

Noah

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev Murdo Alex Macleod

[0 : 00] Let us turn now to the chapter we read, the book of Genesis, chapter 6, reading at verse 8. Genesis, chapter 6, reading at verse 8. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. These are the generations of Noah.

Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations. And Noah walked with God. Remember that the book of Genesis is known as the book of beginnings.

And we have here an account, or the account rather, of the beginning of the destruction of the known world as it was from the time of creation up until the time of Noah.

Now, we tend to think of this time in the history of the world, coming towards the end of the 20th century, as a time which is characterized by violence and ungodliness, hitherto unknown in the history of the world.

[1 : 58] But that is not altogether true. The account we have of the state of affairs at the time when God indicated to Noah that he was going to destroy the world with a flood.

The account that we have of the state of affairs at the time when God said that he was going to destroy the world. The account that we have is one which makes very, very sad reading indeed. Man had become so degenerate, so ungodly, so immoral, that God had to step in to save the world by the means of the flood.

And to restart, as it were, human life through this man Noah and his family who alone were saved out of the mass of mankind at that time.

It is probable that the ungodliness and the degeneracy of the age gathered peace as a result of this reference that we have in verse 2, a statement which people find extremely difficult to understand, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all which they chose.

In verse 4, When the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, they bared children to them. The same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

[3 : 59] And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth. Now, whatever the terms sons of God and the daughters of men mean, the outcome of their marriage relationship was of disastrous consequences to the world.

It may be that the sons of God is a term which is used for believers, and that the daughters of men is a term used for people, for those who were unbelievers.

And the result of this intermarriage had disastrous consequences for the world. And we have in this chapter a most terrible picture of human degradation, where God's creation was utterly perverse, and when men became more or less like the brutes, like the beasts themselves, where unbridled sin produced a human race which was, in every respect, ripe for judgment.

Well, it was into that situation that God stepped and spoke to this one man. That man was Noah, who, we read here, in the midst of all this degeneracy and ungodliness, was the one person characterized by faith in God and by a righteous life.

And it is to this one man that I want to direct your attention today, and to look at him in the light of what the Bible tells us both here, and in the book of Hebrews, and in the letter of Peter, the second letter of Peter, to find out for ourselves, what kind of man was this man Noah?

[6 : 19] What do we know of him? Well, we read, for example, in the preceding chapter, chapter 5, verse 28, when he was born, and verse 29, that his father Lamech called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord God hath cast.

The first thing we're told about this man was that at his birth, he was a source of comfort and consolation to his parents.

And the way the Bible puts it leads us to understand that he wasn't just the natural hope of his doting father, but that his father was giving expression to what was in all probability a revelation given to him by God concerning his son Noah.

It was, in other words, a prophetic utterance spoken by his father on the basis of the revelation or the promise of God.

He was, just as Moses was to be, he was an extraordinary child. And the father recognized that the promise of God was to be fulfilled in this son.

[7 : 52] And during his son's lifetime, his father saw him as a man of God, and he saw him developing into a preacher, as the New Testament tells us, a preacher of righteousness.

A man who walked by faith, and a man who spoke to his generation. His father lived until five years before the flood came.

And he saw Noah's task, in accordance with the word and the promise of God, building the ark. He saw it almost completed.

And he knew that this man, who was his own son, was to be the means of saving the then known human race.

That was the kind of man, he was, that was the kind of child he was, the kind of man he developed into. He was a source of consolation and of comfort to his parents.

[9 : 01] Simply because he was a man of God, a man who believed the word of God, and a man who acted in faith upon the word of God.

Now, I know that in our setup, if I want to apply this for a minute, some people find fault with the likes of me because, for example, we don't have the children's addresses in our services.

Now, I'll be perfectly honest with you. I was never in favor of that, I think probably because I'm a bit of a coward and I find it so difficult to make that kind of address and I find it extremely difficult to, in that sense, to have children's addresses.

Secondly, I'm not all that convinced of their worth or their value in the public worship of God. I believe that the word of God is to be preached to all who are present and that the work of blessing that word is not mine but God's.

And thirdly, I have always been amazed at the ability of children to understand what is said in a sermon, some of them, far more so than can be said of their parents.

[10 : 35] they take in things and I wouldn't be surprised if there are times when you as parents are embarrassed when a child goes home from a service and speaks to you about something that you never even noticed, didn't even pick up yourself but the child did.

Having said all that, let me just say a word to the children here today. Know this great man of God from the time that he was born growing up as a child in this world was recognized by his parents, certainly by his father, as a child who loved God, who believed in God and who did what God told him.

And no child can be a greater blessing in a family. No child can be a greater blessing than that kind of a child. And I just want to ask you very simply as children here today, what kind of children are you?

Do you love God? Do you believe God? And do you do what God tells you? Well, if you do that, let me assure you of this, that your parents will have the greatest blessing that they could possibly have.

grace and then secondly, we read about him in verse 8 of this chapter that he found favor in verse 8 of chapter 6, he found grace or favor in the eyes of the Lord.

[12 : 14] He found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Let me tell you something else. This is the first time that we come across this wonderful word in the Bible.

Grace. You know that after this chapter 6 of Genesis, particularly when you go into the New Testament, it is full of this word grace.

What does grace mean? Well, essentially, it is just this, God's favor, God's love, God's blessing freely bestowed upon people.

When God blesses us, he doesn't bless us because we deserve his blessing, we don't deserve his blessing. We deserve his curse, his wrath. We deserve to be abandoned by God.

But grace is God in his love coming to us when we don't deserve his love. Now, Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord.

[13:19] In other words, Noah was a good child, and Noah became a great man of God just because God blessed him.

He wasn't like that naturally. He became a man of God because the grace, the favor, the love of God was bestowed upon him freely.

He became the object of God's delight, the recipient of many of God's favors, brought into a living relationship of faith with God because God favored him freely, sovereignly.

He found grace from God. And then thirdly, we read here in verse 9, the last part of verse 9, that Noah was a just man and perfect generations, and Noah walked with God.

This is the other thing that we're told about this man. He was a man of faith. He was a good man. That's the meaning of the word perfect or righteous.

[14:34] He was a righteous man and he walked with God. He lived believably. He lived in close fellowship and close contact with God.

His life inwardly, in his heart relationship with God, in his thinking processes, his life inwardly was right.

It was as it ought to be. And outwardly, his walk was good. No one found offense with Noah. No one could level the finger of accusation against him and say, that man is inconsistent.

He says one thing, he does another. Or he does one thing, but he's thinking something else. He was that kind of man. He was reconciled to God.

He was in league with God. He was at one with God. He walked with God. He was a prayerful man. He had a life that was lived in close contact with God and he honoured God.

[15:44] Now, that's all very well as it is put, but you remember this. You remember the kind of day in which he lived. It was an ungodly time.

A time of great moral declension and degeneracy. A time of great moral rebellion against God.

People were doing what they liked and they were saying what they liked.

and the more sin became entrenched in life and in society, the bolder people were becoming. They were saying things then publicly that perhaps they wouldn't have said a hundred years before that time.

That was the kind of generation in which he lived, very similar to her own. As sin finds its feet, as it were in society, and as sin is allowed to develop and to express itself privately and then openly, people become bold and they say things that they would never say perhaps in a previous generation.

Things that people are ashamed of twenty, thirty, forty years ago, people boast of that kind of conduct today. It was the same in Noah's day.

[17:04] But you see, he lived by faith and he walked with God and he talked with God and he spoke about God and after a minute, he preached about God.

He was a preacher of righteousness and it wasn't easy to do that. Then, very few people believed. No one outside his own family believed a word that he said.

Jesus tells us that they ridiculed him. They poured scorn on Noah. that's what happens today. If you confront men with the law of God, with God's demands upon their lives, they will laugh you to scorn. And they did the same with Noah. It wasn't easy for him to live the way he did. yet he was this man of faith.

When his faith was challenged, denied, and denied defiantly, violently opposed, he persevered in his walk.

[18:15] And then we read this about him. And this is where we're indebted to the writer of the Hebrews for this. by faith, Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, and moved with fear to put an ark for the saving of his family, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Now, what are we told about that? We're told this, that he acted believably on all that God said to him.

Now, there are times when faith isn't easy. Let's look, for example, at Noah's faith. What did he believe in? Well, of course, that writer of the Hebrews tells us.

The first thing that faith does is it believes in God. It believes in the existence of God. But you see, it is God in a particular God.

It is a particular God. And God presented in a particular way. Look at the fallacy of this, for example. Say just now, a person, I just want to use this as an illustration to show you what I'm getting at.

[19 : 44] Have you come across a person who wants to live the way he prefers himself? He's got a particular style of life and a particular code of conduct.

But at the same time he makes out that he's a good man or that he's accepted by God. Now, take a man who has a particular kind of conduct.

A man who is immoral. And he claims that what he's doing himself is perfectly acceptable to him and to many others and he can have as good a relationship with God as anybody else.

And then you ask this question. How can you claim to do what you like, claim to have a right and a proper relationship with God when what you are doing is contrary to what God tells you to do?

It can't be. It can't be. So the writer of the Hebrews says this, He that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is the reward of them that diligently seek him.

[21 : 05] Now do you see what faith does? Faith moves a man Godward. He comes to him. And he comes to a particular God, to the God who has revealed himself, to the God of the Bible.

And faith believes that what that God has said, that God will do. That's the kind of faith Noah had. You see, the writer of the Hebrews makes that statement.

He goes on to say this, there were people who lived like that. For example, Noah lived like that.

What did God say to Noah?

Well, he said some astounding things to him. Noah, I am going to destroy this world with a flood.

Noah, you've got to build a huge ark.

And it's by entering into that ark that you and your family are going to be saved. And I'm going to destroy this world. And you're going to bring into that ark all the animals, the species that I mentioned to you.

[22 : 10] You're going to bring them in. And it is through you that I'm going to save this world. And I'm going to do it. You better get going on this work. And for over a hundred years, Noah believed what God had said to him.

And Noah worked in accordance with what he believed. He took over a hundred years to build that ark. Now that was faith. Ah, you say, what's so wonderful about that? Well, let me tell you.

The flood that God told Noah was going to come upon the world was something that Noah had never heard of in his life. Never. The world had never seen a flood.

The world had never been destroyed. It was the world that God used to know, I'm going to destroy this world with a flood, was a word which conveyed to Noah that something supernatural was going to happen to the world.

It had to be supernatural. And that exactly is a point about the flood. The windows of the heavens were opened. it was no ordinary downpour.

[23 : 16] The word that is used there tells us that the actual rain that fell for forty days upon the earth was supernaturally sent. And then, you see, that wasn't enough to destroy the world.

There was a subterranean catastrophe. There was an explosion, as it were, underneath the surface of the earth.

The waters of the deep, the seabed itself. There were geological upheavals in the seabed, in the river beds, and underneath the surface of the earth.

And just as the water supernaturally came down, so the water supernaturally gushed out through the surface of the earth. Which explains, for you who may have problems with this, many, if not all, of the geological phenomena that we have in the world today.

You see, this was what God told Noah, and Noah believed it. He believed what God said, and then he believed something else. He believed that he had to go to work on the building of this ark.

[24 : 42] The world had never seen this kind of vessel. Three decks to it. Huge structure. Do you realize that the world had never seen a liner quite like this until the 19th century?

Do you realize that? The ark was of such astounding proportions. Noah's mind could hardly grasp it.

He had never seen a ship. Maybe he had never seen a ship in his life. I don't know. There's one thing certain. He had never seen a ship quite like the one that God told him to build.

And yet, he believed what God told him. That is faith. Faith receives God's testimony. Oh, I know that there are people who discredit the flood.

I know that there are people who don't accept that such a thing has happened to Jonah ever happened to. I know that there are people who don't believe the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. I know that there are people who don't believe that Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of

salt.

[25 : 51] I know all these things. So did Jesus. And Jesus believed them. And isn't it significant? That all these historical incidents in the Old Testament that Jesus referred to him on one occasion seems to have been referred to maybe because he knew full well that in days to come, as in his day, people would discredit them, discount them, and disbelieve them.

But my friend, they're facts of history. And we believe it because God said it. Do you know that I think I told you the story before? someone was writing about the story of Jonah being swallowed by that big fish and then being vomited ashore after three days.

And he wrote that at that time, that biological, that the, the, the, the, the, some of the researchers that had been carried out on underwater fossils, had confirmed to people that in that, at that time in the Mediterranean, there were fish which were capable of swallowing a man such as Jonah.

And this marine biological research had convinced this man of the accuracy of the book of Jonah. well, these things may be good to confirm your faith, but they are not the basis of faith.

The basis of faith is not any research of any kind, but the word of God. We believe because God says it.

[27 : 45] And if you want a good ground for your faith today, you be assured of this, you'll never have a better, a stronger ground of assurance than the fact that God has said it.

And don't be afraid and don't be ashamed to believe on the basis of the word of God. That's all that Noah had in his generation. They disbelieved, they poor scorned, they ridiculed him for a hundred years.

He was building this ark, preparing for the flood. You can imagine, you can imagine, the way that people would react, the way that the local community would react, as the ship was being built.

You can just imagine the way that, as the Bible tells us, the New Testament tells us, the way they would laugh at Noah, and the way they would ridicule Noah, and the way that they would test Noah's faith.

But he believed, he acted, he worked, he built. And that's what the Christian is like today. Your faith will be exposed to ridicule.

[28 : 59] People will find fault with you, they will present many difficulties, and at times when your faith will be shaken to its very foundation. confession. And the only thing you can do is to hang on tenaciously when you have no answer to many of the objections that are raised.

Hang on, you've got the best answer of all. God has spoken, God has said it, therefore I will believe. Let me say something to you young people here today, who from time to time may be confronted with a people and with teachings and with theories which seem so very plausible and which seem to have the answer.

The only problem is that they're contrary to what the word of God says. I say this to you, in the face of all that you're exposed to, don't you turn away from the word of God.

You believe what God says and you remember this, that a better and a greater than you believed all that was written in the Old Testament and that was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

[30 : 26] The Old Testament scriptures were authoritative for him. Let them be authoritative for you. Well, Noah believed what God said.

And the other thing about Noah's faith was this, his faith moved him to fear. Moved with fear. He prepared an ark to the saving of his soul.

Now what does that mean? I came across a summit quite recently, a course of lectures drawn up for some Christian leaders which they were to read and to assimilate.

And that course of lectures, one of them, referred to John the Baptist as a man who frightened his hearers into believing and into repenting.

They were frightened into repentance. Now then, is that what is meant here about Noah? Was he this kind of man? He believed God and he was so afraid of God, he cowered and he cringed and he did everything that God told him.

[31 : 39] He lived a life of fear. Oh, there are people who say this about the Christian. There are people who say this about young converts. They've only become converts because some preachers scared them and they decide to become believers.

They were scared out of their wits rather than scared into faith. say what it means here. Oh, no. You see, a person who fears God, spoken of like that in the Bible, isn't a person who is afraid of God.

Isn't a person who's living a life of fear and afraid that his every act will be seen and commented on. No, no, that's not what is meant at all here by fear.

It means that Noah loved God. Noah obeyed God. Noah delighted in God.

That's not fear. Noah rejoiced in God. And everything he did, he did because he knew that what God said was true. And so he was moved to act.

[32 : 49] He was moved to obey God, to do what God told him, to start building the ark because he knew that that was going to be the means of his salvation.

And that's what faith does. Faith accepts the testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ as the only Savior. And a man of faith puts his trust in the Lord Jesus for the salvation of his own soul.

And all whom he loves, he brings, he seeks to bring to the Lord Jesus Christ because he knows that there is no other way of being saved.

God spoke to Noah about coming judgment and he believed. God spoke to Noah about the way of salvation and he acted. And though he was assured of his salvation and not of his family, he used the means suggested to him by God.

In other words, move with faith means this, that this man of faith was diligent in obeying God. He had faith in what God said and he had confidence in what God provided.

[34 : 07] That's the Christian. He believes what God says and he has full confidence in God's way of salvation. And says Peter, and the right to the Hebrews, this man who thus believed God and thus acted preached to his generation.

He preached righteousness to his generation. He preached with his love and he preached with his acts and he preached with his words to the people around him.

He told them about the coming judgment. He told them about God's demands upon their own life.

And in the face of all the opposition, he preached to them. And that's all the Christian does. By his life and by his words, he testifies to his own generation that God is true and that God's word will be fulfilled.

But the point is this, and I think this is one of the great problems for Noah. He preached as you and I would say unsuccessfully for 120 years.

[35 : 28] Do you realize this? I don't think we grasp, I wish we could grasp the significance of this. For over 100 years, this man preached to the people around him.

he told them about God and he told them about the coming judgment. He told them about the way of escape. Not a soul believed him.

Not one soul believed Noah. You may be surprised, no doubt, if you're a Christian today, that in spite of all that you say to people, and in spite of all the evidence that you present to them, not a soul seems to believe what you're saying.

And there are times when that can be terribly discouraging, terribly discouraging. But as you've heard often enough, what you and I are told to be is this, not successful preachers or witnesses, faithful witnesses.

You remember this. All you can do is to present the truth. You cannot shake anybody into a belief or an acceptance of it.

[36 : 55] But God can. God can. And it may be that God will be pleased to use your witness. it may be that you won't see a soul accepting what you say.

But you remember Noah. For over a hundred years he preached and no one believed him. Only he and his family went into that ark and only he and his family were saved.

saved. And this is the message of the gospel to you and to me today. God demands faith of each one of us.

God demands obedience. God demands a life of commitment to him and to his word. That's what God demands. What is going to be your response to God's claims upon you?

Do you believe what God says? Do you believe that there is only one way of escape from the wrath to come?

[38 : 11] And have you acted on the basis of that faith? Have you made choice of the only saviour and the only redeemer?

You remember that today as in the days of Noah there are many people who hear this testimony but who refuse to believe.

As someone put it hell excites no fear and heaven excites no desire in the lives of the majority of people.

Where do you stand today in the light of the teaching of the word of God? Have you been moved to believe and to act in the face of all the opposition that encounters your faith?

Well, that was Noah. That was the kind of man he was. That was the kind of life that he lived. and that was the kind of activity that he had.

[39 : 26] He believed what God said. And in the course of time, his faith was vindicated.

And God willing, next week, we'll have a look at what happened when the flood did come and the way in which Noah and his family were saved.

let us pray. Oh God, we look to thee anew today. We look to thee for thy blessing, for thy favor, for thy power.

We bless thee that thou art the God of all grace, and the God who has made a provision for us in thy grace in Christ. Christ, draw us, we pray to each one of us, young and old, today, to the exercise of faith in our living Lord and our living Savior.

To thou bless us this day and prepare us for our duties for the rest of this day and for our worship this evening. We beseech thee to make thyself known in the power of thy saving grace, to guide us and to direct us and to lead us, forgiving all our sins, for Jesus sake.

[40 : 54] Amen.