

The Biblical Faith of Noah

³⁷ "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. ³⁸ "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. (Matt. 24:37-39)

The Bible is our **one and only** rule and guide for life and practice.

In other words, we measure everything against the Word of God.

I hear preachers says, **"I don't emphasize doctrine/theology because it divides."**

.. I tell you that this is exactly why doctrine and theology are necessary and essential.

... it separates the wheat from the chaff, the true from the false, the sheep from the goats.

... beware of any church or preacher that makes fun of or lampoons sound doctrine.

From the beginning God has always warned His people against the danger of following after false gods and false teachers.

Jesus himself warned us that **"many false prophets and teachers would come in His name trying to deceive" ...**

... after Jesus' resurrection the New Testament writers are constantly warning the church to beware of false teaching/heresy and false preachers.

Here is why false teachers and heresy is so dangerous ...

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God ... but what if what you think is the Bible is in fact, the truth of the Bible mixed with lies.

- What if you are being told that all sickness is a result of sin
- ... or that every negative thing is a demon that needs to be cast out
- ... or that Karma is a biblical principle (if you do bad/good you get bad/good in this life)
- ... or if you lay on a person's grave you can "soak up" their anointing.
- ... or you can use the **enneagram** (wiccan satanic symbolism) to tap into greater spiritual power and effectiveness in church leadership
- ... or (as Jimmy Carter said this week) that Jesus would approve of gay marriage.
- ... or as **Pastor Raphael Warnock** (of 6000 member Ebenezer Baptist in Atlanta) said, "legalized abortion is consistent with Christianity."

The end result of false teaching and false teachers is **chaos and increased wickedness and depravity.**

... this is exactly what happened in the **book of Judges** where everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

... that is exactly what we see in Israel before the captivities with the worship of Baal, Ashtaroath, Molech, and others

False teaching always causes and spiritual blindness that keeps people from seeing the truth.

... and when that happens depravity/violence/injustice/ runs rampant throughout the land

... This is exactly what happened in Noah's day.

So, the author of Hebrews seeing the potential danger of these Jewish Christians falling into spiritual blindness ...

... points them back to the first time in history this happened... in Noah's day.

Why is Noah's story so important?

Because when the whole world was blinded by lies ... Noah was not.

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. (Heb. 11:7)

Now, the author of Hebrews is writing to Jewish Christians who are well-versed in the history of Israel ...

... they knew the stories of the Old Testament saints and heroes who people who had faithfully lived for God.

... and yet, these Jewish believers were thinking of abandoning the very Christ every Old Testament saint had looked and longed for.

To abandon Christ would be to abandon **the new and better covenant** that Christ brought

To abandon Christ would be to abandon the **new and better country** that the Old Testament believers had (by faith) been looking for ...

Even though these New Testament Jewish believers had the full revelation of Jesus Christ (the new covenant)

... they still needed to persevere

... Noah is an excellent example of what perseverance looks like.

Let me set the scene ...

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. ⁶ The LORD was sorry that He had

made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ 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 and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. (Gen. 6:5-8)

Here Genesis describes Noah's world and the people of Noah's day.

"Every intent of the thoughts of their heart was continually evil."

... The word **intent/imagination** is the Hebrew word "**mah-ha- sabot**" which means *cleverly designed*.

... this word is related to the fashioning of pottery

The text is saying that the people cleverly fashioned **philosophies/ways of thinking/arguments** to justify evil ...

... this is the earliest case we know of where society started calling good evil and evil good.

We are seeing some of that now during this election season.

- ... if you are for biblical marriage then you are called hateful and unloving
- **Here's one I heard in a lecture this week:** "Jesus was not killed by atheism and anarchy but by law and order aligned with religion."
- We even see this today in how abortion is justified ... even in certain areas of Christianity.
- They are now trying to say that if a person claims to be "pro-life" what they mean is "pro-birth" because pro-lifers don't care about children after they are born ...

[It doesn't get more convoluted than that!]

In case I haven't been clear... let me be clear.

This lust and passion for the legalization of abortion is nothing less than demonic.

- The angel of the lord told Samson's mother not to drink wine/alcohol because it would defile the unborn baby Samson.
- God told Jeremiah that he was formed in his mother's womb
- John the Baptist, in his mother's womb leaped when he came into the presence of Jesus in Mary's womb.
- And Jesus said if you harm one of these "little ones" it would be better that a stone be tied around your neck and you be thrown into the sea to drown.

... If you care about justice, if you care about the last, the lost, and the least then your first concern will be for the innocent unborn child.

I can't see any other option in scripture.

... but if you stand for truth and righteousness there is going to be a battle.

Look at Genesis description of the people in Noah's world.

Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. (Gen. 6:11)

See the phrase "filled with violence" it literally means "filled with outrage."

Evil had multiplied and filled the earth and the people loved it ... and they didn't want anyone or anything to restrain or take away their **carnival of crime and carnality**.

... they would kill and destroy to keep it.

... when it comes to sin and darkness nothing has changed.

This passion to promote evil and condemn goodness in Noah's day disappointed God...

... God was grieved then, and God is grieved now.

But never forget ... God does not delight in judgment and punishment ...

The cross was God's first intention; hell is God's last resort.

... The days of Noah were awful but the Bible tells us that Noah didn't follow the crowd.

When everybody else forsook the truth ... Noah stayed true.

... In fact, Noah's faith pleased God and because of his faith Noah found **grace and favor** in the eyes of the Lord.

Please know: even In the worst of situations, circumstances, and societies it is always possible to live by faith and please God.

I want to show you three very powerful things about Noah's faith that we need to learn.

1. Biblical Faith focuses on the future grace

in reverence Noah prepared an ark

The idea of a world-wide flood would have been foreign to Noah ...

...**First** of all, there had never been a "flood" so that had to have been a new concept.

...**Second**, (according to Genesis 2:5) it had never rained before.

So, imagine how hard it must have been for Noah to believe that **rain and a world-wide flood** was coming that would destroy everything.

... and yet God told Noah to build an ark for safety.

¹⁷ "Behold, I, even I am 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. ¹⁸ "But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark (Gen. 6:17-18)

Can you imagine the mocking and ridicule that Noah must have suffered at the hands of his own neighbors and family?

But Noah kept building and obeying because he believed what God told him.

And just in case you think God is being too extreme by sending this flood look at the word “destroy” in verse 17

... it is the Hebrew word, **la-sha-at** and it has already been used 3 times in this chapter (v. 11-12) and in the other places it is translated “corrupt or corrupted.”

The pattern of using this word to describe the situation as well as the degree of coming punishment is to show that God is giving measure for measure ...

... In other words, the punishment matches the crime.

... this is how wicked the world was.

In some ways the people to whom the book of Hebrews was written were in a similar position.

They weren't **building an ark** based upon the prophecy of a coming flood, but they were supposed to be **living for God based** upon the prophecy of Jesus' return.

They needed to believe the promises of God and live contrary to the culture of their day ...

They had to trust that Christ would return and complete their redemption by finally removing every vestige of the presence and power of sin.

Faithful living is living with your eyes fixed on eternity.

... staying true to Christ in the present trial as you look forward to that better land.

Do you know why the main theme of the Bible is not soup kitchens, homeless shelters, environmentalism, and social activism?

Because future grace tells us that this is a world is temporary ...

... this is not our forever home!

Noah was commanded to build an ark in order to offer a way of escape from this world and the wrath that was coming.

Jesus is that ark!

When we look at the news and social media and we see society collapsing all around us ...

... or even when “so and so” doesn’t get elected—all is NOT lost!

This is world is but a temporary abode

And as true believers we live today **in light of the hope of tomorrow** when we shall see Jesus face to face.

We know that if we trust Jesus and all of His promises ***then we, like Noah, are heirs “of the righteousness that comes by faith” (11:7).***

Biblical Faith focuses on the future grace

2. Biblical Faith transforms the motivation of the will

in reverence Noah prepared an ark

Some people don’t come to Christ for the same reason the people of Noah’s day didn’t get on the ark—

...they refuse to think.

They imagine clever ways to escape thinking about the future or their eternal destiny.

... *"I don't want to talk about Jesus or God, I'm an atheist."*

I hear people say that but in reality, they've never really studied atheism or thought out the implications and consequences of atheism.

... the truth is they are intellectually lazy and don't want to do the hard work of thinking out the implications of what they believe.

Here's another one:

I don't read the bible; I don't care about Christianity it's just not relevant to me.

The story is told of a professor who was teaching a seminar group on the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas

... two of the students seemed totally disconnected and more interested in passing notes than paying attention to the lesson.

The professor noticed this and pointed it out ...

... the girl responded, "I'm having trouble concentrating because the subject matter just isn't relevant to me."

P: "Not relevant? We are asking here if right and wrong is absolute or is it merely subjective."

She responded, "Well, yes, right and wrong is totally subjective, everybody has their own truth."

P: "Oh, really? What if I just decided today that anybody who smirks when I lecture will automatically get a failing grade in this course?"

She responded, "Well, that would be unfair."

P: "Ah, but you just said that all right and wrong is subjective so by what criteria can you call that unfair?"

The girl rolled her eyes, got up, and walked out of the class.

The point of this story is to show that she really doesn't want to think.

People who say they are atheist are saying that they have **adopted a view of the world** that promotes **racism ...**

... a belief system that **cannot explain the origin of our innate sense of justice.**

... a world where **murder is as virtuous as love, and abuse as valid as compassion.**

If there is no God, then ultimately nothing can be said to be right or wrong.

Again, here's my point:

People didn't miss out getting on the ark (or accepting Jesus) because they thought about it ... it's the exact opposite.

... they missed the ark, people have rejected Christ, because they **refuse** to think about it.

They think that Christ (just like getting on the ark) will get in the way of them doing what they want to do ...

And that is one of the great lies the Devil tells us.

The Christian life does not start by changing our behavior ... it starts by changing our motivation.

I can tell you today that when I came to Christ my behavior didn't dramatically change overnight.

... but my motivation did.

The longer I've lived for Jesus the more I've wanted to do right and wanted to not do wrong.

The philosopher **Arthur Schopenhauer** was paraphrasing the Apostle Paul's when he wrote:

What the heart desires, the will chooses, and what the will chooses, the mind justifies.

Nobody is a free moral agent making unbiased decisions ...

... everybody is motivated by something.

I am sure that before he met God, Noah had **no thought or desire** of spending 120 years building an enormous coffin shaped boat.

... but when Noah began to walk with God everything changed.

And Noah wasn't a reluctant builder.

in reverence Noah prepared an ark

It is not discipline but delight in Jesus Christ that changes the motivation and perspective of our hearts.

One of the big advertisements of the "purpose driven" theology was that if you offer people a "grand purpose" for their lives they would **choose that and thereby choose** to become a Christian.

It that were so, then Christianity would be nothing more than a selfish choice for selfish gain.

Christ does not change us from the outside in ... Christ changes us from the inside out.

Biblical Faith focuses on future grace

Biblical Faith transforms the motivation of the will

3. The focus of Biblical faith is God

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. (Heb. 11:7)

The central word in this verse is GOD.

Noah **heard**, Noah **obeyed** (a consequence was that the world was condemned by his obedience) and Noah became an **heir of righteousness**.

Biblical faith does not center on man, it centers on God

"You can tell that a church has nothing of substance left to say when it starts talking primarily about itself."

Biblical faith is centered on God therefore it holds tightly to Jesus Christ as the central revelation of the Father.

Religion focused on man is filled with self-help teaching and self-centered philosophy.

... Noah wasn't doing something for himself ... he was denying himself and obeying God.

And listen to me ... this is the surest path to God's glory and our good.

This week I read the story of someone who had gotten caught in a riptide and almost died.

[Apparently around 100 people a year die by getting caught in riptides.]

According to what I've read riptides are created by the unevenness of the ocean's floor

... as the water is going in and out from the shoreline it creates these unusual currents that pull swimmers away from the shore.

... and the reason that people drown is because they panic and try to swim against the current and back towards the shore ...

... the force of the water not only exhausts their energy; it ultimately drags them under.

So, the key to survival is to not resist the current but go with the flow of the water ...

... instead of exhausting yourself allow the current to take you out to sea...

... ultimately the riptide current will settle down and, in a minute, or two and it will leave you in a safer spot.

In the story I read the person that got caught relaxed into the current, was pulled out into sea, and there he was rescued.

... that's why that person is alive today... they were rescued.

The truth is that all of us are caught up in the same riptide ... and that riptide is sin

... and any fighting against the current is futile

This is where the tired clichés of cultural Christianity break down

... because no matter how catchy the slogans are ...

... no matter how attractive the companion journals are

... not matter how popular the celebrity preachers may be

... none of them can breathe new life into a dead body sunk in the depths of the sea.

What we need is to be rescued ... and only a holy God can do that!