

Noah's Obedience to God

"Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did." - Genesis 6:22

In the day of Noah, the Lord tells us there was a dramatic contrast in His creation. Noah, "found grace in the eyes of the Lord...Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah's life was in contrast to the world around him whose thoughts were evil continually."

Noah was righteous; Noah walked with God (Gen. 6:8-9). Scripture does not lead us to believe that he was perfect, but his life reflected God and was therefore blameless. In 6:22 we note that Noah "did all that God commanded him." In other words, he obeyed.

Obedience. A difficult concept for many to grasp and understand, for with obedience comes the principle of submission to the one whose directions are being followed. Humans tend to cringe at the thought of submission to anyone. I believe that is why so many people struggle with the fact Noah obeyed God completely. The Biblical record of the flood has come under constant attacks to try and discredit the event in its entirety. Those who pursue this agenda believe that if they can disprove the flood, they can eliminate the idea of God as the Designer and Creator.

The attacks seek to appeal to man's belief that reasons for our obedience must be completely understood by us and/or make sense. Mankind's problem has been, and will continue to be, our belief that we know best or we are wiser than God. For instance:

It did not make sense for Noah to build an ark, especially as large (building a structure that was 450 feet long 75 feet wide and 45 feet high) as he did with no body of water in the area to launch it. The scriptures tell us he did.

It did not make sense for Noah to begin building an ark when he was over 500 years old especially considering it would take 120 years to complete. The scriptures tell us he did.

It did not make sense for Noah to undertake an endeavor for which he would suffer vast ridicule, potential threats and violence. The earth was corrupt and filled with violence and injustice. Evil was so bad, "every imagination of the thoughts of his (man's) heart was only evil continually." The corruption of man was so bad that "it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." Evil, which is Satan born, has a singular desire; destroy mankind's relationship with God through disobedience! Noah realized it was more important to listen to God than to his own understanding.

The proof of Noah's complete obedience to God is found, not only in scriptures that directly speak to it, but in examples provided to us in instances where individuals did not obey God.

In Leviticus 10, we are told, "Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane (strange) fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded them. So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord" (Leviticus 10:1-2). The KJV says "strange fire". It was "profane" or "strange fire" because that fire was not authorized. Various commentaries have speculated about what made the fire "strange." It doesn't matter! It was NOT what the Lord commanded and Aaron's sons paid with their life.

Just as God had in the days of Moses, Christ provides us the ingredients for proper worship to God: Spirit and Truth (John 4:24). Anything else is an abomination before the Lord and will NOT be accepted.

Israel, setting out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin (Ex. 17:1-2), needed water to survive. Moses petitions God for relief and the Lord tells him to strike the rock before him and water will come out for the people to drink. Moses did as he was told and the water did come gushing forward. In Numbers 20, the Israelites again find themselves without water. This time the Lord tells Moses that he should, "speak to the rock..." and water shall be brought forth. Moses did not follow the Lord's commands (he struck the rock), and the Lord reprimanded him by saying, "Because ye believed not in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." Moses was prevented from entering into Canaan even though he did exactly what the Lord had commanded of him previously to bring forth water. Following God's commands exactly are the only way to be pleasing to the Lord. Unfortunately, we often believe we know what the right thing to do is. Proverbs 14:12 teaches, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man..." We believe we know what is right, what is best. However, the end of this scriptures states, "...but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Moses and Aaron's failure was two-fold. In scolding the people they asked if they (Moses and Aaron) had to bring forth water. They did not give God the credit, as they should have. Secondly, they did not do what God commanded. If Moses had done it God's way, merely speaking to a rock, the water would have flowed just the same. Partial obedience is not obedience.

Disobedience, regardless how "well intentioned" the action is also not an acceptable. King David and others moved the Ark of the Covenant in a way that God had not authorized (he moved it on a cart – not on the shoulders of the Levites, as God had authorized, 1 Chron. 15:1-15; 13:1-14; 2 Sam. 6:1-11). Uzzah simply reached up to steady the ark because the oxen had stumbled and

Jehovah smote him for his sin. Because the affair involved an unauthorized way of moving the ark, and because an unauthorized man touched it, he was destroyed by God. The matter of authority is crucial!

Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden tree (Genesis 1:16-17; 3:6). Lot's wife looked back to the city of Sodom (Genesis 19:17, 26). Ananias and Sapphira lied to God (Acts 5:1-11). All had excuses for not obeying God and all excuses were rejected.

There are many other examples of disobedience before God and in EVERY case there were consequences to be paid. Consider the following:

Sin in our life, disobedience clearly forbidden in the Bible (Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Romans 1:18-32; Colossians 3:5-9, etc.) will lead to the highest priced consequence: eternal separation from Jehovah God in the fires of Hell.

Our confidence in the fact Noah obeyed all that God commanded of him is found in the love shown and the blessing prescribed to Noah by our God:

Gen. 9:1 - And ***God blessed Noah*** and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

Gen. 8:20-21 - And Noah builded an altar unto Jehovah, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean bird, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And ***Jehovah smelled the sweet savor***; and Jehovah said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done.

Gen. 9:8-9 - And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, ***I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;***

Gen. 9:12 – And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you

Heb. 11:7 - By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord before the flood by obeying the Lord. It allowed him to save himself and his family. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord after the flood because he was obedient to God even when the evidence told him it didn't make sense. Noah and his family were rewarded for their faithfulness. They were given a new earth, a purified earth. It was theirs to foster.

My father always told me something, which has continued to stick with me to this day: "If God has said it, don't argue about it, just obey it." Wouldn't our world be a much better place if all people would follow that advice?

Gary Summers summed up the story of Noah in a very eloquent fashion when he stated:

"One person can be spiritually strong; one individual can be steadfast and unmovable (1 Cor. 15:58). It only takes one person with deep trust and commitment to make a difference in this world. One's first priority must be to save oneself; the next one is to save one's family. The third is to influence positively the entire world--not through force, which is the only means some understand, but through the power of godly speech, godly behavior, and godly living. What more fitting epitaph to a faithful life could there be than: 'As God commanded, so he (or she) did.'"

Amen.