Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Noah: A Preacher of Faith
Scripture: Hebrews 11:7
Code: 90-384

All right, let's turn to Hebrews chapter 11...Hebrews chapter 11 and we're going to look at Noah and the work of faith, the great story of Noah is summarized in one verse, verse 7 of Hebrews 11, "By faith, Noah being warned by God about things not yet seen in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household by which he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith."

Now one of the things you would note from that is you just read a Bible verse that condenses Genesis 6, 7, 8 and 9...in that sense, it is a very cryptic verse, it assumes that you know the story. And that's a fair assumption because after all, this book was written to whom? To whom? Hebrews. They knew the story, they were extremely familiar with the story. In fact, the whole chapter is cryptic, the references to Abel, brief. The references to Enoch, brief. The references to Noah, brief. A little more detail with regard to Abraham and Sarah, references to Moses relatively brief, references to others, brief. And in verse 32, you just have names, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, the prophets.

So the assumption here is that these people know the Old Testament. They're familiar with these characters and their stories. And certainly every Jew was familiar with the astounding story of Noah. Noah is the next in the list of faithful men, men whose lives were marked by faith. I remind you that James said, "Faith without works is dead." What he meant by that is true faith is supported by action. And Noah is certainly the classic illustration of that fact in the Old Testament. His action of faith is in some ways more remarkable than anyone else. The Bible everywhere and always teaches that men come to God by faith alone and then go on to live in faith, that simply means to take God at His Word and trust in that Word as true. Never by works or self-effort, or ceremony, moral achievement do you reach God.. You always come to God by faith. It has always been so, it has never been any different.

But when the gospel of grace and the gospel of faith came along, being preached by Christ and the Apostles, it seemed to the Jews of that day like a new message because Judaism which, of course, originally was a message of salvation by grace through faith had been corrupted into a system of works. The Hebrews had been exposed their whole lives to a kind of Judaism that taught that you attain salvation by your efforts, your moral efforts and your religious efforts. And while there were some godly believing Jews, they were but a remnant. And the Jews in general had been taught that salvation comes by works.

God hated that, as He always does. But the Jews had placed their hopes in nationality, circumcision, possession of the Law, conformity to the Law, observance of ritual, all the externals. And maybe the model of that, the most well-known model of that would be the Apostle Paul, right? He was circumcised the eighth day of the tribe of Benjamin, a zealous Jew as measured against the Law, openly blameless, a traditionalist...which he thought was gain to him. But when he found the true gospel of faith and grace through Christ, he said it was nothing but rubbish.

The theme of salvation has always been grace. And that's the whole point of the chapter, to say to these Hebrews, "This is not new, this is old," and the lead in to chapter 11 comes, as you've noted if you've been with us, in verses 38 and 39 where the writer of Hebrews quotes from Habakkuk 2:4, "The just one shall live by faith." Faith has always been God's way. It has never been any different than that.

So the gospel of grace and faith is not new. And the rest of chapter 11 makes the message crystal-clear by giving us a list of all those who can be classified as men and women of faith. The means of righteousness, both in the New Covenant and the Old Covenant was faith.

Now we have seen the example of Abel and the life of faith. We've seen the example of Enoch and the walk of faith. And now we come to Noah and the work of faith. Noah's story is really amazing. And in verse 7 you just get a very brief summary.

The writer of Hebrews knows they know the story. Most of you know the story, but some of you may not know and the story really needs to be told in its fullness, or you're not going to know what this verse is talking about because there aren't any details here. The only detail here is that he prepared an ark. We don't even know for what. It refers to things not yet seen. What things not yet seen? And how did he condemn the world? And how did he become an heir of righteousness?

So in order for us to get the full account of Noah's faith, we have to go back to the great story. Now what begins the verse is the first thing to be known. "By faith, Noah being warned by God.." He had nothing to go on but what God had said. He had nothing to go on but the Word of God. And God told him something was going to happen that had never happened in the history of the world. Was Noah going to believe this? Was he going to be committed that what God said was in fact true.

Let's go to the story back in Genesis chapter 6. It is, in some ways, the most remarkable Old Testament illustration of faith and one of the most remarkable in all of history because of what it involved. Now let's go down to chapter 6 and verse 13...Genesis 6:13.

"Then 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."

God comes to Noah and tells him He's going to destroy the entire earth. About 1500 or more years have passed since the creation, the story of man on earth had just gotten worse and worse and worse and worse since the Fall. Sin is frankly running rampant. It is an ever-increasing escalating offense to God and so God delivers a decree that He's going to destroy the whole earth and then goes on to say specifically by water He is going to drown the human race, sparing only Noah and his family and no one else. As in verse 18, "I will establish My covenant with you and you shall enter the ark, you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you."

Now this is the most remarkable judgment event in the Old Testament, the destruction of the entire human race, with the exception of eight people. History tells us that God will judge sinners. The Bible tells us that God will judge sinners. And He does and He judges every sinner one at a time. It is appointed unto man once to die and after this, the judgment. Every sinner faces the judgment of God, one sinner at a time. But periodically there are these massive judgments. For long periods of time, God leaves sinners to their own devices and the fulfillment of their own desires, and then suddenly and devastatingly intervenes in human history in cataclysmic fashion. This in human history is the greatest of all cataclysmic judgments. It is the second most astounding event in the Old Testament, the first and most astounding event in the Old Testament is the creation, the creation of the entire universe in six days. This is next to that as a monumental event.

Now we don't have the time to go through all the detail. We have done that in a study of Genesis and you can get a hold of that, you can download that, if you want, on an MP3 file or you can get the CDs or whatever you want from Grace To You and go through the details of this judgment. But for us, for this time, we're just going to look at what God said He was going to do, what He asked Noah to do an dhow Noah demonstrated his faith.

What brought about this judgment by God? Let's go back to verse 5...Genesis chapter 6 and verse 5. "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The Lord was sorry that He made man on the earth and He was grieved in His heart. The Lord said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things to birds of the sky, for I am sorry that I have made them.'"

That was what did it. God saw that the iniquity, the wickedness of man was great on the earth. It was so sweeping that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. This is chronic rather than spasmodic. Every thought, every idea, every motive, every imagination and therefore every deed, the result of every thought was an expression of the fallenness of man, the depravity of man.

Verse 11 adds, “The earth was corrupt in the sight of God and the earth was filled with violence.” By the way, the Hebrew word for violence is *chamas*, used of abuse of people and general rebellion. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, translates that as *adikia*, unrighteousness.

Verse 12, “God looked on the earth and behold, it was corrupt for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.” You’ve probably noticed the onlys and the alls, there’s a sweeping condemnation of judgment.

Verse 6 tells us that the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth and He was grieved in His heart. This is a kind of anthropomorphic statement. God doesn’t undo anything He does and He doesn’t do things that He wishes He hadn’t done in the truest sense, but this is to express an anthropomorphic emotion that God regretted what He had done...similar to the statement our Lord makes about Judas. “It would have been better for that man if he had never been born.” This is a kind of Hebraic way to express consummate grief.

So verse 7, the Lord says, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land from man to animals to creeping things to birds of the sky for I’m sorry I made them.” Blot out...that is a very strong Hebrew word, *machah*, precise, graphic language, it is a word that expresses the idea of erasing something. That is to say, removing it all together. I will erase man from the planet, a promise of wholesale death and destruction.

Now that gets us back to verse 13. God then speaks to Noah and tells him, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. Behold, I’m about to destroy them with the earth.”

There’s one incident in the beginning of this chapter, the opening four verses, that tells you how bad it was, that people literally welcomed demons to come into them, men welcoming demon-possession, cohabitating with women and the fruit of that was satanic alliances, horrendous children that carried on the wickedness to its extreme levels.

So here God speaks in verse 13 for the first time personally to Noah. He will speak to him three more times, chapter 7 verse 1, chapter 8 verse 15, chapter 9 verse 1. And the message that He gives to Noah is this message of massive, massive judgment.

You know, it must have been so staggering for Noah to hear this. There were millions of people in the world by this time. We can’t know the exact number but I’ve heard everything from eight million to a hundred million. I mean, the world is densely populated. In the first place, people lived for nine hundred plus years and you can produce a lot of children in that amount of time. Just to believe that this is actually going to happen is certainly an act of faith. There must have been something in him that would sort of parallel the skeptics that Peter tells us that when they hear about the Second

Coming say, “That’s never going to happen, all things continue as they were from the beginning.” The same kind of skepticism must have existed in the mind of Noah, at least at one point when he talked to himself, but everything goes along normally the same way. How can this possibly be?

And if that’s hard to swallow, try this on. Verse 14, “Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood. You shall make the ark with rooms and shall cover it inside and out with pitch.”

Now God hasn’t told Noah how He’s going to destroy the world yet, right? He just says in verse 13, “The end is coming. I’m going to destroy the whole human race.” Noah doesn’t know how. So He gives him a command without an explanation. The explanation doesn’t come until verse 17, “I’m bringing the flood of water upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life from under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall perish.”

So at the beginning, God says to Noah, “Build a big box, ark, *tebah*in Hebrew. The word is used throughout the flood narrative and it really means box, or chest. It’s not shaped like a boat, it’s not shaped like a ship. It has no propeller. It has no pilot. It has no sails. It has no rudder. It has no captain. It has no navigator. It’s a box. And, by the way, it’s only used this word one other time in the Old Testament and it is used in Exodus chapter 2:3 through 5 to describe the box that baby Moses was put in, to float down the Nile. God used a box to save Moses so he could save Israel. God used a box to save Noah so Noah could save the human race.

In both cases, the box was a refuge from death t o provide a future in one case for Israel, and another case for the human race. The Ark of the Covenant is a different Hebrew word all together.

Now God then says, “Make a box,” back to verse 14, “make it of gopher wood.” We don’t have any idea exactly what that is. There’s some suggestions as to what it is. It appears nowhere else in Scripture. It may have been a kind of a cedar pine which was plentiful. Now remember, Noah was not a ship builder and this wasn’t a ship, this was a box. This is an immense task, he can’t do it on his own, very likely, even with three sons helping him. He would have to had to hire multiple carpenters and design people to effect this thing and to move around the pieces of this giant box. And He says, God does, “You shall make rooms, compartments, or dwellings.” Likely they numbered in the thousands. “And then cover it inside with pitch.” And that is a kind of calking substance. Pitch, by the way, is related to the Hebrew verb to smear, smear it, seal it so it doesn’t leak.

Then verse 15, it gets very interesting. “This is how you shall make it.” Now if he’s thinking of a box just for him and his family, hey, that would be an 8 by 10 would do. He doesn’t know what the box is for. “This is how you are to make it. The length of it is three hundred cubits, the breadth, or width is fifty cubits and the height is thirty cubits.” That’s 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, 45 feet high. This is not a design for speed. This is not a design for easy guiding. This is a design for stability. It is the largest vessel ever built until the nineteenth century when giant ships were built because steel was used, iron

was used. The largest ship ever built was launched by the P. & O. Line, it was called the Himalaya. It was 240 feet long. That was t he largest ship in history.

Later that year, in 1858, they built the Great Eastern which was almost 700 feet long, a massive ship. And when that ship was built, historians say it was five times the tonnage of any ship before it. So big that it was bigger even than ships that were built after it was built.

So when you back all the way back thousands of years to the time of Noah, this is far larger than any ship anyone would have ever imagined or conceived of...unheard of to build a box this big. In 1844 Brunell built the Great Britain which was 320 feet by 51, by 32. What's interesting is, the people who study the ratios of ships understand that all these ratios are similar. When you come to modern ship building in the nineteenth century, the ratios are the same as the ratio for the ark. At a ratio of about six to one, length to width because God knows about stability and later ship builders even today will tell you six to one to eight to one is required for stability.

The ark then is way ahead of its time. Nobody would have understood this kind of design, another indication of the divine nature of Scripture. Its length is six times its width and keeps it stable in the midst of tossing seas. As a rectangle it has more stability and because it's a rectangle and doesn't have pointed ends and then rounded sides, it is one third larger in capacity than a similar sized ship with a hull. The gross tonnage, 1415 thousand tons. The internal space, a hundred thousand square feet. The volume, 1.5 million cubic feet. It's a massive boat.

Some have calculated that the capacity is equal to five hundred and twenty-two boxcars. And each boxcar can carry 240 sheep so you could carry in this box a total of 125 thousand sheep. The reason people calculate that with sheep because sheep would be a sort of average sized animal...some smaller, some larger. So it could handle as many as 125 thousand animals.

Thousands of compartments are built in this massive box to house, at this point, no one knows not what, but it's certainly sufficiently large to carry what the Lord finally tells him it's going to carry, two of every species of animal in the world. And then enough space for Noah and his family and some additional animals for sacrifice and food. Only supernatural revelation could so design a ship of that size, of that dimension to contain that population of animals.

Now when God gives Noah the command to do this, it is 120 years until the Flood. This is what you would call a long-term project. Did he start building immediately when God commanded him? Well it's very likely he started thinking about building, and then he had to figure out how to build. And then he had to try and find some people who could design a building like that, a box like that. We don't really know how long it took to build it but the assumption could be he probably started very early and began to put the design together and thoughts together and then to assemble the components and begin to build.

There are people who think that the Flood story is a fictional invention. It's pretty hard sell because of the precision with which the dimensions of this ship are designed. Now what God told Noah to do was to build a flat-bottom barge with no rudder. And you would ask yourself, "What in the world would I be doing that for?"

Well God gives him more detail. "You shall make a window," verse 16, "for the ark. Finish it to a cubit from the top." Now the best way to understand that is probably that the roof overhangs the box and just below the roof there's an opening all the way around for much needed ventilation...as you would imagine. The origin of the word used here for window, *tsohar*, is very obscure but it seems to connect with sources that mean light. The thing would be dark if there wasn't some light coming in. Though it is very likely that below the overhanging roof there was an opening between the beams that held the roof up. An opening 18 inches wide between the roof and the sides of the ark just under the roof and interrupted only by the posts, providing ventilation and light, set back under the roof so that the rain wouldn't come in. Set the door on the side of it, he is told. "Set the door on the side of it and you shall make it with lower and second and third decks." One door.

Now in this box, Noah doesn't know it, he's going to spend a year. He's going to spend a year floating over a drowned planet.

This is a cruise without a stateroom, without a porter in the most primitive conditions imaginable. This is a year in a stable. But there's enough room here with three different floors and thousands of compartments for everything.

Why am I doing this? Verse 17, "Cause I'm going to bring the flood of water upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life; from under heaven everything that is on earth shall perish." I love this beginning, "Behold, I, even I.." Supernatural judgment is coming. I'm doing this. I'm going to drown the world.

The word "flood of water" is a technical term, *mabbul*, that is used only in Genesis 6 through 9. It is as if God picked a word exclusively to describe the Flood. It has one other use in Psalm 29:10. His purpose is to destroy all air-breathing creatures, everything excluding those in water who will survive. Everything that is on the earth shall perish.

This is not a local flood. This is a worldwide Flood. And if we had time we can go through the rest of the story and see how it has to be a worldwide Flood because all humanity on the face of the earth dies. Chapter 7 verse 23, "He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the earth from man to animals to creeping things, to birds of the sky, they were blotted out from the earth and only Noah was left together with those that were with him in the ark."

We also know that it was a worldwide flood because of the depth. It couldn't be a local flood because it covered Mount Ararat and Mount Ararat is more than 17,000 feet high. Simple mathematical calculations will tell you that if the flood rises to above 17,000 feet, it doesn't go down like that. It spreads over the planet. We know it's a worldwide flood because its duration is 371 days, a year. And it is the reason why I have on my desk a seashell found about two miles east of my house in Santa Clarita. What's a seashell doing in Santa Clarita? What are sea animal artifacts doing all over the Grand Canyon? And why do you find a buried mastodon in the tundra in the northern edge of Russia frozen and when uncovered, dug up and the content of his stomach examined, his stomach is full of tropical plants? This is a universal flood.

By the way, I have a tusk from one of those mastodons, pre-Noah. Pretty neat. And by the way, the piece of the tusk that I have is carved by a man in a hut on the northern edge of Siberia and he carved it into a mastodon. The massive flood.

The Bible is clear when it discusses the theology of the Flood, that this is a universal flood because it compares it to the coming destruction. Second Peter 3 it tells us that in the way that God destroyed the world by water, He will destroy the world by fire. And that is a universal destruction in both cases.

So there's lots of indications that this is a worldwide flood. And the most obvious one is that is exactly what the Bible says, only eight people survived. There's a promise and I read it to you in verse 18, "I'll establish My covenant with you," this is the first time covenant appears in Scripture, it is a covenant with Noah and his family, to spare them. "And of every living thing and all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark." Now he's starting to get the details of why the box is so big. "Keep them with you alive, male and female, of the birds after their kind, of the animals of their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground of its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive."

You know, that would be my first question when I heard the part about you're going to bring two of every kind. You immediately say, "Just exactly how am I going to do that? How am I going to get two of every king of animal, bird, creeping thing into this thing?"

A little further information tells us that they will come...they will come. God is going to gather them. This is an astounding responsibility. This is a great opportunity to exercise a little doubt, wouldn't you say? " Are you kidding me? A flood? What is that?" There had never been one. "Rain? What is that?" There never had been any. Up to this point, a mist watered the earth, there was a canopy around the globe. It was all a tropical environment. There were no seasons as we know them. There were no ice caps on poles. It was one universal climate under a common kind of canopy, mist. And that's why you find mastodons on the upper edges of the Arctic Circle with tropical vegetation in their stomachs.

What are you talking about, rain? What do you mean, flood? Here?

And by the way, Noah was living in a wilderness. There's no water there. This is a remarkable opportunity for a little bit of sensible doubt, I would think. I suppose if it were any of us we would have said, "Could you go over that again? Rain? Flood? Float? Boat? Two of every kind of animal?"

That's what makes it so remarkable in verse 22 when it says, "Noah did according to all that God had commanded him. So he did." Folks, that is a monumental act of faith, an absolutely monumental act of faith. And because of that, of course, he was spared. Why him? Go back to verse 8, "Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord."

Why did he find favor in the eyes of the Lord? Verse 9, "Cause Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time and Noah walked with God." I think that's pretty amazing because it was Noah, Mrs. Noah and the kids and their wives in the world. And you think living the Christian life is tough and you're surrounded by all these folks stimulating you to love and good works? Can you imagine what it was like for Noah and his family to live in a world that was so corrupt, every other human being was drowned?

This is a remarkable man, not to be underestimated. This is a man who believed what God said was true, which tells me he believed in sacrifice like Abel did. Which tells me that he believed that he was a sinner and needed a sacrifice for his sin and he needed to receive grace and forgiveness from God. This tells me that he knew what it was. And it says it here as it did with Enoch, that he walked with God. He was in true righteous communion and fellowship with God. He was a righteous man and God made a promise. That's what a covenant is to this man. And he head the promise and he obeyed the promise.

Now all of that sort of gets us to the point of Hebrews chapter 11. As I said, we don't want to go in to a whole lot of detail, so let's go back to Hebrews chapter 11 and consider what the writer tells us. And it's a remarkable testimony of this man's faith. "By faith, Noah being warned by God about things not yet seen." What are things not yet seen? Cataclysmic world judgment, by means of, secondly, a flood, as a result of, thirdly, rain. Did Noah know the world was corrupt? Absolutely. Did he know that he was different than everybody else? Absolutely. Did he understand that God was holy and righteous and a God of judgment? Of course he did. He's not living in the dark, by the way, folks. Not at all, you don't want to underestimate this man. There was a lot that he knew. Remember now, we're 1500 years into human history and God has revealed Himself and he knows his God and he walks with his God and he trusts his God.

So being warned by God about things not yet seen, he acted. Now I just want to tell you three things about his faith, okay? Just three things, they're listed here. One, he obeyed God's Word. He obeyed God's Word when it was way beyond anything he could experience or conceive or comprehend. It

says, “In reverence he prepared an ark for the salvation of his household...in reverence he prepared an ark for the salvation of his household for 120 years.” Over that period, he built a massive 15,000 ton ship in the middle of the wilderness, for one reason, because God told him to do it and God told him the flood would come and the judgment was inevitable and he obeyed.

This is the essence of faith. Faith doesn’t have to understand, it doesn’t have to comprehend. Faith reaches out for something that is beyond experience, beyond comprehension. I think we understand that a little bit. We walk by faith and not by sight, right? We’ve talked about that. We’ve entrusted our eternity to God. We’re living in faith, trusting Christ for a heaven we’ve never seen, to escape a judgment we’ve never seen. The Bible says that all sinners will go to hell. The Bible says that there will be a holocaust of divine judgment on the earth in the future by fire. We believe that, we have not seen that. But we live in faith and by faith we obey the gospel which is the ark of safety for us. God has provided for us an ark to rescue us from future judgment and we have gone into that ark, the ark is Christ.

So his faith is, first of all, demonstrated in his obedience to God’s Word in a matter which he could not experience, or even conceive. Secondly, his faith not only showed up in his obedience but it showed up in his preaching. We could say it this way, he obeyed God’s Word and he announced God’s judgment. You might say, well he believed it but it was so bizarre he really didn’t say much about it because he was afraid people would think he’s crazy. But no, it says also in verse 7 that by his obedience in building this massive box in the middle of the wilderness because it was going to rain and there was going to be a flood the likes of which no one had ever experienced, he condemned the world...he condemned the world. That very act was a constant statement for 120 years that judgment was coming...judgment was inevitable. And that is why it says, “Noah was a preacher of righteousness, and God preserved him with seven others when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.” Noah was a preacher of righteousness.

As long as he built the box, he was preaching coming judgment. He was declaring coming judgment. And God was so patient, right? A hundred and twenty years, 120 years of patience, as Genesis 6 says, God preaches this message through the building of the box. It must have been the topic of everybody’s conversation constantly. “Crazy Noah.”

Do you remember what we looked at when we were...and I’ll just review this because I think it’s worth to be reviewed, when we were considering Enoch back in chapter 5 of Genesis. We also saw the patience of God because, you remember, Enoch lived 65 years and became the father of ...whom?...Methuselah. And I told you, Methuselah means “sent out,” “shot out.” The name Methuselah was a prophecy, a divine revelation was fixed in the name Methuselah. When that child was given the name “Shot out,” or “Sent out,” God was connecting that child with the time when His judgment would fall, when He would send His judgment. And the year that Methuselah died is the year the Flood came. And to show you the grace of God, Methuselah lived longer than any man, 969

years. The grace and the mercy and the patience of God.

People knew things. The institution of sacrifice had been in place since Abel. They knew that sinners need to come to God not offering their own merit, their own achievement, their own works, but recognizing their own sin and that they are worthy of death and understanding that God will provide a sacrifice in their place. They knew the seriousness of sin because they knew Cain. Cain's life overlapped. He lived for centuries and the mark of Cain went with Cain and everybody understood the curse of sin, the horror of being cursed by God. Cain was a living illustration of how deadly sin is.

By the way, Adam lived 930 years and told his tragic story of the Fall probably every day of his life. And then there was the preaching of Enoch who was a preacher of righteousness, according to Jude 14 and 15. And then there was the ministry of the Holy Spirit, "My Spirit will not always strive with man," which means the Spirit was striving with sinners, doing His work of conviction. And then there was the preaching of Noah. All these lives overlapping. As long as Methuselah lived, he would talk about his father who three hundred years after he was born, after Methuselah was born, took a walk with God one day and walked right into heaven. And how many people did Methuselah tell his story of a father who walked with God and lived in such a way that he didn't even die? And Methuselah's father, Enoch, was an illustration of what will happen to every believer who will some day enter into the presence of the Lord and conquer death.

So the generation of Noah's day had to spurn sacrifice and atonement, they had to reject repeated warnings and repeated messages of judgment and righteousness. Divine revelation had to be despised and rejected in this mad dash into corruption. And yet God waited and waited 969 years, in the case of Methuselah and 120 years in the case of Noah. But Noah's faith is marked by his obedience in doing exactly what God told him to do and his willingness to be a preacher of righteousness and give the message that went along with the work he did, proclaiming the inevitable coming, devastating, worldwide judgment in the drowning of the human race. He was preaching that the only escape is righteousness. How amazing and how many converts did he have? None.

The third thing that is said about him is he obeyed God's Word, he preached God's judgment, he received God's righteousness. He became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. Boy, that sounds like a Pauline concept, doesn't it? That sounds so New Testament. He became an heir of the righteousness which is by faith. He believed God and because he believed God's Word, God granted him righteousness, imputed righteousness to him. That's what it means in verse 8 of Genesis 6, "Noah found favor, or grace, in the eyes of the Lord. He was a righteous man, blameless in his time, Noah walked with God."

Chapter 7 verse 1, "Then the Lord said to Noah, 'Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time." He is an Old Testament illustration of justification by faith. In covenant relationship with God, he believed God and God accepted his faith

and granted him righteousness. He is a righteous man. He is blameless before God.

Is he perfect? Oh no, no, no. We know that, don't we? When you get in to chapter 9 you find that he was guilty of a sin. He was caught naked and drunk. Noah's not a perfect man before men, but he is a perfect man before God because by faith, righteousness was credited to his account.

We understand that as a New Testament truth but this is telling us it's an Old Testament truth. If you read Romans, you will read in chapter 3 that by the works of the Law no flesh is justified. If you read Philippians 3, as I quoted it earlier, Paul says, "I went about to establish my own righteousness until I found the righteousness of God granted to me by faith in Jesus Christ."

The great sweeping doctrine of justification is that to the one who believes God, in Noah's case, he believed all that God had revealed. In our case, we believe all that God has revealed and that means that we believe the full message, all the way through His Son Jesus Christ. And when you believe that message from the heart, God will grant righteousness and cover you with his own righteousness and view you as blameless. And you will, having been captured into the ark of safety who is Christ, be delivered from all future judgment.

Peter understands this so very well. He understands that Christ is the ark of safety. Christ is the one who protects us from judgment. Peter wrote about that in his epistles. I won't take time to get into it, but he uses that as kind of a warning for the future in chapter 3 when he says, "In the future there's going to be another judgment, the Day of the Lord will come like a thief in which the heavens will pass away with a roar, the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, the earth and its works will be burned up." There's coming another holocaust of proportions like this and even greater. And the only ark is faith, faith in the Word of God all the way to the complete revelation in Jesus Christ.

Father, again Your Word has spoken to us with its clarity and its power. We thank You for its consistency, how it stands every test of scrutiny, examination, comparison. We rejoice in its truth while on the one hand like John, it is sweet to our taste, it is bitter to our stomachs, it must have been so for Noah. It must have been, in many ways, both a joy to know that he was to be saved and rescued from judgment and a horror to know that everybody around him would perish and thus there was a kind of passion surely in his heart as he proclaimed judgment and called people to faith and righteousness. So it is for us as we think about the future, on the one hand, grateful that we have found our way into the ark of safety who is Jesus Christ and we rejoice in that and yet at the same time we sorrow over those who will perish in the devastation of that final judgment.

We thank You that when Christ comes in judgment, it won't be as it was in the days of Noah in the complete sense. Yes, the comparison is made so as it was in the day of Noah, will it be in the coming of the Son of Man, people will be going about their business, marrying, given in marriage, doing all their daily tasks and they will be swept away in fiery judgment as they were swept away in a flood of

judgment. But the difference will be, and we thank You for this, there won't be eight souls saved, there will be many...there will be thousands, there will be millions, and we thank You for that hopeful promise and reality. May we be faithful as Noah was, to be preachers of righteousness to this generation, warning them of judgment to come and calling them to the gospel of grace and the righteousness which is imputed to those who have faith.

Thank You, Father, for the greatness of Your salvation, given to us though we are utterly unworthy. We give You praise in Your Son's name...Amen.

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