

Studies in Faith: Noah

By God's Orchestration

We begin this morning with some background on Noah, his family and the time it took to build the Ark and then we will move to the faith of Noah. I feel if we understand the background; how God orchestrated the events, it will help us understand God's Word and how these scriptures in Genesis and Hebrews relate to us and better know what God is calling us to be.

Our examination of God's plan for Noah and the Flood starts with Genesis 6:3, "Then the LORD said, My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.' " Many people use this verse to determine the time it took Noah to build the ark. However, I believe these 120 years are a countdown to the Flood. In other words, mankind's violence had reached a horrible level, so God declared that 120 years was the "drop dead" date for mankind to suffer and to restarted mankind with Noah and his family as we read in Genesis chapter 6, verses 3 to 9. These 120 years would seem to be the absolute maximum for the time given to build the Ark, but examining the Scriptures reveals more and this allows us to be more accurate in our estimate of the time line of God's plan.

For example, from Genesis 5:32 we know Noah was 500 years old when Japheth was born. In Genesis 10:21 the language structure in the Greek calls Japheth is the elder brother of Shem, even though Shem is listed first. We also understand from Genesis 11:10 Noah's second son, Shem, had his first son two years after the Flood, when he was 100. This means that Shem was 98 years old

when the Flood came, and it also means that Shem was born when Noah was 502 years old. Genesis 9:24 tells us that Ham is the youngest of the three.

When God gave Noah instructions to build the Ark, the 120-year countdown was already in progress. God told Noah that [“you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.”](#) (Genesis 6:18) So, here is what we can deduce; Shem was born 98 years before the Flood - it **could not** be more than this. If we were to assume the same time of approximately 2 years between Ham and Shem as between Japheth and Shem, then Ham could have been born around 96 years before the Flood. Although the Bible is silent on the exact timing, it is reasonable to assume that some time elapsed for the three sons to grow up and find wives. I would be most comfortable giving a range of anywhere from 20 to 40 years for all 3 sons to be married, thus making Ham no less than 16 at his marriage and possibly as old as his 50s. If we calculate the timing of life and events we can reasonably come to the following conclusion of a tentative range of about 55 to 75 years for a reasonable amount of time to build the Ark. Of course, it could be less than this depending on the age when Noah’s sons took wives. Also, consider that the Ark was completed prior to loading the animals that the Lord brought to Noah and that they had to take time to gather food and store it aboard the Ark. So considering the text, we can conclude that the construction of the Ark did not involve the 120 years mentioned in Genesis 6:3 but 75 years at the most. Now I want to move onto the faith of Noah and what God has for us to learn. So, this morning in my message you will find history, genealogy and faith woven together.

Years until the Flood	Event	Bible Reference
120	Countdown to the Flood begins	Genesis 6:3
100	Noah has Japheth, the first of his sons, when he was 500 years old.	Gen. 5:32; 10:21

98	Noah has Shem who was 100 two years after the Flood.	Gen. 11:10
? Perhaps 95 or 96 the same time between Japheth and Shem.	Ham was the youngest one born to Noah and was aboard the Ark, so he was born prior to the Flood.	Gen. 9:24; 7:13
? Perhaps 20–40 years for all of the sons to be raised and find a wife	Each son was old enough to be married before construction on the Ark begins.	Gen. 6:18
55–75 years (estimate)	Noah was told to build the Ark, for he, his wife, his sons, and his sons’ wives would be aboard the Ark.	Gen. 6:18

Pray

“By Faith”

Please open you Bible to Hebrews chapter 11 and let me start by reading verse 7, “**By faith** Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.” Everyone is familiar Noah and his building of the Ark. Noah and the Ark is without a doubt one of the most beloved stories of the Bible. Children play with their little animals and toy ark; Sunday School teachers tells them how the animals marched two by two into the big Ark and then the rains came. We picture Noah and his family huddled in the Ark, the rain pounding on the roof and lightning breaking all around. This would have been a new and frightening experience since it possibly had not rained before the flood and they would have never seen lightening or heard and felt the thunder. The water may have been in great turmoil with the land underneath experiencing great movement. When the rain ends after 40 days the family goes about caring for the animals. They are floating on the waters surrounded by elephants, lions and a couple of giraffes whose long necks jut out through the window of the Ark.

But the story of Noah and the Ark is more than just a children's story. It is a true story about God's rage and righteousness, it is about salvation and damnation, and perhaps most of all, it is a story of one man's faith in God. The Bible says all this in Genesis 6 verses 5 to 8, **"The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."** ⁶ And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷ So the LORD said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.' ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD." (Genesis 6:5-8)

So, in a world of corruption and chaos, what made Noah alone so different? Why did he find favor in God's eyes? The answer is straight forward at the beginning of verse 7 of Hebrews 11, **"By faith"**. By taking another look at a familiar story, let's try to discover how Noah's faith unveils itself through his life and love for God. We see at the end of verse 7, Noah was righteous before God, which means he believed and lived his belief. I do not mean that Noah merely believed in God, which of course he did. But Noah's faith went beyond intellectual assent; he really believed that God meant what He said—that He could and would destroy the entire world with a catastrophic global flood. And Noah believed God in spite of the influence of the world around him. Noah was the 10th generation from Adam and was born only 130 years after Adam had died, so I would imagine many people believed there was a God, they just did not follow Him. Mankind's memory is so short. Recently there was a survey on Sanford University, one of the most prestigious colleges in America and over 50% of the students questioned could not accurately tell the interviewer what 911 was. So, too in Noah's time, in 10 generations people had forgotten all that God had done and they turned their

backs on God. Not only the world, in general, had turned from God but what about **Methuselah** the son of Enoch. Remember it was Enoch whom God took to heaven without his dying because of his faith and his walk with God and his son knew this. It appears Methuselah did not walk with God like his father Enoch. Methuselah's son **Lamech**, who was also the father of Noah was alive when work began on the Ark and yet he is not mentioned either. Had these 2 patriarchs turned from God and lived in the evil world?

In Genesis 5:29 Lamech assigns his son the name Noah and prophesies, “Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands.” His naming of Noah acts as a transition from the genealogy of the line of Seth to the narrative of Noah. The prophecy Lamech utters when naming Noah attests that life under the curse was painful for Lamech and his descendants. So again, one could ask, did the writer of Hebrews skip over Methuselah and Lamech in his discourse on faith because they were part of the corruption and evil of the world? Possibly.

Try to image by putting yourself in Noah's shoes, for this is something I did as I studied and prepared for this morning. Noah lived in a world that God describes as mankind's “every intention of the thoughts of *their* heart was only evil continually”. It does appear evil mankind included Noah's father and grandfather for **Noah alone found favor in the eyes of the LORD.**” The Bible says, paraphrasing in our modern language, “As far as God was concerned, the Earth had become a sewer; there was violence everywhere and people were becoming more and more evil. God took one look and saw how bad it was, everyone was corrupt and they were corrupting others — life itself was corrupt to the core”. Now, at first blush we might think that this was a description of modern America, but trust me — Noah had it worst. Sure, we have our share of corrupt politicians, entertainers and

supposed role models who allow their fame and popularity to corrupt their morals and integrity and they desire to corrupt everyone else so they are not confronted with their sin. But thank God that the Good News of Jesus has spread and is spreading throughout this entire planet. Though we are still surrounded by violence, crime, and corruption, there are over a billion people on earth who claim to be Christian and there are millions who believe by faith given by God's grace and have given their lives to Jesus. Christians are scattered throughout the world acting as salt and light, preserving this world in the name of Jesus. Without the true saints of Christ, the world would be far more corrupt, violent and evil.

In Noah's day, he alone and it would appear by association his family, among all the thousands upon thousands of people had a relationship with God. Imagine if you were the only person in church this Sunday. I do not mean the only person in our church, but the only person in any church anywhere in the world! It was not easy for Noah to go against the entire society; to make the decision to believe God when everyone else in the whole world had turned their backs on God. To make matters worse, it is likely that the majority of Noah's neighbors thought he was completely out of his mind – he took up to 75 years to build a really big boat on dry land. It is possible most of the people around Noah had never seen the open water of the ocean. I read one study that the supercontinent Pangea was torn apart at the time of the flood because God caused the North Pole to move from zero degrees to its present 23 degrees causing the stress that forced the tectonic plates to shift and move rapidly and the process continues but is growing ever more slow. This alone would have caused the seas to be in great turmoil as the Ark was lifted from the land.

Earlier in Genesis, the Bible explains, ⁵“When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God

had not caused it to rain on the land ... ⁶ and **a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground**— ⁷ then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. ⁸ And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden ... ⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.” (Genesis 2:5-9) It is difficult to discern whether the lack of rain was a temporary or permanent situation, but a lot of credible Bible scholars believe that rain had not fallen on the earth from the time of creation up until the time of the flood, rather a “**a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground**” and underground springs provided an uninterrupted cycle of water for plants and crops.

Building a massive boat so far from any large bodies of water is one thing, but preparing for a flood when no one on earth had possibly never seen rain or flood and the ocean was a great distance away; must have appeared to all the people in Noah’s area as just plain crazy. Noah’s neighbors probably thought he was a little insane for talking to an invisible God during the years of the construction of the Ark and I am sure the story of the crazy guy building a boat on dry land went out far and wide. Unfortunately, the story of God, the Creator and sustainer of life was not being told far and wide like the story of crazy Noah. Building an ark and predicting a flood most likely made all the people question Noah’s sanity. Remember Noah did not build a small boat for he and his family. The Ark was at least 450 feet long or 1 and ½ football fields and it was at least 75 feet wide. We know it had at least 3 decks and could have been up to 100 feet high. Maurice and Peggy recently traveled to Kentucky to see a full scale replica of the Ark and it was massive. It too, is built far from the ocean on dry land – interesting.

“Noah walked with God”

In Genesis 6, verse 9 we read, “Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.” This may be another reason Noah is mentioned after Enoch who walked with God and was taken by God before death. These 2 men spent their lives in such close relationship with God that the scriptures say they “walked with God”. The world was growing ever more corrupt and evil, and yet, these two remained faithful. Does this not sound like our world today – growing ever more corrupt? God through His Son Jesus Christ is calling believers to be in close relationship with Him or to walk with Him in the midst of an evil world. Charles Spurgeon preached in June of 1890 these words that still inspire and ring true, “Noah is the picture of one who is the Lord’s witness during evil days, and lives through them faithfully, enduring unto the end. It was his to be delivered from death by death. The ark was, so to speak, a coffin to him: he entered it, and became a dead man to the old world; and within its enclosure he was floated into a new world, to become the founder and father of a new race. As in the figure of baptism we see life by burial, so was it with this chosen patriarch; he passed by burial in the ark into a new life.” I had not thought about the symbolism of the Flood representing the eternal death of unbelievers and the Ark being like baptism for believers and yet, what a wonderful parallel.

Living “By faith”

In the life of Noah, we observe a life engaged in conflict with the fallen evil world, a life lived in the midst of those who knew God and backslide into apostasy

until they were as corrupt as the rest of the world. This is the story of our time as the Remnant Church lives true to God's Word in the midst of a world in conflict and growing evil and churches that are backsliding in an effort to remain popular with the world and have journeyed away from and are apostate and lost. As we live true to the Word of God, we are then called the righteous of God by the Triune Godhead. My beloved may we live by trusting in God the Holy Spirit that dwells within each of us and may our lives bless God and take the message of the Gospel to the lost world.

“By faith” Abel, Enoch and Noah walked with God. These men lived what they believed and they believe in God. They lived ordinary lives; they were not super heroes; they were not chosen because they had proven themselves with special talents – they believed **“By faith”**.

Let me ask this Lord's Day, “Have you faith?” I am not asking you as the body of believers, as the church. Let me ask again and hear the question as it is being posed to you, as an individual, to you as a child of the Living God. “Have you faith? Do you believe in the living Son of God?” If you are not living **“By faith”**, then you are living outside of God's grace. Life may have given you good things, material things of comfort or life may have been a struggle but know this, God has put you where you are for a reason and first and foremost the reason is for you to live by the saving grace in Jesus Christ and then use your life experiences to share salvation through Christ with the world. Is this how you see your purpose in life? Abel saw this as his purpose; he lived **“By faith”** in what God revealed and was martyred for God's glory. Enoch lived **“By faith”** and was a shining example to all who knew him and they observed the blessings brought by having a close intimate relationship with God **“By faith”** and God took him home for His glory. Notice in our text that Noah believed in God in his ordinary life. Before the great

test came, before he heard the oracle from God in heaven, Noah believed in God. We know this because the scripture tells us “Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.” So, “**By faith** Noah walked with God” in the midst of evil and “**By faith**” he believed in a future he could not see and lived out God commands surround by people who thought him a fool. Because of Noah’s faith God used him to restart the human race for His glory.

Faith must be a constant resident within each believer, not an occasional guest. I came from a false belief system of the “Latter-day Saints”, and I do not think much of their faith in a false Christ; I far more admire those who are “Every-day Saints” in the true God. One needs faith on Sundays in church and at the Lord’s table, but we need faith on Monday as the work week begins. Our testimony of the glory of God is to continue throughout the week and make known how God has rescued us each and every day. We need faith every day so we will not fall into temptation as King David did. In days of rest or work we need to live “**By faith**”. It was “**By faith**” Noah did everything before he entered into the Ark. This is important, although it may appear simple, each and every day Noah lived “**By faith**”. Men think they need faith to build something of greatness, but they need to realize true greatness comes from living each day by faith and how it speaks to the world. I pray the Lord teaches us, through His Spirit within us, how to live daily by faith as Noah did.

So, now we have come to your life story. Will you live “**By faith**” as Abel, Enoch and Noah did for the glory of God? Remember a key truth is found just 1 verse before we read of Noah; in verse 6, my beloved, “**without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.**” Your ordinary life can be lived as a great testimony to the glory of God just as did Abel and Enoch and Noah. May

your testimony, by daily living out your faith show your children God's glory, and your children's children and all those God has put in your life – may they know the glory of God by your faith! May they too live their lives **“By faith”** in the one true God! Amen!