies that God has not yet forsaken, that mercy and grace are yet present.

By means of faith Noah “became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” It was not his works that delivered Noah and his family. Rather, it was the faith that was made conspicuous by those works. Believing, he obeyed, and by means of that faith he was delivered.

Almighty God, most holy, sovereign and able to judge, was revealed by the flood as possessing all of these attributes. But judgment of sin was preceded by grace from God, shown in the deliverance of Noah and his family. Indeed, God’s grace and mercy were also revealed by the flood. Noah’s receipt of that grace begot faith within, and his faith was made evident by his works. Faith found its fulfillment in the deliverance of his family, yea of all humanity, from the destruction of the flood.