

Moments *for* You

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Theme: Noah



KNOWING NOAH

He wasn't first like Adam. His story didn't have nearly as many twists and turns as Joseph's. Though all too familiar with water, he did not part the Red Sea like Moses. There was no fantastic fish story and radical revival as was the case with Jonah. He was not a shepherd, turned giant killer, turned king like David. Unlike Jesus, he was not capable of providing salvation to the world, although he was instrumental in sparing many pairs of animals. Yet, if you ask the average person around the globe who the guy was who built an ark with a bunch of animals on it during a worldwide flood, no doubt Noah's name would be known by most.

There are things about Noah and his times that we cannot understand or relate to. The atmospheric conditions were much different, and people lived for centuries. There was limited history to learn from and no Bible to read. We can, however, relate to the fact that Noah lived in an evil culture. The hearts of the people were "only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). Still, Noah knew God and that was reflected in his active faith. The Bible says: "Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God" (Genesis 6:9).

Walking closely with the God he loved would lead him to an assignment that he probably did not want. God's project would take faith as big as an ark. It meant taking on an enormous building project while being a preacher of righteousness along the way (2 Peter 2:5). He had about 120 years to appeal to people, but Noah was arguably the most unsuccessful preacher

of all time. However, his steps were taken in faithful, enduring obedience.

When God leads us to serve Him in unique ways, we should see it as a privilege and get to work as Noah did. We sometimes must endure the dark clouds and rain, knowing that brighter days are ahead—if not in this life, then in the next. Just as the beautiful rainbow had Noah looking up and hearing God's promise, we know that the promised return of Jesus is near. We worship the Lord like Noah did, though we will also have failures along the way. The Lord forgives. God blesses (Genesis 9:1). Perhaps knowing Noah will encourage us to walk with God in righteousness and accomplish great things, even in a dark world.

—Lee Seese

NOAH'S FLOOD

In the Bible's account of Noah and the Flood (read Genesis 6-9), we see the dreadful outcome of mankind's wickedness, the plan of God to rescue and restore humanity, and the faithfulness of God's chosen servant, Noah.

WICKEDNESS REIGNS

Genesis chapters 4 and 5 set the stage, taking us from the Fall of man in chapter 3 through the tragedy of the first murder, when Cain slew his brother Abel. This brutal act of senseless violence is only a glimpse of what we find in chapter 6, where God sees that "the wickedness of man was great in the earth" and decides to "blot out man ... from the face of the land ... for I am sorry that I have made them" (Genesis 6:5,7). The corruption of the human heart was on full display.

NOAH STANDS ALONE

In the midst of the evil and violence of his day, we read that Noah was a

“righteous man” who received God’s approval: “Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord” (Genesis 6:8-9). He descends from the “godly” line of Seth, from whom the lineage of Jesus is traced in Luke 3:23-38. An interesting note: if you compare the genealogies given in Genesis 4-5 with those in Genesis 10 and 25, you will notice that the “ungodly” lines (Cain, Japheth, Ham, Ishmael) are exhausted first, then the “godly” lines of promise (Seth, Shem, Isaac) are detailed later.

JUDGMENT AND PROMISE

After God finds His man, He shares His plan. God described to Noah the judgment that would befall the earth and its inhabitants. He also makes sure to encourage Noah for the task ahead. Looking beyond the years of hard work, rejection, upheaval and destruction, God promises to bless Noah and his family: “I will establish My covenant with you” (Genesis 6:18).

THE ARK

When God makes the plan, all we have to do is follow it. Sounds easy, right? Noah had lots of building to do, but he didn’t have to calculate the volume of his vessel, or test the seaworthiness of different materials—God specified all those details. God knew how much space would be required for the crew and cargo, and how to design a sturdy, stable ship. Depending on which standard you use for a “cubit” (ancient cubits ranged from 18 to 21 inches), Noah’s ark was about 500 feet long, 50 feet high, and 85 feet wide. The interior space probably held as much as 450 semi-trailers!

THE ANIMALS

Another thing God took care of was bringing the animals to Noah: “two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive” (Genesis 6:20). The Bible doesn’t say exactly how many different animals went into the ark,

but it’s likely that the number was significantly lower than the total count of “species” found today. The Hebrew word translated “sort” or “kind” may equate more to our modern “genus” or “family” taxonomic ranks. For example, the genetic variation found in one pair of animals from the canine “kind” likely produced the wide variety of wolves, foxes, and domesticated dogs we have today. It is thought that 16,000 animals (which could have easily fit on the ark) would have been sufficient to preserve animal life.

THE FLOOD

The text in Genesis describes the flood as a unique, one-time event. Listen to the language used: “all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened” (Genesis 7:11). The world that existed when Noah entered the ark was completely destroyed and reshaped by the cataclysm of the flood. Psalm 104:7-9 describes in part how the earth’s new topography was formed at God’s command: “At your rebuke [the waters] fled ... the mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that You appointed for them. You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth.”

THE SURVIVORS

After more than a year in the ark, Noah and his family (his three sons, his wife, and his son’s wives) emerged from the ark. God gave them the same command He issued to Adam and Eve: “be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 9:7). He also established a universal covenant with Noah and every living creature: a promise to never again destroy the earth with a flood. When we see a rainbow in the sky, we can remember God’s promise.

—T. Don Johnson *Visit muthb.org/mfy/noah for more information about Noah’s flood.*

CHRIST, THE ARK

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and that's the message we find whether we turn to Moses or Matthew, to the Old Testament or the New. God designed the plan of salvation from before the creation of the world, so when we turn to Genesis, we are not surprised to find the Lord Jesus Christ represented there. I would like to suggest that Christ is foreshadowed by Noah's Ark in at least three ways.

DOOM

First, there is coming *doom*, a day of wrath, a day of judgment. This is seldom preached about or talked about today, but Jesus warned: "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:26-27).

Despite Noah's repeated warnings of imminent judgment, life went on as usual until it was too late. The Bible warns, "it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Every day, people go about their daily lives, getting up in the morning, going to school, going to work, going through the motions of life with no thought for the warnings of the Bible about Christ's return.

Peter prophesied of today's society: "scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.' For they deliberately overlook this fact, that ... the world that then existed [in Noah's day] was deluged with water and perished.... The heavens and earth that

now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment" (2 Peter 3:3-7). Don't miss the warnings!

DOOR

There is a coming doomsday, but there is also an open *doorway*. There is one place of safety from judgment. For 120 years, Noah preached and pleaded and warned his friends and neighbors to flee from the wrath to come. The door was open to all. Inside that ark there was safety, there was deliverance, there was salvation.

The Bible tells us there is likewise one door to Heaven: Jesus Christ. "There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

M. R. DeHaan said, "There was only one ark. God did not make a fleet of ships and say, 'You have your choice.' There are religions without number, but only one way of salvation." Until you trust in Christ, you're standing outside the *only* door to safety, the *only* way to Heaven. Jesus Christ is our ark, and we enter by faith.

DONE

The third word is *done*. Everything necessary to provide for our salvation has already been accomplished by Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross.

I'd like to show you a very interesting word in Genesis 6:14, "Make yourself an ark of gopher wood ... and cover it inside and out with *pitch*." The word translated "cover ... with pitch" is the Hebrew word *kopher*. This word also appears in Leviticus 17:11, "The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make *atonement* for your souls."

Here's the parallel: when Noah and his family entered the ark, the water swirled around it, but it was sealed with pitch, and waterproof.

Those inside were safe. When we put our trust in Jesus Christ, the spotless Lamb of God who shed His blood to atone for our sins, we come to a place of absolute safety. We are hidden with Christ in God. Not a drop of judgment can touch us.

And it is all because of God's grace. Genesis 6:8 (KJV) says that "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." This is the first time that the word "grace" appears in the Bible. The word means God's goodness to us when we don't deserve it. There's no way we can escape our sin—no works we can do, no price we can pay, no plea we can make. But God Himself has within Himself the love and power to snatch us out of danger, deliver us, justify us, and save us.

Call upon the Lord and He will save you. "By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

—Robert Morgan, adapted

GOD REMEMBERED NOAH

"But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided" (Genesis 8:1).

Have you ever felt abandoned by God? Have you ever wondered if God has forgotten you? Have you ever felt as if your prayers were bouncing off the ceiling and hitting you on the head? If so, Genesis 8 is for you.

When the text tells us that God "remembered" Noah, it doesn't mean that God had forgotten him. It simply means that in the midst of the great flood, God stayed true to His promises. The Lord looked down on the earth and fulfilled His promise to have mercy on eight people floating in a big

barge with all those animals.

Perhaps Noah felt forgotten by God. If so, he is in good company because the greatest saints of the ages have felt the same way. Consider Psalm 42:9, "I say to God, my rock: 'Why have You forgotten me?'" And in the Lord Jesus we have the supreme example of a righteous man feeling abandoned. In His darkest moments on the cross, He cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46).

Our text contains an important message of hope. In the midst of judgment, God always remembers mercy. He remembers those who suffer and He keeps His eyes on them. Though they often feel forgotten, the Almighty will not abandon them. As God remembered Noah, even so He will remember you and me. There is no trial so severe that it can separate us from the God who loves us.

In his message on Genesis 8, James Montgomery Boice points out three ways in which the Lord remembered Noah during the flood.

1. GOD SENT A WIND

Genesis 8:1 is specific on this point: "God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided." We should learn from this that when affliction has done its appointed work, it will be removed from us. Whether it be sickness or bad circumstances or hateful opposition, when God's purposes have been served, the hard times will go away.

It is significant that the flood did not disappear in a day. The waters rose slowly and fell slowly. Even so, God often works deliverance for us gradually, little by little, day by day, step by step.

2. GOD GAVE NOAH A SIGN

Noah was looking for signs that the flood was coming to an end. No doubt

he was ready to see the family have a little bit of elbowroom. So he sent out a raven. Since ravens feast on rotting flesh, it no doubt found plenty to eat on the surface of the waters. It flew back and forth but did not return to the ark. The first time Noah sent out a dove, it came back because the water wasn't low enough. The second time the dove returned with an olive leaf, indicating that plants were beginning to grow. The third time he sent out a dove, it didn't come back at all.

But why did he send the birds in the first place? The answer is simple and perhaps easy to overlook. God had told him when the flood would *start* but not when it would *end*. Often, it is the not knowing that wears us down. We watch and wait and wonder and pray as the uncertainty gnaws away on the inside. Our chief question is always: "When will this end?" And the answer is always: "In God's time, not one day sooner, not one day later." Nothing can rush, change or hinder God's designs for His children.

3. GOD SPOKE TO NOAH AGAIN

The final way God remembered Noah was by speaking to him again. In verses 16-17 the Lord instructed Noah to leave the ark with his family and the animals. As far as we can tell, this is the first time God had spoken to Noah since He told him to enter the ark.

Who could blame him if he felt forgotten? The same thing can happen to any of us. You may come to a time in your life when you feel forgotten and alone. You may think that your prayers are bouncing back at you. You may lack the conscious sense of God's presence so that you feel abandoned and left to face life on your own.

What do you do then? You must do what Noah did. Stay faithful to what you know to be true. Obey the Lord and follow the light that you

were given in the past. Day after day, Noah had to get up and take care of his responsibilities on the ark. It did not matter if he "felt" like it or not. God had given him a job to do and it must be done. Christian, wait on the Lord. And while you wait, obey as much as you know. Stay faithful. Do your duty. And just as God spoke to Noah again, so He will speak to you in due time.

—Ray Pritchard, condensed

REMEMBERING GOD

In Genesis 8 we see Noah remembered the God that remembered him.

NOAH REMEMBERED GOD'S TIMING

It probably took Noah between 50 and 100 years to build the ark. But Noah walked each step with God, trusting in His timing. And after the thing was built, they went into the ark and were in there 7 days before the flood came. Those 7 days might have felt longer than 7 years!

We also see God's perfect timing in the flood's aftermath. Notice this pattern found in the text:

- **7** days of waiting for flood (Genesis 7:4)
- **7** days of waiting for the flood repeated (Genesis 7:10)
- **40** days of the flood (Genesis 7:17)
- **150** days of the waters prevailing (Genesis 7:24)
- **150** days of the waters receding (Genesis 8:3)
- **40** days of waiting (Genesis 8:6)
- **7** days of waiting after the first dove (Genesis 8:10)
- **7** days of waiting after the second sending of the dove (Genesis 8:12)

As we pray and hope and struggle and fear, we have to remember that God's timing is not our timing—His timing is perfect. When He says "No" or "Wait," He has reasons based in His love for us, even if we don't understand them.

NOAH REMEMBERED GOD'S PRIORITIES

A curious thing here. Why did he send out a raven first, then a dove? Commentator Kent Hughes writes, “Noah released the raven first because as an unclean bird it was expendable, since it was good for neither food nor sacrifice.” The first thing Noah was willing to give up was something God considered unclean and unsuitable.

Is there not a valuable lesson for us in that? So often we protect things in our lives that God has actually called us to let go of. This might be our pride, our comfort, our schedules, our dreams—anything that gets in the way of trusting God and doing what He has called us to do. Maybe you're caught in a habit or in a relationship that you know doesn't honor God, and it's a huge area of compromise for you in your spiritual life. Follow the example of Noah, who was ready to part with what was unclean in God's eyes.

NOAH REMEMBERED GOD'S PURPOSE

One thing Noah had to be counting on was that God wasn't saving him and his family for some post apocalyptic wasteland. Noah was trusting in God's unchanging plan for His beloved—restoration, not annihilation. If He takes much away, it is only because He wants us to treasure Him only, and if we will treasure Him only, how will He not also in the end give us all things besides (Romans 8:32)?

Christian, when you were at your moment of deepest danger—sinful and deserving of Hell and eternal death—God remembered you (Romans 5:6). Look to the cross. It is all the proof you need that God has remembered you and knows what is best. His timing, His priorities, and His purposes are all revealed in Christ's death and resurrection. He has not forgotten you. Remember that.

—Jared C. Wilson, condensed

THE PLEASING AROMA

“The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma” (Genesis 8:21).

The first thing Noah does when he leaves the ark is give thanks to God. Wouldn't you think he would at least have stopped to build a fire and cook a meal? No, this man knows how to put first things first.

It is God's will that we give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:18). This is because giving thanks means we recognize reality. We recognize the undergirding of God and presence of God in the midst of life and His control over the affairs of life. You cannot give thanks without recognizing the situation as it really is.

In Romans 1, God's charge against a false and godless world is that although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him (Romans 1:21). People today do not hesitate to thank someone for a gift or an act of kindness, but they find no time to stop and give thanks to the God upon whom their life depends.

But Noah built an altar, and he gave thanks to God for His deliverance. We read that Noah's thanksgiving was a sweet savor in the nostrils of God. God delights in our thanksgiving and praise.

—Ray Stedman, condensed

A GOOD MAN'S SIN

“Noah ... drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent” (Genesis 9:20-21).

It's always shocking and sad when a good man sins. When I hear of a Christian leader who has fallen, my initial response is usually, “I can't believe it! How could it happen?” I want to hope that if I walk with God long enough, the day will come when temptation automatically glances off me.

But it just ain't so! After walking

closely with God for years, George Müller used to pray, “Lord, don’t let me become a wicked old man.” When I first read that years ago, I thought, “There’s not a chance!” But I’ve come to understand his prayer. No matter how long we’ve walked with the Lord, there isn’t one of us who can escape the constant struggle against sin.

Noah is “Exhibit A.” He had walked with God for over 600 years! In a wicked world, Noah stood alone for God. He was the only man on earth whom God saw fit to save from the judgment of the flood. The opportunity to launch a new beginning for the human race stood before him. And what happened? He got drunk and uncovered himself within his tent. Shocking! Disgraceful! Unbelievable! Is this the same Noah?

Some have tried to exonerate Noah by arguing that he didn’t know about fermentation, and got drunk accidentally. Other explanations have been suggested. But since drunkenness and nakedness are always presented in the Bible in a shameful light, we must conclude that Noah sinned.

Noah’s sin shows us that even the most godly are prone to sin. When it comes to godliness, Noah was the most righteous man on the earth before the flood. Centuries later, through Ezekiel, God listed Noah, Daniel, and Job as three of the most righteous men in history (Ezekiel 14:20)! And yet Noah got drunk and lay naked in his tent. “Let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12).

Past godliness doesn’t guarantee future godliness. You don’t build up an immunity toward sin. Neither age nor maturity provide protection against temptation. We must walk in dependence upon the Lord daily.

—Steven J. Cole, condensed

BETTER THAN NOAH

“He who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new’” (Revelation 21:5).

The famous story of Noah and the flood fills Sunday school classes, kids’ books, and Christian art. But Noah’s flood isn’t simply a Sunday school story about zoo animals and rainbows. Real people died; real sin was punished in a real flood. At the same time, Noah’s life isn’t just a grim story about fury and death. Even though God did execute judgment because people refused to forsake sin, He still showed grace to those who trusted Him.

The problem is that Noah’s ability to build an ark and survive the flood didn’t include any power to escape the corruption in his own heart. There needed to be another salvation story that didn’t end in sin and curses. Jesus brings us this better story. While a wooden ark delivered Noah from physical death, a wooden cross delivers us from spiritual death. Just as Noah obeyed God by climbing onto a boat to save a few, Jesus obeyed His Father by climbing onto a cross to save many.

When the floodwaters receded, the world was like a new creation. Yet Noah still sinned after the boat hit land. Jesus Christ became the man Adam chose not to be and the man Noah never could be. Adam was born without sin but chose to sin; Noah was born into sin and could never escape it.

But Jesus obeyed completely so He could be authorized to judge sin and crush Satan (Revelation 1:18). When Christ returns, those who took refuge in the ultimate ark—Jesus Christ—will embark into eternity with forgiveness, resurrection, and a new creation immune to God’s curse.

—Brandon D. Smith, condensed