

January 30th, 2022

“Persevering Faith”

Hebrews 11:7

Read Hebrews 11:7... Noah was a man of obedient faith, fully trusting in and responding to God’s sovereignty, even about “things not yet seen.”

Noah was the last pre-Flood descendant (nine generations later) in the godly line through Seth; Noah’s father was Lamech (see **Genesis 5:28-29**).

During the early centuries in the life of Noah he watched as mankind rebelled against God, sinking into depravity, becoming more corrupt, until God was sorry He had made man (see **Genesis 6:5-7, 11-13**).

Through Noah’s obedient faith he became a recipient of God’s grace (see **Genesis 6:8-9**). Noah responded obediently to God’s command to build an ark, in order to save those humans who would believe, along with animals from every species that crawls or walks on the earth, or flies in the air (see **Genesis 6:14-22**).

Noah lived in an arid dry land, where Noah had never seen a flood, and most likely had never seen a boat, but he obeyed the Lord without questioning or complaining.

And what a ship it must have been! Even the most conservative value for a cubit would have been 17.5 inches (from elbow to fingertips), meaning the ark was 438’ L x 73’ W x 44’ H. Modern naval engineers confirm that the ark’s shape and dimensions would form the most stable design for a sea-going vessel, and is fact that which is used for the large cargo carrying ships of today.

Hebrews 11:7 says God warned Noah about things “not yet seen” and yet, Noah believed God and obeyed, building the ark while also warning the people about the coming flood, when God’s wrath would be poured out on the earth.

See **2Peter 2:1-10...** Clearly no one gets away from God’s judgement, and no one who belongs to God will see judgement. Did you notice in **verse 6**, “God did not spare the ancient world when He brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others.”

Wow! Although Noah was not trained to preach or to build a large ship, Noah did what God commanded him, Noah obeyed and was considered righteous.

Remember how Adam’s son, Abel, was considered righteous because he believed and obeyed God, offering (**Hebrews 11:4**), “a better sacrifice,” i.e., he did what God required of him, and God accredited to him righteousness.

Romans 12:1, “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship.”

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We don't sacrifice animals as did Abel, we offer ourselves as living sacrifices to please God.

Remember Enoch (**Hebrews 11:5**), “By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.”

But our priority today is to learn about Noah. Preachers often say that Noah built the ark over a 120 year period. Today I want to challenge that time frame and give you a more biblically correct way to think about it.

God said (**Genesis 6:3**), “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” We know that Noah was 480 years old God declared this, because Scripture tells us (**Genesis 7:6**), “Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of water came upon the earth.”

We also know (**Genesis 5:32**), “Noah was five hundred years old, [when he began having his sons] Shem, Ham, and Japheth.”

So, Noah didn't start having sons until at least 20 years after God's declaration about His coming judgement upon mankind; and even if Noah had a son every two years (for six years), the youngest would have been 16 when Noah was 520 - that is 40 years after God began the 120 year countdown to the flood, i.e., that would only leave about 80 years for Noah to build the ark with the help of his sons; as it is doubtful that the godless generation living at that time would have been willing to help with the construction.

As we read earlier (**Genesis 6:11-18**), “God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth. Make for yourself an ark... you shall enter the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you.’”

Out of all who were alive on the earth at that time, only Noah's family (eight people total) believed, got into the ark, and were saved by God who provided for and protected them — from the cutting down of the first tree, through the last application of the last bit of pitch, to the loading aboard of all the supplies and then the animals; and then their yearlong sea voyage that ended on Mt. Ararat (1 year and 10 days from the time they got into the ark), where they climbed out on dry ground and were given an everlasting covenant from God (see **Genesis 7:1-5, 11-13, 17-24; 8:2-6, 13-14, 18-21; 9:1, 3, 12-15**).

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Talk about a tough assignment! God warned Noah when he was 480 years old, before the birth of his three sons who would help with the building of the ark, while also proclaiming the message that God’s judgement was coming upon all who would not believe and obey God.

Noah was not trained to preach or to build a massive ship; and yet, year after year Noah did what God had commanded him; no doubt, in the face of relentless mocking and ridicule from a wicked and rebellious people who wouldn’t heed Noah’s message of impending destruction and death. But then, the majority of the people, who have or ever will live on this earth, also reject God’s offer of salvation.

Only eight people out of all those who were alive at the time of Noah were willing to believe God and to get on the ark and be saved.

1Peter 3:18-22, “ For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits *now* in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through *the* water. Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

Romans 6:3-7, “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.”

Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

1John 1:8-10, “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.”

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In the above passages, Peter, Paul and John are all talking about a person’s pledge of faith based on their belief in God and a sincere desire to please Him, as did Abel who (**Hebrews 11:4**), “obtained the testimony [from God] that he was righteous”; Enoch who (**Hebrews 11:5**), “obtained the witness that... he was pleasing to God”; and Noah who (**Hebrews 11:7**), “became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”

Sins cannot be washed away by water, like dirt from the body; nor can sin’s penalty be removed by religious rituals, pious law-keeping, performing good deeds, or ancestral heritage; only genuine repentance (a response to God’s Spirit convicting you of sin) can cleanse your heart from all unrighteousness.

God looks at us through the lens of His Son’s death and resurrection, by which we are made righteous“ in Christ” (cf. **Romans 3:10-12, 23-24, 6:23; 5:8; 8:1; 10:9-10, 13**).

2Corinthians 5:21, “He [God the Father] made Him [God the Son] who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him..”

Only those who have repented of sin and believe in Jesus Christ for salvation are considered righteous by God; and by the way, only the righteous go to heaven.

John 11:25-26, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.”

John 14:1-3, “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” **6**, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father [who is in heaven] but through Me.”

How about you? Are you going to heaven? How are you going to get there?

Noah and his family (8 persons in all) were saved from death, because they were in the ark that God instructed Noah to build; they were saved from sin’s penalty because they believed and obeyed God; all of the rest of humanity who were alive at that time drowned and were then condemned to hell.

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Jesus is the ark of salvation for all who believe in Him; because He alone can forgive our sins and guarantee our safe passage and arrival into heaven. Your eternal security and safety is found in the heavenly ark of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior: crucified, resurrected, and coming again.

1John 5:11-13, “And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

Pastor Mike

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