

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 20 February 2022. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced, and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

Noah, the Preacher of Righteousness

Hebrews 11:7

Without a doubt, one of the most famous men recorded in Scripture is Noah. The name “Noah” is virtually proverbial; and the story of the ark that Noah built has been passed down from generation to generation. The remotest tribes in Greenland, the Rocky Mountains, the Amazon jungles, central Africa, the Far East, and the Pacific Islands have been told, by their fathers, about a Flood that once covered the world, and about a big boat that an ancestor of theirs built thousands of moons ago. To this day, even the secular world benefits from the Bible’s record of Noah. Creative people market all kinds of “Noah’s Ark” toys, songs, movies, books, children’s clothing, and so on. Yet, most people in today’s world don’t believe that Noah ever existed: they view him as a cute, white-bearded “fairy tale character.” In contrast, those of us who have placed our faith in God’s Word do *not* view Noah as a “cute character.” We know that he was a real man, who performed one of the most amazing feats of faith that the world has ever seen. We also know that the judgment of the Flood was very real, and very horrific.

Yet, have you ever stopped to consider that God’s judgment *would have come*, whether Noah had exercised the faith to build the Ark, or not? God wasn’t bluffing when He said that He was going to destroy all flesh! God is not like an exasperated parent who keeps telling young Johnny, “If I have to tell you again, you’re going to be in big trouble”--but then fails to punish Johnny when he continues to disobey. God means what He says, and says what He means!

Consider what God said to the prophet Ezekiel, for example. In **Ezekiel 14:12-20**, God warned the people of Judah that because of their wickedness and rebellion, their land *would* be destroyed: and there was no reversing it. God told them that even if “**Noah, Daniel, and Job**” were living among them, He would not spare Judah for their sake: only they themselves would be delivered, because of their righteousness. So it was in the days when Noah lived. The Flood *would* come: the only question was whether anyone would believe God, or not. If no one had taken God at His word, then all humanity would have been wiped out; and there would have been no redemption. Fortunately, though, *Noah* believed God; and we, his descendants, should be thankful that Noah *did* believe! We are all here today because our father Noah believed God, and built an ark of safety for himself and his family.

Over the last few weeks, we have been studying God’s Hall of Faith in **Hebrews 11**. We have studied Abel and Enoch; and now, we have come to Noah. What can we learn from Noah’s faith? Plenty! This morning, we will examine **the nature** of Noah’s faith; **the products** of Noah’s faith; and **the reward** of Noah’s faith. The title of this message is **Noah, the Preacher of Righteousness**.

Read Hebrews 11:7.

I. The nature of Noah’s faith

What was the nature of Noah’s faith? What was his faith like? Well, as we just read here in **Hebrews 11:7**, Noah’s faith was grounded in things “*not seen as yet*.” We saw this same

definition of faith in **Hebrews 11:1**, where Paul said that faith is the “*substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*” Faith is not a “fuzzy” thing. Faith is complete assurance of the truth of God’s Word. Faith is grounded in things that are yet “hoped for”—things which God has promised to perform in the future. Though we have no *material proof* that these things will happen, our faith in God’s Word is so strong, that it is as though our faith had actual “substance.”

We who are living in the 21st century have nothing to complain about when it comes to having “evidence” to support God’s Word. We have 6,000 years’ worth of fulfilled biblical prophecies to peruse! We have *mountains* of evidence to which we can cling! We should have no trouble believing that Jesus Christ will come again, because the prophecies of Christ’s *first* coming have already been literally fulfilled; and the historical evidences of Christ’s death and resurrection are overwhelming! If the Lord made good on the prophecies of His *first* coming (His virgin birth, His miracles, and His crucifixion and resurrection), will He not make good on His promise to “come again”? Consider the things that we see happening all around us, at this very moment. For more than seventy years, Israel has been back in her land, just as the prophets prophesied; and as we speak, the Jewish people are fully prepared to rebuild their Temple. They are awaiting only the appearance of their “messiah” (who, the Scriptures tell us, will be the Antichrist). As we speak, we see a one-world government, a one-world economy, and a one-world apostate religion, being formed right before our very eyes, just as John prophesied. With so many of God’s promises having already been fulfilled (or *about* to be fulfilled), can we not believe God when He says that His Son will come back literally, physically, and visibly to earth, and set up a literal, 1,000-year Kingdom? We surely can!

We who live in these “last days” have *many* “infallible proofs” to support our faith! Yet, by comparison, Noah had very little to support his faith. Not only was he called upon to believe in something that was yet *future*: he was called to believe in something that had never happened before, even on a small scale! Not only had there never been a flood (not even a small-scale, local flood), but there had never been such a thing as *rain*! To believe what God had told him, Noah had to believe that the entire course of nature would be changed!

Read Genesis 2:4-6 and 6:5-22.

This is the nature of real faith! Real faith is assured of things “*not seen as yet.*” How strong is *your* faith, Christian? Is your faith like Noah’s faith? Our situation is not unlike Noah’s, you know. God’s Word promises us that a horrific time of judgment is coming upon the whole world. The Bible tells us that there will be a great delusion upon those who have not believed the Gospel, so that when the Antichrist is revealed, they will believe his lie. The signs of the times are undeniable: and *we are approaching that time!* It is at the doors!

Yet, if Christ’s coming be this close, why do many Christians live as though it *won’t* happen, or *couldn’t* happen any time soon? Why do we spend our lives pursuing vanities and trivialities? Why do we treasure up things of this earth in order to bring pleasure to ourselves, yet lay up little toward the advancement *God’s* Kingdom?

Even if Christ does *not* come back for another generation (which I doubt, given that world leaders, apostate religious leaders, and economic “movers and shakers,” are blatantly, openly

conditioning us for a “New World Order”), do we not believe that there is a literal “furnace of fire” in a realm just beyond this life, which will devour those who reject Christ? Jesus’ warnings couldn’t be clearer. Three times in **Mark 9**, Jesus described hell as a place where **“their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”** Again and again, Jesus rebuked the religious people who were “playing church” with words like this: **“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Matthew 23:33).**

If we who know Christ as Saviour really believe these things, then how ought we to be living our lives? Peter asked this very question as he reminded his readers about the last days.

Read 2 Peter 3:10-14.

Peter’s question is almost rhetorical. In **verse 11** he says, **“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be?”** The answer to this question is so obvious, that Peter went ahead and answered his own question before he’d even finished stating it! He says, **“What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?”** This is how the realisation of Christ’s return should affect us. It should motivate us to live *holy and godly lives*. Furthermore, Peter says, **“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”** As we await Christ’s return, we should be living at peace with God, and with others; and we should be avoiding sin, and going to God for cleansing when we do sin.

Think of what happened on September 11, 2001. If some of the people in the Twin Towers on the morning of September 11, 2001, could have known ahead of time about what would happen in the next hour, would they not have “diligently” run up and down the towers and warned as many people as would listen to get out of the building? If they had any conscience, they would have done so. Why, then, do we believers, who claim to believe that God’s judgment awaits the lost at the moment of death, treat it so casually? Why do we soil our garments with the things of the world, and live as though these things will not happen?

What is the nature of *your* faith, Christian? Maybe you’re not sure. If so, then an examination of the *products* of Noah’s faith should help you see your faith in its true light.

II. The products of Noah’s faith

What were the products of Noah’s faith? What did his faith produce? Let’s look again at **verse 7. (Read Hebrew 11:7.)** The product of Noah’s faith is clear: his faith produced **obedience**. Paul says that Noah, **“moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.”**

Think of what was at stake. Paul says that Noah built the ark **“to the saving of his house.”** His own life, and his family’s lives, depended upon his obedience. Consider also the *magnitude* of Noah’s task. Imagine if God were to command *you* to build a structure that is about five stories high; nearly as long as two football fields; equipped with thousands of animal pens, with the capacity of about 540 railroad box cars; and strong enough to withstand the shock of tidal waves of two hundred feet or more, without capsizing or spinning out of control! As for resources and workers, you would have to trust God to provide them! By the

way, the Bible doesn't tell us that Noah was wealthy. He may have been no wealthier than you or I! Imagine if God were to drop a task of *this* magnitude, requiring enormous resources (which you don't have) into your lap, and say, "The clock is ticking. Hop to it!" Would you do it?

When the Lord gives you a task of *any* magnitude, it soon becomes evident whether your faith is the real thing, or whether it's "just talk." True faith produces obedience! Noah obeyed God's command, despite the ridicule from everyone around him, because he was convinced that God's Word would come to pass. Is *your* faith producing that kind of unquestioning obedience? Or do you drag your feet when it comes to doing God's will? When there is something that you know God wants you to do, do you hide behind platitudes such as, "Well, I have my own ways of serving God"? Noah could have substituted the task of building the ark with some other kind of "service" of his choosing, which was more convenient, and to his liking; but if he hadn't built that ark, he would have perished in the waters along with the ungodly. **You cannot substitute anything for explicit obedience to God's command.** If you truly are living by faith, then you *will* obey Him!

The first product of Noah's faith was **obedience**. The second product of his faith was godly **fear**. Noah's faith didn't produce a mere *mechanical* obedience; it was an obedience that was driven by *godly fear*. Noah built the ark because he *feared God*, and feared for the lives of his family and friends. However, building the ark wasn't the only thing that his godly fear motivated him to do. In **2 Peter 2:5**, Peter calls Noah "**a preacher of righteousness**"; and in **1 Peter 3:18-20**, Peter reminds us that Christ preached to Noah's wicked generation *through Noah*—and that he did this "**while the ark was a preparing.**" Not only did Noah build the Ark; but the whole time he was building it, he was preaching to the scoffing multitude, and trying to warn them of the coming judgment. And how long did he do this? **Genesis 6:3** tells us that it was 120 years from the time of God's announcement until the Flood came!

Think of that! Noah was faithful to his mission of building the Ark, and to the mission of preaching to the lost, for *120 years*, day in and day out! (That's 43,200 days!) Do you think that it might be possible, in 120 years' time, to lose your vision, and to become lax? Of course it would! One hundred twenty years is plenty of time for doubts to creep into your mind--especially when the evidence of a coming Flood is *not* forthcoming, and when everyone on earth, except for your immediate family, is laughing at you! By the way, Flood legends from cultures around the world often *specifically* mention the fact that everyone *laughed* at the man who built the Ark. The shame and mockery that Noah endured must have had a profound effect upon Noah, because his descendants, 4,400 years later, are still talking about it. That's a lot of pressure, isn't it? Many a Christian stops serving God under far less pressure than that!

What if Noah had gotten tired and frustrated with his job, and had decided to "take a sabbatical" from his duty for a while? Would God have *delayed* the judgment until Noah had gotten over his "pity party"? Would He have "stopped the doomsday clock" until Noah felt like "getting around" to his duty again? What if Noah had gotten tired of seeing no response to his preaching? Building an ark is one thing; but being scorned by the people that you're trying to warn is quite another. Peter reminds us, in **1 Peter 3**, that the spirits of the people to whom Noah preached are all "**in prison**"—in other words, in hell. Not one person outside Noah's own family believed Noah's message! What if Noah had gotten sick of being ignored and rejected, and had decided to quit altogether? Would God have postponed the judgment

indefinitely? No! God had sworn that judgment was coming in 120 years, and He was not going to repent. The time was appointed, and the clock was ticking. Man had 120 years; and God meant what He said. If Noah had failed to do God's will, he and his family would have been destroyed, along with everyone else. Not only would humanity have been wiped out; but all mankind (including Noah) would have perished eternally in hell. Jesus Christ would not have been able to come in the flesh, as a descendant of Adam; and thus, there would have been no ransom for man's sin. There would have been no salvation.

Christian, your faithfulness is *extremely* important! Your faithfulness *does* have a profound effect upon others—first and foremost, upon your own family! Noah had three sons; but by the time that the Flood came, they weren't little children. They were adults of 100 years and older. They could have rejected their father's faith, and have embraced the wicked culture around them, and have chosen the "easy way"; but they didn't. They chose to embrace the scorn of being a follower of Jehovah. They, too, sacrificed *everything* to build the ark. Noah's sons were, by the standard of their day, young men (Shem was 98 at the time of the Flood); and they had their lives before them. Yet, they chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, instead of the pleasures of this world. How did they come to make such a choice? It's simple: their parents' faith, and the *obedience* that sprang from their faith, spoke volumes. Everything about their daddy's life said, "Serving God is worth it!"

I often think of the effect of my parents' faithfulness in my own life. My family lived 30 miles from church, and it took 45 minutes to get to church. Yet, my parents did not miss any services, unless truly providentially hindered. When it snowed, they travelled across 30 miles of icy country roads; and God always protected us. When my dad worked late, and we barely had time to gulp down supper on the way to church, we were still there. If we kids had school the next day (and my dad had to get up very early to drive us to our school before he started work), we were still there for the Sunday night service. Unless we were direly ill, we were at church. Every night, we had family devotions. We all took turns reading part of a chapter of Scripture; we all discussed the Scripture that we had read, and asked questions; and each of us prayed. Every morning, before 6:00, I came downstairs and saw my dad reading his Bible and praying in the sitting room (and usually, he had a 10 or 12 - hour work day ahead of him—sometimes more). After every payday, my parents gave their tithe and missions, regardless of their situation. As I discovered years later, their financial situation was very lean for much of my growing-up years (especially since they sacrificed to send us to a Christian school); yet, they always gave to the Lord. Some people snickered about my parent's separation from the world, and implied that their dedication to God was "over the top"; but my parents were not moved. Everything about my parents' testimony said, "Serving God is worth it!"

I often wonder: if my parents had been more lukewarm and casual in their commitment to the Lord, would I have ever felt the urgent desire to be a missionary? Would I have thought that doing God's will, no matter what the cost, was really compulsory? It is far less likely that I would have done so. And what if I had not obeyed God's command to come to Ireland as a missionary? Some of you would not be saved today, and would still be bound for hell.

Do people stop dying and going to hell until we "get around" to giving them the Gospel? Does the day of *your own* death get kicked a little farther down the road, so that you can have more time to serve the Lord? Does God delay your death by whole years, or even decades,

because you were out of God’s will for a long time, and were doing what *you* wanted to do? Does God push the day of the Rapture back because His people aren’t being very faithful, and they need more time to get ready for His return? Clearly, the answer is “**No**”! We have an appointed time; and we must use every moment that God gives us. Moses said, “*The days of our years are threescore years and ten: and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away...So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom*” (Psalm 90:10, 12).

Brethren, our lives are all about serving the Lord! David knew this very well.

Read Psalm 88:1-4, 9-12.

Why did David pray for deliverance from those who wanted to kill him? Was it because his own life was dear to him? No! He wanted to live longer *so that he could have more time to serve and praise the LORD with his life!* (**Read verses 9-12 again.**) The driving thought that continually motivated David was the thought that after his death, he would have no more opportunity to serve God in the land of the living, and to win others to Him.

What motivates us, as a church, to knock doors, to preach on the street, to hand out tracts, to put on Holiday Bible Clubs, and to witness to people in our workplaces, in the shops, and on the street? If we be motivated by results and big numbers, we will get discouraged, and end up throwing in the towel. If, however, we be motivated by love for Christ, and for others, then we will find the strength to keep going. We will be motivated by the thought, “Could this be the last door to which I’ll have a chance to bring the Gospel to before Christ comes? Might this person that I’m talking to die tomorrow, without having heard the Gospel?” Love for Christ will make all the difference in your giving, too. Instead of trying to “budget” your giving, you will give God what is due Him without a second thought. You will also give passionately. You will be motivated by the thought, “How many more tracts might be bought with this money? How many souls in Ireland, Hungary, or Honduras, might be saved?”

Are you “*moved with fear*” at the thought of lost souls that are on their way to hell? If so, it is an indication that you are living by faith. If not, you need to *start* living by faith—mingled with fear! Faith, prayer, love for God, anticipation of Christ’s return, compassion for souls, *and fear of God*, all go together! It’s a “package deal”!

Read Jude 20-23.

Noah’s faith produced **obedience**. It produced **fear**. Lastly, it produced **rebuke**. Noah’s life was an **open rebuke to those who rejected God**. Let’s read **Hebrews 11:7** again. (**Read Hebrews 11:7.**) What does the phrase “*by the which*” refer to? It’s referring back to the word “*faith*,” at the beginning of the verse. Paul is telling us that “*by faith*” Noah “*condemned the world.*” It wasn’t so much the *words* that Noah preached which condemned the world; it was his *faith* that condemned the world.

Now, what, exactly, does it mean to “*condemn*” the world? What it means is that when a Christian is sold out to the Lord, and is living by faith, he is a living rebuke to the ungodly. A Christian doesn’t even need to *say words* of rebuke in order to “condemn” the people around him; he needs only live by faith! You may try to be as kind and loving with your words as

you can possibly be; yet, if you live a godly life, and you live your life by *faith*, your very life will be an offence to people around you. They will say, “Well, who does Mr. Good-Two-Shoes Christian think *he* is? He thinks he’s so righteous! Guess he thinks *we’re* all going to hell!”

Are there unsaved people around you whose “feathers are ruffled” merely by your being around them? If not, then you’re probably not living by faith to the extent that you should! Of course, we shouldn’t be purposely offensive or obnoxious to the lost; however, if you are living by faith, there *will* be people who won’t like you. This, too, is a product of faith! Paul said, “*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*” (2 Timothy 3:12). Christian, does your walk of faith speak to the lost of their need for repentance?

III. The reward of Noah’s faith

(Read Hebrews 11:7.) In the last phrase of verse 7, we see the reward of Noah’s faith. What was his reward? Well, besides being spared the judgment of the Flood, the *ultimate* reward of Noah’s faith was that he “*became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*”

What does this statement mean? Well, an “heir” is someone who *inherits* something from *someone else*, right? So, then, if Noah “inherited” righteousness from God, it means that Noah’s “righteousness” was *not his own to begin with*. It was *God’s* righteousness, which Noah *inherited* from Him. This sounds just like the kind of righteousness that Paul had!

Read Philippians 3:7-9.

Noah’s righteousness was the same kind of righteousness that Abel had, and that Enoch had. It was *imputed righteousness*. It was God’s own perfect righteousness, which He credited to Noah’s own bankrupt account. Because God imputed (or credited) His own righteousness to Noah, He was able to accept Noah into His family. In God’s eyes, Noah’s judicial standing was that he was “righteous”! There is no other basis upon which God could have accepted him. Noah was *not*, in fact, perfectly righteous: he was a sinner. Yet, when God saw Noah, He saw the imputed righteousness of His Son; and on this basis, He accepted him.

Now, on what *condition* did God apply His Son’s righteousness to Noah? **The condition was faith!** At some point in Noah’s life, he repented of his sin, and placed his complete faith in God’s grace and mercy. He may not have understood everything that God’s Son would do in the future to purchase his salvation; but he knew that the Saviour was coming; and he rested his faith in God’s promise. Building the ark wasn’t what saved Noah’s soul; this act of obedience was merely the *fruit* of Noah’s faith, which began on the day he was saved. The reward of Noah’s faith was imputed righteousness, and salvation!

Conclusion: What is the nature of *your* faith, Christian? Faith isn’t charting out a strategy that seems reasonable to you, praying a quickie prayer about it (so that you can say that you have God’s “rubber stamp” of approval), and then proceeding to follow *your* will. Faith is placing your confidence in the plan that *God* has shown you through His Word, and through earnest prayer. Faith is confidence in “things not seen as yet.” Are you living that kind of faith every day, Christian? **What are the products of your faith?** Do you obey God’s commandments? If you are not obeying Him, then you are not living by faith. **Are you moved by fear** of God’s coming judgment on the lost? Are there people in your life that are irritated by your faith in God? If not, then perhaps you need to reevaluate your faith!

How about the **reward of faith**—that gift of imputed righteousness? If you cannot point to a time in your life when you admitted to God that you couldn't save yourself, and placed your complete faith in *Christ's* righteousness, then you have not received that gift. Will you, by faith, ask Christ to save you today?

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