

Noah Found Grace

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(modified from an article written by Tony Hudson)

People disagree about what saves us. Is it God's grace? Is it our faith? Is it faithful obedience to God's instructions? To all of these questions, I would simply answer yes. And I believe the example of Noah is a good one for us to learn from.

In Genesis 6:3, God said he would give mankind 120 years before destroying them. God explains why in Genesis 6:5-6. *"Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.'"*

However, as God planned to destroy mankind, He extended His favor to one man - Noah. *"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."* This was indeed a blessing for Noah, but what did it mean? I think the writer of Hebrews sheds light upon that question. Hebrews 11:7 tells us that it was not only God's grace but also Noah's faith that saved him. *"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."*

Now we see that God extended His grace to Noah by warning him "of things not yet seen", that is, the coming flood he planned to bring to destroy all mankind. There is no indication that Noah knew *when* the flood was coming - just that it *was* coming.

Not only did God warn Noah, he also told him what to do to be saved. God told Noah to make an ark, what kind of wood it should be made from, what size it should be, how many doors and windows it should have, and how many stories it should have. God told Noah he was to bring animals onto the ark with specific instructions as to how many of each kind and of each gender. And Genesis 7:5 says, *"And Noah did according to all that the LORD commanded him."*

Now think back to Hebrews 11:7. God's grace was shown in that He warned Noah about the flood that was coming. Noah's faith is shown in that he believed God, and Noah's faith was fulfilled in the works he did as he built an ark to save he and his household. So we see the grace of God combined with Noah's faith. And his faith led him to obey the commandments of God that were intended to save him .

Is that not what God has done for us today? God has determined a day when the world will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:7). Peter also says that God is waiting because *"he is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Peter 3:9). So God has extended His grace to us in a warning, just as He warned Noah.

And God has told us what to do to be saved, just as he told Noah what to do to be saved. He sent his Son to die on the cross, accepting the punishment that we deserve for our sins (1 Peter 2:22). Having sent His Son, God calls on us to believe in Him (John 3:16).

His Son Jesus said we must believe and be baptized (Mark 16:15-16). We see confession of one's belief is called for as it was when Philip taught the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. And those who accepted this

teaching on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 asked what they should do. They were told to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). They turned from their sins asking for forgiveness. They were baptized, and their sins were forgiven. Then in Acts 2:41-42 we learn that those who received the teachings continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. It seems reasonable to do as Noah did - all that God has commanded. We should believe the warning of things that we have not yet seen (the day the earth is destroyed and the Day of Judgment). Having believed, we should put our faith in God's Son who died for us. We should repent of our sins, confess our belief in Jesus, be baptized for the forgiveness of our sins, and live steadfastly in the doctrine set forth by the apostles in the New Testament.

God saved Noah and his family because they believed and obeyed Him. The waters of the flood lifted the ark up and washed sin off the face of the earth. God will save us too if we believe and obey Him. We can be buried in the waters of baptism, and God will wash away our sins.

God has made it very clear how man is to be saved from his wrath against evil. Let's make sure we find grace in the eyes of God by demonstrating faith through obedience, just as Noah found grace in the eyes of God.