

GENESIS 6:9-22

"NO MAN ON EARTH LIKE NOAH!"

OR, HOW DO YOU KEEP YOUR FAMILY FROM DROWNING?

Noah was the only dad on earth who saved his family from drowning in the great flood. He was unique. We are all unique. God created Adam and Eve in such a way that it would be impossible to ever have two descendents exactly alike. When God breathed a soul into Adam He made him one of a kind. Every human born in Adam's descent has shared this uniqueness. But among Adam's generations, God introduces us this morning to a man we can truly say was one in a billion. His name was Noah and his world was on the brink of destruction, eaten by the cancer of sin to the point of being hopelessly, completely and irreversibly evil.

In our text this morning Noah shines like a blazing light against an ink black backdrop. In fact if there was such a thing as a spiritual weather report of Noah's world it would have been a world map totally blackened by disaster, destruction and storm with one point of light, and that was Noah. No one else was even looking up, every thought, every intent, and every deed were all completely evil. Noah's day is one of the clearest illustrations of what the reformers describe as total depravity. Left to ourselves, we always go the way of sin and rebellion, turning our self-righteous backs on God.

This is the 3rd stop in our series on the World that Perished in the Genesis Flood. This series investigates the six fundamental truths about the World that Perished in the Genesis Flood. What are those truths?

1. First we saw that the World that Perished in the Genesis Flood Series had NO TIME FOR GOD. And that is what we studied last time.

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2. Then we saw that World that Perished in the Genesis Flood had NO REGARD FOR THEIR AMAZING MAKER. We will see the planet earth flourishing with life. We will see this globe teeming with plant, animal and human population explosions. And all the time Evil was INTENSIFYING. Simply stated, a life with no time for God soon loses all respect, regard and acknowledgment of their Creator.
 3. This morning we find NO MAN LIKE NOAH ON THE WHOLE PLANET. This biographical study of the life of Noah will be an amazing time of analyzing what it was that made this hero of the faith tick. Why he saved his family and how he served the Lord.

When everyone else was drowning in the World that Perished in the Genesis Flood, God tells us about one man and his family who didn't. Why don't we turn there and hear what God has to say about Noah? Genesis 6:9-22.

Early in the 1990's, a *Time* Magazine editor Lance Morrow penned some grim humor in expressing his despair at the world's ever-deeper plunge into evil. Playing off the then well-known persona of Willard Scott, the bright, cheerful weatherman of NBC's *Today Show*, he says:

I think there should be a Dark Willard. In the network's studio in New York City, Dark Willard would recite the morning's evil report. The map of the world behind him would be a multicolored Mercator projection. Some parts of the earth, where the overnight good prevailed, would glow with a bright transparency. But much of the map would be speckled and blotched. Over Third World and First World, over cities and plains and miserable islands would be smudges of evil, ragged blights, storm systems of massacre or famine, murders, black snows. Here and there, a genocide, a true abyss.

"*Homo homini lupus*," Dark Willard would remark. "That's Latin, guys. Man is a wolf to man." Dark Willard would... add up the moral evils—the horrors accomplished overnight by man and woman. Anything new among the suffering Kurds? Among the Central American death squads? New hackings in South Africa? Updating on the father who set fire to his eight-year-old son?

Or on those boys accused of shotgunning their parents in Beverly Hills to speed their inheritance of a \$14 million estate?
An anniversary: two years already since Tiananmen Square.

The only depravity uncharted might be cannibalism, a last frontier that fastidious man has mostly declined to explore. Evil is a different sort of gourmet.

Dark Willard is right. The world is in bad shape. Most of it is dark, with a few mottled areas and some bright spots. Of course, this is because of what humans are—sinners who are tainted in every part of their persons with sin. Most are not as bad as they can be. But apart from God's grace, many have descended deep into darkness, though through God's grace there are yet bright spots in this world.

What a depressing job poor Willard has, we think. But it could be worse. Think how it would have been for a pre-diluvian Dark Willard! Except for one tiny point of light, the entire forecast would have been darkness. Remember God's assessment of Noah's days in Genesis 6—"The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time" (v. 5). As bad as our world is today, this cannot yet be said of it. True, all humans are depraved and are naturally given to evil thoughts. But it is not true that "every inclination" of the thoughts of every man and woman's heart are "only evil all the time."

Now imagine how this all came down on this pre-diluvian farmer. The only floods he had ever seen, if indeed he had seen any, were the wadi washers which came from an occasional thunderstorm. And he had certainly never set his eyes on anything as big as the ark, much less a ship! But he heard God's Word, and he considered it (some respected scholars, such as the famous Bishop Westcott¹ think God's words were also heard by others)—and after thinking for a moment *he alone believed* God!²

¹ Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), p. 356 says: "The faith of Noah was directed to a special revelation which was made known to others also."¹

² Drawn and copied from Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Hebrews Vol 1&2—An Anchor for the Soul*, (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books) 1998, c1993, Hebrews 11.

Noah was one in a billion, and one word sums up his life: OBEDIENCE. Men who keep their families from drowning in the world will be like Noah who warned his family. Turn to Heb. 11:7. The inspired writer condenses Genesis 6-9 into one verse. Noah:

Listen to the inspired biography of Noah's life in Hebrews 11.

"By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Hebrews 11:7, NKJV).

- Believed God ("by faith").
- Stayed in touch with God ("being warned of things"); he had spiritual perception.
- Obeyed God ("prepared [a what?] an ark").
- Had the respect of family ("saved house").
- Called sin what it was, and sinners who they were ("condemned the world")!
- Was saved by faith ("according to faith")!

Noah was a man of godly integrity. That is why his family listened to him. Even when he failed at times, they saw the direction of his life. That is how he saved them from drowning in the sea of wickedness around them. There are several ways Noah expressed this godly attitude of obedience. Join me in v. 7 as we take apart the keys to a life of obedience.

1. **NOAH'S FAMILY DIDN'T DROWN BECAUSE NOAH BELIEVED GOD; HE WALKED "BY FAITH."**

By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Hebrews 11:7, NKJV).

The great theologian, John Calvin, wrote, "It is faith alone that justifies, but faith that justifies can never be alone." True saving faith can never be by itself: it always brings life, and life produces good works.

So what are the seven vital signs of Living Faith? James the earthly brother of Jesus writes us a list in his letter to the Jerusalem church. We studied these in depth last year in our James series. Do you have them marked? James 2 says:

1. LIVING FAITH CHANGES THE HEART: v. 14
2. LIVING FAITH PROMOTES GENEROSITY: V.16
3. LIVING FAITH PRODUCES FRUIT: V. 17
4. LIVING FAITH DISPLAYS ITSELF BY WORKS: V. 18
5. LIVING FAITH BELIEVES GOD: V. 19
6. LIVING FAITH OBEYS GOD: V. 21
7. LIVING FAITH LOVES GOD: V. 23

How was it that Noah persevered in building the ark? He stood alone amidst a world of sinners and unbelievers. He had to endure scorn, ridicule and mockery. What was it that nerved his arm, and made him patiently work on and face it all? It was faith. He believed in a wrath to come. He believed that there was no safety, excepting in the ark that he was preparing. Believing, he held the world's opinion very cheap. He counted the cost by faith and had no doubt that to build the ark was gain.³

It is fascinating that the Chinese⁴ character for "boat" is a pictograph of a vessel with eight people on board. What could that be? Probably another of many ancient testimonies to the universal thread in global cultures of Noah and the Ark. Another character of the language of the Chinese is "Righteousness" which is an ideograph of a Lamb on top of the personal pronoun "I". Thus perhaps in this way there is the true meaning of righteousness hidden which is "I Stand Under The Lamb To Be Righteous"

2. NOAH'S FAMILY DIDN'T DROWN BECAUSE NOAH STAYED IN TOUCH WITH GOD; HE WAS "BEING WARNED OF THINGS TO COME."

³*Holiness*, (Simpsonville, SC: Christian Classics Foundation) 1997.

⁴ Don Richards, *Eternity In Their Hearts*, Ventura, CA Regal Books, 1981, p. 117-118.

"By faith Noah, **being divinely warned of things not yet seen**, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Hebrews 11:7, NKJV)

God wanted Noah to know that he was to start a "new creation." There are some interesting parallels between the 1st and 2nd worlds.

- ✓ In the 1st creation the dry land appeared from the receding waters (1:9), with Noah the waters abated until the ark came to rest on Ararat (8:4).
- ✓ When Noah left the ark, God commissioned him to be fruitful and multiply (9:1) and to have dominion over the earth (9:2), just as He had told Adam (1:26, 28).
- ✓ Noah planted a garden (9:20), whereas God planted a garden for Adam and Eve (2:8).

To know the future needed to be in spiritual contact with God (through God's Direct Revelation) which we now have in God's Word and prayer (as he listened to God). All this led to spiritual perception of God's will for Noah's family. I hope every one of you hearing my voice will want to know for certainty God's will for your family so that you can obey it!

Are you accustomed to listening to the voice of God (God's Word) before you get saturated with the radio, TV, morning paper, World wide web news and so on? Tune in to God and get oriented for the day first.

3. **NOAH'S FAMILY DIDN'T DROWN BECAUSE NOAH OBEYED GOD; HE "PREPARED AN ARK."**

"By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, **prepared an ark** for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Hebrews 11:7, NKJV).

Noah built the ark **in reverence as he was moved with godly fear**. The Greek word () can be translated "pious care, or concern," in the original sense of genuine spiritual devotion. He treated the message of God with great respect and awe. He "was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6:9). He was a man of obedient faith even before God called him to build the ark. He had been faithful over smaller things, and now the Lord gave him a great thing to do.

Although we don't know exactly what the length of the cubit was in Naoh's time, if we use the lowest, most conservative figure it would be about seventeen and a half inches. On this basis, the ark Noah built was 438 feet long, 73 feet wide, and 44 feet high. In other words it was nearly one and a half times the length of a football field and more than four stories high. Since it had three decks, the total deck area was almost 96,000 square feet, and the total volume within the decks was about 1.4 million cubic feet. Total capacity of the ark equaled the capacity of 569 modern rail road stock cars, of which 208 could hold the 21,000 land animals of the 1,072,300 total species. The average land animal is the size of a sheep. Naval engineers have discovered that the dimensions and shape of the ark form the most stable ship design known. The ark was not designed for maneuverability but for stability, in order to best protect those within it.

4. **NOAH'S FAMILY DIDN'T DROWN BECAUSE NOAH LED HIS FAMILY; HE "SAVED HIS HOUSE."**

"By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the **saving of his household**, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Hebrews 11:7, NKJV).

The ark is a beautiful picture of the salvation offered in Jesus Christ. The ark was easily large enough to hold all the animals needed to assure each species' survival. It had plenty of room for every person who wanted to come to God for safety. The fact that only eight persons came into the

ark means that only eight wanted to be saved on God's terms. God does not wish "for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). God's nature does not change. His will in Peter's time was the same in Noah's time. Only those perished in the Flood who rejected God's way of salvation. Had more come to Him for safety, we can be sure the ark would have accommodated them. Just so, Jesus' blood is more than sufficient to atone for all the sins ever committed since the Fall. That no more people are saved than are simply means that these are the only ones who *want* to be saved. Jesus declared absolutely that no one who comes to Him will be cast out (John 6:37).⁵

They went along with his project, alone in the whole world! Why? Because he was living a life of integrity in the world and at home.

5. **NOAH'S FAMILY DIDN'T DROWN BECAUSE NOAH WAS UNAFRAID TO POINT OUT SIN; HE "CONDEMNED THE WORLD."**

"By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, **by which he condemned the world** and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Hebrews 11:7, NKJV).

He confronted the whole world of sin and stood against it — the longest sermon in 100 years. If we add what the Apostle Peter tells us that Noah was a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5). This means⁶ that for the entire 120 years while he labored on the ark (it would take 4 men 90 years to build a 1.4 million cubic foot structure at full time working rates today), he was also preaching to all who would listen. So his family worked alongside him on the ark, and stood alongside him as he preached

⁵MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

⁶ Ideas and some words drawn from Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Hebrews Vol 1&2—An Anchor for the Soul*, (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books) 1998, c1993.

Now imagine this, a small crowd gathers at the side of the construction site, Noah is working on the construction scaffolding. And while the curious "tire kickers" gawk at him, he warns them. Because he was God's messenger, he must have gone on preaching missions throughout the countryside. But he never varied his message, it was always a call to faith in God, repentance, and righteous living. The ancient *Sibylline*⁷ *Oracles* imagined this passionate address from his lips:

Faithless men, maddened by passion, do not forget the great things God has done; for the immortal all-provident Saviour knows all things, and he has commanded me to be a messenger to you, lest you be destroyed by your madness. Sober yourselves, cease from your evil practices and from murderous violence against each other, soaking the earth with human blood. Reverence, my fellow mortals, the supreme and unassailable Creator in heaven, the imperishable God who dwells on high. Call upon him, all of you (for he is good) to be merciful to you all. For this whole vast world of men will be destroyed with water and you will then utter cries of terror. Suddenly the elements will turn against you and the wrath of Almighty God will come upon you from heaven.

6. **NOAH'S FAMILY DIDN'T DROWN BECAUSE NOAH LIVED "ACCORDING TO FAITH."**

"By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world **and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith**" (Hebrews 11:7, NKJV).

Noah was the only dad in the World that Perished in the Genesis Flood that saved his family from drowning. How? By warning them with God's Word and by living before them with integrity! If we want to follow his example, we can save our families too. But we need to:

- o Believe God.

⁷ Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), p. 464, quoting from *Sibylline Oracles* 1.125ff.

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- Continually be in communion and contact with God.
 - Always obey God.
 - Live a life of integrity in the world and at home.
 - Confront sin, and stand against it.
 - End as an heir of faith.