

Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The TREE OF LIFE is a weekly teaching summary.

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The Pennsylvania/New York Conference

This week during our Pennsylvania conference we studied the antediluvian hero named Noah. Noah lived approximately 800 years, during which time it took him 500 years to reach spiritual maturity. Noah lived at a time when things were much like they are now. We have experienced in our generation an enormous increase in knowledge just as the antediluvian civilization experienced. We will never know just how advanced Noah's civilization was since most evidence of it was wiped out by the great flood. But we do know from what the word of God tells us in Genesis chapter six that it was a period of great scientific achievement but also a time of great lawlessness. It was a time of the most fantastic musical and artistic advancement but was also a time known for the greatest violence. Noah's society knew great cultural luxuries but also great immorality and wanton cruelty. It was a vicious and perverse society and this was the society in which Noah reached spiritual maturity.

And that's not all, the antediluvian period was also famous for Satan's infiltration of the human race, Genesis 6:1-13. You see, Satan figured that if he could destroy true humanity by having his fallen angels cohabited with human women that the Messiah could not be born true humanity. And he almost succeeded. There were in reality only eight people left who were true humanity, Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives. It is through this account our theme emerged... if Noah could refrain from being influenced by the wickedness of his day then we should be able to do the same.

We too are intimate with Satan's influence, it is present all around us though not visible as it was in Noah's day. We do not see the angels as he did. We do not have in our society today Nephilim (half fallen angel/half human) creatures of renown strength. We do not have with us the sons of the gods, Hebrew "benhi ha elomhim" (Gen 6:1-2), who were fallen angels. Today we encounter an invisible enemy, Satan and his fallen angels comprise what is known as the kingdom of darkness, Ephesians 6:12. It is this very kingdom that rules the world system in which we live. So, the enemy is present and still very powerful, only he is manifested differently. Just as Noah did not let the evil standards of his day rob him of his fellowship with God we are neither to allow the distraction of our day to lead us astray from our walk with God.

Genesis 6:9 tells us that God found Noah to be righteous, i.e., justified and vindicated by God as well as blameless; complete, perfect, whole, therefore spiritually mature. In an evil and godless environment Noah was able to keep himself pure to God. We too can do the same in our present evil environment. How do we keep ourselves pure and remain in fellowship with God? Well just as Noah had a specific and detailed set of instructions from God by which to live his life, we too have an exact and precise set of plans to execute. The pre-designed plan of God for the church age believer is a very detailed set of divine instructions which teaches us exactly how to execute the spiritual life, attain spiritual maturity and glorify God.

Now, if Noah would have received the warning of Hebrews 11:7 and not put it into action, perfect humanity would have ceased to exist altogether. This proves that one can receive God's word/instructions yet fail to apply it. It is therefore very important to put truth into action and go forward with that which you have learned and believed. With doctrine in the soul you can take proper action even though you are in the minority as Noah was. Noah was ridiculed and laughed at continually. He was mocked as he followed the Lord's directions, as he built the ark, and as he preached to his society of the coming flood. It had never rained before in human history and no one had ever seen a ship, so Noah

became the great comedic figure of his day. Fortunately he cared more about what God thought of him than what people thought of him. Genesis 6:5-7 allows us insight into exactly what Noah had to deal with. And Romans 15:4 informs us that these things are written for our example. One man made a difference. We see this same principle in Gideon, David, Abraham, Paul, etc., proving that the minority is where you want to be. Exodus 23:2 even warns that the majority is never right. Our Lord also taught this in Matthew 7:13-14. Revelation 12:9 and 20:3 tells us it is the majority who is deceived by Satan.

It takes faith to walk with God in things that are not yet seen. God warned Noah about things that had not yet occurred in human history and Noah believed God. We too are warned of things not yet seen, Matthew 16:2-3. We are warned by way of the signs of the times or what is known as reading historical trends. Mature believers have as a part of their blessing the ability to be warned about things to come which other shallow believers have no clue about nor would even consider. What other believers would have considered foolishness, Noah acted on. In fact, the ship which Noah constructed was ACTION from residual doctrine. By taking "minority" action Noah became a comedian to his society. It was a great source of fun for them to run down dumb ole' Noah for 120 years, until... the flood came. Once the waters accumulated their laughter ceased. One hundred and twenty years passed and Noah never changed his tune, he held his ground and remained faithful to God. When a believer's conviction or decisiveness is based on Bible doctrine in the soul, he will become part of the minority. You too will be called many colorful adjectives if you remain in God's plan. Our Lord tells us that narrow is the way and few there are who find it, Matthew 7:13-14. But, if you desire to find "it", i.e., truth, God will make it known to you, Jer 29:13. We are also promised by God that what people mean for evil God can turn to good, Genesis 50:20; Psalm 76:10; 2Co 13:8. But there is something that is required on our part... FAITH. God did not show Noah down the corridors of time actual proof of what was going to happen. Nor did Noah ask for proof, he believed in God and His word and acted in faith on His word. This needs to be balanced in that God is not

solely interested in action first. Training must precede action! Noah wasn't motivated to build a ship to show off in front of people, he was motivated to build a ship for God based upon the doctrine he had learned and had resident in his soul.

The ship Noah built served to condemn the world or rather, Noah's action in faith condemned the world. He did not condemn with his words but by way of his life. He emphatically proved that the mature believer can remain faithful to God even in the worst of circumstances and in face of any opposition. In fact, one of the ways to tell you are in the right place is, you will have opposition! For 120 years the world condemned and ridiculed Noah but in the end truth won as it always does and Noah's life condemned the world. A mature believer's life serves as a judgment toward evil. Even in the midst of an evil environment, the positive believer can grow to the status of maturity. Philippians 4:13 tells us that through Christ we can do all things! There are ten main lessons we learn from the life of Noah:

- 1. God can take any type of evil situation and convert it into divine good. Please note, only God can do that - not man. It takes divine power to bring about divine good, Genesis 50:20.**
- 2. Whenever someone tries to curse or destroy another believer, the Lord will turn the curse into a blessing when the believer operates in the faith-rest drill, Deu 23:5.**
- 3. Even when evil comes against you, the Lord can turn it into a blessing provided you operate in the faith-rest drill and let Him handle the situation, Deu 32:41. Our job is not to make people pay but to leave room for God to work.**
- 4. The believer does not have to fight and defend himself in the face of unjust treatment, God will do that for the believer who operates in the faith-rest drill, 2Th 1:6. Note: this does not mean that the believer rolls over in the face of danger but utilizes the provisions which God has brought in.**
- 5. The believer is told to stop being anxious and worried and let God handle any unjust and unfair situation, Isaiah 35:4.**
- 6. Because of this we are commanded never to take revenge on anyone for anything, Romans 12:19.**
- 7. If you are being mistreated in any situation do not lift up your hand against another person, 1Samuel 24:12. (This does not negate legal recourse if applicable.)**

8. If you have been robbed by another believer do not take out your vengeance and frustration on him, give it over to the Lord, 1Th 4:6.

9. Never repay evil with evil and give someone what you think they deserve, Proverbs 20:23.

10. When someone has wronged you, let the Lord repay him according to his deeds, 2Timothy 4:14; Proverbs 24:29.

Noah did not judge those who were judging him claiming that they would get what they deserved. There is no "pay-back" time in the mature believer's system of thinking. And the only way to truly let the Lord handle it is by remaining faithful to the word of God and all its principles. Remember what Eph 6:12 informs us of, ultimately our problems are not against blood and flesh (man) but against Satan and his kingdom of darkness. Unfortunately people, even believers, allow themselves to be used by the kingdom of darkness in attempting to get to spiritually adult believers. Hence, there is only one place of security and that is in the person and thinking of Christ. It is only in the plan of God that His wall of fire (divine protection) surrounds us. Just as the ark represented the one place of security in time of disaster, our union with Christ is the only place of security in time of disaster.

The ark itself was constructed of gopher wood which was light and tough representing the humanity of Jesus Christ. The bulkheads/roofs were divinely designed with a pitch to it analogous of the work of Christ on the cross keeping out the waters of divine judgment. And there was only one set of plans pointing to the fact that there is only one plan of God for the believer's life and for the believer's stability. Gen 6:16 tells us there was one door in the ark, a reference to the only way to be saved or delivered, through faith in Jesus Christ. There was also only one window on the ark pointing to the one perspective our outlook on life for the believer, i.e., to reach spiritual maturity and glorify God. Under the topic of typology there are many analogies between the ark and the spiritual life but the greatest of lessons is that grace always precedes judgment, Gen 6:17. God warned about the coming judgment through the doctrine communicated by Noah for 120 years, 2Pe 2:15. God then provided the ark as the vehicle

for safety and security as well as for a training aid to accompany Noah's teaching. And even though the devil tried to hinder the incarnation by angelic infiltration of the human race, all he actually did was serve to destroy the citizens in his own kingdom. The ark was the only place of safety when international judgment fell on the human race, just as being in Christ is the only place of safety from eternal judgment. Of course, our response to the provisions of God is another issue. But we, like our friend Noah, can forge forward in the plan of God and attain spiritual maturity regardless of all the evil that surrounds us.

We would like to thank our mountain friends in Pennsylvania/New York for your gracious hospitality. It was great to spend time with you all and come to know you better. It was not only encouraging to you but to us as well. Thank you again.

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