

No story in all the Bible is more familiar to us than Noah and the ark. Many generations after Cain and Abel, men became exceedingly wicked. In fact, the Bible says that the people of the earth were so wicked that even the thoughts of their hearts were only evil continually (Genesis 6:5). This grieved God deeply. So much so that He was sorry He made man and said so. "I will destroy man whom I have created" (vs.6-7).

God told Noah to build an ark in which to save his family from the great flood, which He would send upon the earth. God gave him careful instructions on how to build the ark, and Noah did exactly as God commanded him (Genesis 6:22). There are two significant lessons for us to remember as we think about the exceeding wickedness of our day.

**First, God always sees those who are good, even in the midst of a wicked world.**

God took note of Noah, a single righteous man in an entire world of wicked men. Some wonderful things are said about Noah. He was a "just man, perfect in his generations" and a man who "walked with God" (Genesis 6:9). How unusual this must have been in a world as wicked as the one described. Of utmost importance is the fact that God saw Noah's righteousness. Despite how evil the world may become around us, God does not overlook even a single righteous man.

**Secondly, we also learn a great deal about faith and obedience from Noah's**

**example.** Noah believed God enough to do exactly as he was instructed. I'm certain Noah had discouragements other than the difficulty that would have entailed the building of the ark. If our understanding of a cubit is correct (one cubit equals eighteen inches), the ark was 450 feet long. That's one and a half football fields! It took over a hundred years to build. Certainly, Noah had some discouragements.

It has been suggested that he was, no doubt, ridiculed relentlessly for building such a large boat, as well as for believing that a great flood was going to destroy the earth. After all, no one had ever witnessed a flood before. Yet, Noah's obedience is testimony that he had faith that the things God had promised would indeed happen.

We live in a world where wickedness is exceedingly great and getting worse and worse. The evil ones of our day ridicule God as Creator as well as His promise to someday destroy the world by fire (II Peter 3:3-12).

Our God cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18). This earth's demise will happen just as sure as the flood happened, and just as certain as Jesus resurrected from the dead (Acts 17:31).

## IT HAPPENED, AND WILL AGAIN!

Furthermore, Jesus assures us of His knowledge of the righteous and unrighteous in all of this, and that each will receive their appropriate reward (Matthew 25:46).

Our day is not unlike when our Lord walked the earth - in terms of faulty conclusions that people draw about themselves. In Matthew 7, Jesus warned His listeners of the seriousness of professing faith in Him that was not in accordance with His Father's revelation.

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name?' 23 Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you! Depart from Me, you lawbreakers!' - HCSB

How amazing indeed that Jesus does not condemn the "faith" of these self-proclaimed followers. Nor does He question their "sincerity." Rather, what the Lord exposes in their faulty reasoning, is their "practices" for having concluded they were acceptable to God, despite them having no authority from the Lord to do them. All of their "spirituality" was not according to the "will of the Father." It's humbling to consider how "many" (v.22) there will be who hear the words of Jesus, "Depart from Me, I never knew you" come Judgment Day. How many indeed will there be who say, "But Lord, look at all the things we did in Your name," all to be rejected.

We must respect the authority of God, just as Noah did in his day. Noah did not offer substitutions for God's instructions. He was told how big the ark must be, the kind of wood to use in building it and how many decks, doors, and windows to have. And the Scripture says, "Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did (Genesis 6:22).

Dear reader, the "will of the Father" is not complicated. He wants all men to believe in Jesus, His Son (John 17:20-21; 8:24). His will is that men repent and turn from their sinful ways (II Peter 3:9) and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 16:30-33). It is the will of the Father that we become conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29).

Belief alone would never have gotten the ark built. Noah followed the instructions and obeyed God. So will those who enter the kingdom of heaven.