

Obedient Noah

Introduction

In the Bible, God has given us dramatic accounts of how He transformed the lives of ordinary people. People who face the same struggles that we face today: immoral culture, sexual temptation, wealth and status, sin and guilt, peer pressure, pluralistic belief, worry and fear.

We are going to look at some people who will challenge us to do something great for God. Our final studies will end with the perfect man – Jesus. The best qualities we find in some of the men we will be studying are perfectly found in Jesus.

Today we start by looking at Noah and his obedience. Noah was 600 years old when the flood came.

Reading: Genesis 6:9-7:1 *This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. ¹⁰ And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. ¹¹ The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. ¹³ And God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴ Make*

Obedient Noah

yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. ¹⁵ And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. ¹⁶ You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷ And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸ But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹ And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. ²⁰ Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive. ²¹ And you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather it to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them.” ²² Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did. ^{7:1} Then the Lord said to Noah, “Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation.

Obedience is not a quality much prized in modern western

Obedient Noah

culture today. It is more common to have a rebellious and maverick spirit.

The Bible instructs us to be obedient to those in authority. In particular it commends submissive obedience to God from people acknowledging His supreme authority. Noah demonstrated such obedience. In fact he invested everything in obeying God.

This great flood describes a human tragedy on a scale that makes the southeast Asia boxing day tsunami like a puddle in the road. Everything on the planet drowned. This was God's judgement on a sinful world. There is another judgement coming, This is serious message! People who want to survive the coming judgement and enjoy eternity must learn from Noah the obedience of faith by which we are saved.

God saw that Noah was righteous. Genesis 6:9 *Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.* We are told twice that Noah was righteous, in verse 9 he was righteous in moral behaviour, blameless in his community and that he walked with God in personal devotion. His lifestyle was marked by righteous obedience to God. Genesis 7:1 *Then the Lord said to Noah, "Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have*

Obedient Noah

seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation.

God literally saw him as righteous in contrast to all the wickedness He saw all around Him,.

In 2 Peter 2:5 Peter called Noah *a preacher of righteousness*. Peter commended Noah for his willingness to stand against the prevailing culture. We are called to be the same, to go against the rising tide of corruption around us, to speak and act in righteousness, even when nobody listens, or when mockery or persecution follows. God is calling us to do the same.

In contrast to Noah, God saw that the earth was corrupt through the corruption of mankind. Genesis 6: 11-12 *The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.* The disintegration of this world is directly linked to human sin. God sees all things, the things behind closed doors; the deepest part of our lives. However deep we think it is hidden God sees it all – nothing is hidden. The account of Noah warns us that God sees and will punish sin. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 2:16 *in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ*. Noah warned of the judgment of God. The flood teaches us God will punish sinners.

Obedient Noah

Jesus warned in Matthew 24:37-39 *But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*³⁸ *For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,*³⁹ *and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.* Friends we know this and we have to obediently declare this truth - Jesus is coming again! But Noah's experience proves that God will do what he has said.

In the graphic film about the Tsunami in 2004, 229,000 people died, one third were children, 9000 were tourists on holiday. This was nothing like the devastation of Noah's day. This is hard to hear. But even the flood is nothing compared to the return of Jesus. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 says *when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,*⁸ *in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*⁹ *These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,*¹⁰ *when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints.*

God came in salvation as well as judgment. God gave Noah very specific dimensions for a lifeboat that would save his

Obedient Noah

family and creation. The ark points to the provision of Jesus, whose resurrection from the dead we are saved. As the ark rose up in the waters of judgment preserving all with it, so Jesus rising from his grave preserves all who are by faith represented Him.

The Apostle Peter explored this parallel between salvation in the ark and salvation in Jesus. 1 Peter 3:20-22 *God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water,²¹ and this water symbolises baptism that now saves you also – not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience towards God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,²² who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand.* God waited patiently for Noah to build the ark just as He waits patiently for people to become Christians. As the floodwaters was used to raise Noah up in the ark safe above God's judgment, so the waters of baptism symbolize our sharing in the raising of Jesus safe above the judgment of sin. It is not the washing of water of baptism that saves anyone. Rather Noah's faith in God's promise was how Noah was saved. So it is faith in Jesus Christ that's saves us.

Simply put, Noah's obediently building and entering the ark to be saved is like Christians, obediently trusting in

Obedient Noah

Jesus' resurrection for the dead to be saved. God gave Noah the ark. He gave us His Son.

God faithfully kept His covenant. Genesis 6:18 *But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you.* God's covenant with Noah was His binding commitment and solemn promise to save him. This was the first of a series of covenants that God would announce to Abraham, Moses, David and Jeremiah. Here it is a promise to save Noah. In Chapter 9, it was extended to become a promise to every living creature never again to send a flood to destroy the earth. The rainbow was given as a sign reminding us of the promise.

This is enormously important for us today. God has now permanently established a new covenant with the blood of Jesus' death on the cross. 1 Corinthians 11:25 *In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.'* Noah's experience was that God kept His covenant promise of salvation. He will keep His promise to us, too. God always keeps His promises. God is faithful to His promises, despite our bad behavior, even though it cost Him the death of His Son Jesus.

Obedient Noah

God generously rewarded obedience. Genesis 6:22-7:1 *Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.* ^{7:1} *Then the Lord said to Noah, “Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation.*

The writer to the Hebrews describes Noah’s faith in these words, Hebrews 11:7 *By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.*

Noah’s saving faith began with believing God’s warning. He believed it even though there was no visible evidence of judgment coming. The destructive flood seemed as implausible then as final judgment seems today. Real faith believes God’s Word, not because it seems sensible to us but because God says so. Saving faith believes God’s promise of deliverance from judgment and rescue into a new world, without yet experiencing what is promised.

But saving faith must be expressed in obedience, If God is really trusted, he will be obeyed, in lifestyle and at cost. Although Noah’s deliverance was provided as a gift entirely by God, it was only accessed by obedience. If Noah had refused to build as God told him to, there would have been no ark to be saved in. God gave him faith to be

Obedient Noah

righteous in obedience. Noah had to exercise it.

God has provided complete salvation in Jesus Christ. God gives us faith to be righteous in obedience. The Apostle Paul call this *obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake*. Faith is expressed in obedience. If we want Christ to be our Saviour we must accept him as Lord. We cannot have a savior with Him being Lord we must have both. Faith in our savior is expressed in obedience to our Lord.

Jesus said in John 14:21 *Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.* John 14:23 *Jesus replied, 'Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.* If we don't obey the commands of Christ, we can't claim to love Him.

God said to Noah Genesis 7:1 *I have found you righteous.* Which means that He was treating him as righteous. But Noah's righteousness could not count for anyone else it only counted for him. **His family were** saved not by Noah, **but** by joining his obedience. Jesus' righteousness however is different. His righteous obedience counts for all of us in a way that Noah's could not.

Obedient Noah

The story of Noah revealed God's commitment to restoring creation. He could have destroyed all mankind forever. God is going to restore creation with a wonderful creation for us to enjoy. The flood account is the guarantee that God will completely renovate and renew His creation.

Like Noah, we must believe God's warning about future judgment, Obey His instructions for salvation, trust in His covenant commitment to save us and look forward to life in a new creation when it comes in Christ.

Personal Study Questions

- + How can I or do I express my personal faith in God by obedience?
- + Are there times I doubt that God will save me? If so how am I going to do things differently when this happens?
- + What does that mean to me knowing that God will destroy and renew His creation?