

The Judgment of God: Loving the Unaware and the Unprepared

Learning from Noah - Gen 6:8 – 9:29; Heb.11:7 KSBBC Aug.1, 2010

Introduction So you live back in Noah's day . . . you are having coffee with a friend and your friend asks you a question, obviously to get a laugh, '*what do you think will happen first, the Cainite Cubs win the World Series or the worldwide flood that nutsy Noah talks about?*' The clear, acceptable, prevailing and misguided implication is that neither will ever happen. One is at least in the distant realm of possibility – the Cainite Cubs beating the Nephilim Giants in the World Series, but the other event is simply unreasonable and will never happen.

This mistaken and prevailing attitude about God and his commitment to getting his way continues today. How can we faithfully love those unaware and unprepared for the certain and coming judgment of God?

Only six chapters into the Bible it becomes clear that God is committed to getting his way. He creates everything and establishes the rules by which everything and everyone must exist. He provides for and sustains all life and then expects the life he gives to honor and respect him. God's way is so perfect and right that he protects it and draws people to it through judgment. God is determined to be exclusively and decisively the one true God. God is already on record as judging and sentencing Adam and Eve, the serpent, Cain and all the descendents listed in chapter 5 from Adam to Noah (exception Enoch). His judgment assures that evil will be disposed of authoritatively, decisively and finally.

God's judgment has happened, is happening and will happen. There is a final judgment coming that will completely destroy and forever condemn every power and person that does not honor God. The scriptures teach that God's judgment is a praiseworthy guarantee that He will get his way and that his judgment is a trustworthy demonstration of his kindness leading to repentance. God's judgment gives us confidence that leads to greater praise and trust.

However, what produces praise and trust in our lives is ignored, misunderstood and denied by the overwhelming majority of our friends, neighbors, coworkers and family members. Our concern is for them. Our goal today is to find and follow a godly example of loving the unaware and unprepared by looking at the life of Noah. Peter referred to Noah as a herald or preacher of righteousness. One of the most intriguing phrases in the Bible describing Noah appears in Hebrews 11:7:

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.

Noah's faith and obedience is said to have 'condemned the world.' Often we make it our job to condemn the world by pointing out how rotten it is, fixating on the current reigning sins or uniting in hysteria over the latest debaucheries. Our disgust, gossip, finger pointing and boycotts are as powerless as they appear to be.

Consider Noah . . . lived by faith, did what God told him to do, only had 7 family members convert, stumbled big time toward the end of his life and still has this statement as the lasting legacy of his life . . . he condemned the world. That must be a good thing, right? He helped people understand God and glorified God by warning people that God must get his way. Let's learn from Noah how to condemn the world the right way . . . no self righteous disgust, no I'm better than you finger pointing and no cheap and pointless posturing. God's judgment is real and must be talked about . . . Noah becomes our teacher today.

Let's read and review the account of Noah's faith and life in **Genesis 6:9 – 7:5**

Loving the unaware and the unprepared as Noah did requires our increased attention to three observable principles or values seen in Noah's story. Noah is well worth imitating (Heb.6:12) in these ways.

1. Live the life. Gen. 6:9; Heb. 11:7

Walk the talk. Live the life. Noah's life could be watched closely with the same results consistently, he lived to please God. Not perfectly, but there was a definite and distinct quality about Noah that caused the writer of scripture to say of him . . . he walked with God. Verse 9 makes it clear that Noah was blameless before God and right before men. The author of Hebrews calls it 'reverent fear' . . . this godliness of Noah. Be certain of this, Noah condemned the world . . . represented God truthfully . . . because it was with God that he walked.

There is far too often a significant and noticeable gap between the orientation of our lives and the message we claim to believe and desire to communicate. The marriage of the message and messenger is crucial for the advance of the good news of rescue from judgment through Jesus Christ. Consider these observations about Noah's walk with God that can help you grow in your impact with the unaware and unprepared.

a. Your walk with God is an observable stance that is in contrast with the world around you.

Noah's world is described as corrupt/violent 6 times in this narrative. Noah's world is known throughout history and referenced by Christ as indifferent and clueless to the works of God. It is against this backdrop that the statement of contrast is made . . . it is with God that Noah walked.

Rom.12:2; 1John 2:15-16

b. Your walk with God is an intentional attentiveness to the ways of God in your life.

Note Noah's stewardship of the ways of God in his life . . . walking with God means . . .

Being a responder to God's favor and grace. 6:8; 8:1; 9:1

Being a listener to God's words. 6:13; 7:1; 9:1

Being a fan of God's promises. 6:18; 8:20-22; H11:7(unseen)

Intentional attentiveness is seen in the term 'in reverent fear' in Heb. 11:7. It means a nervous caution, lofty regard, attentive care. It speaks to the core concept of what we value the most is what we are most attentive toward. Walking with God is holding God and his grace, words and promises as precious, valuable, satisfying . . . nervously concerned that we will miss something he has for us and cautiously guarded that we will not stray from him. Noah did that.

2. Embrace your assignment. Gen. 6:22; 11:5; Heb.11:7

It may go without notice, but the outstanding secret to Noah's influence was simply that he did what God told him to do. His obedience meant embracing a rather strange, sometimes embarrassing and incredibly difficult assignment. The scriptures reveal this profoundly important principle in the few words . . . 'Noah did this' (6:22); 'Noah did all that the Lord commanded him'(7:5); 'by faith . . . Noah constructed an ark' (H.11:7). Not building the ark while saying he believed God and his word would not have produced quite the same results. His words, life, warnings and preaching are all dead . . . useless without obeying the specific command in his time and circumstances. The ark building process was as important as the completed ark in the effective proclamation of judgment and safety. Noah's God given platform for influence was building the ark.

Note the assignments and platforms that God gives us to embrace are much like Noah's . . .

Embrace the uniqueness of your assignment. Public, lonely, hard
God has given you a unique platform in your world to embrace . . . you have been sinned against, you have a health issue, you have significant popularity, you are in a challenging marriage, you hardly ever get any credit for what you do . . . faithfulness is always measured in real life terms rather than Sunday church terms.

Embrace the extent of your assignment. Over 100 years with no response
Some of us believe that our assignment should have ended or changed a while ago when we really tried hard to please God and change but he did not change the assignment.
Embrace the exposure of your assignment. Mockery and humiliation
Both our sanctified imagination as well as extra biblical literature tells us that Noah endured long and cruel humiliation from those watching him build the floating box.

Cmp Heb. 10:32-39 – ‘sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction’ Sustained and committed boldness will be richly rewarded by God. Maintain hope on which embracing your assignment is built.

Cmp. 1Peter 3:13-17 – ‘when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.’

3. Get the message right. 2Peter 2:5; Heb. 11:7

Note the two references describing the message Noah preached. It was a message of righteousness. It was more than get on the boat, stop being bad, learn to swim for a long time, or build your own boat. There was something that each person needed that only God could provide. The reality of judgment brought attention and clarity to the genuine need of every human being . . . righteousness.

Our message must be as clear and true. Think through the following terms used to describe the message Noah preached . . .

There is a warning of present and future condemnation.

The message of warning is explained in Gen. 6:1-8 . . . this God-ignoring, God-replacing corruption cannot last. God will get his righteous way even if he has to wipe out everything and start over. God sets the standard of what is right . . . his standard must be met. It is obvious that every person falls short of that standard of righteousness.

There is an offer of God’s provision of righteousness.

The ark, a limited picture of God’s provision of safety, points toward God’s ultimate provision of righteousness found in Jesus Christ. While the ark could deliver a person from the temporal judgment of the flood, Jesus’ righteousness saves a person from eternal damnation. 1Peter 3:18

There is an invitation to repent and believe.

The righteousness that Noah preached was appropriated to life by means of saving faith. Faith that believes that God exists and rewards those who seek him. Faith that turns from corruption, acknowledges personal guilt and turns to embrace the righteousness of Christ as their only hope of deliverance from a just and certain judgment.

Loving the unaware and the unprepared as Noah did . . .

Lord, I’m Listening . . .

1. Live the life.
2. Embrace your assignment.
3. Get the message right.

Escape the coming judgment by turning to faith in Christ today.