

## Hebrews 11:7

(title) If I were to ask what the most recognizable Bible event is, many would vote for Noah's Ark. This event is the subject of paintings, pictures, children's books, toys, & videos & even discovery channel specials. Just about everyone knows about Noah's Ark and the great flood. Unfortunately many view this event as a fairy tale type children's story or legend. But to the Christian, Noah and the Ark is not only an actual historical event, but the source of valuable truths about God, biblical history, and our own salvation. It does not surprise us to find it referenced in Hebrews 11, as an example of faith. ***Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.***

Let us begin by noticing a few things about Noah. First, he was a **Righteous man in A Wicked World** – The original account of Noah and the flood appears in the book of Genesis 6-9. It begins by telling us that (6:5) ***GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (6) And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.*** God created man which was good, but he gave man free choice to choose right and wrong, good or bad, and in Gen. 6 the majority had chosen evil. V6 tells us that this grieved God. ***(7) And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. (8) But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.***

The text goes on to tell us that God did destroy all the people on the earth (except for Noah and his family) with a worldwide flood. ***Genesis (7:11) In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. (12) And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.*** Notice that the windows of heaven were opened which means that the rain started and it rained for forty days and nights. But notice also that the fountains of the earth were broken. Water came forth from below the ground. Back up to v10 and notice that after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth: ***Genesis 7:10 And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.*** Noah, the animals, and his family had to wait in

the ark seven days for the rain to come. They had never seen rain up to this time. This was a real test of faith - to wait a week after more than 100 years of preparation.

7:19 tells us that all the highest mountains of the earth were covered with water. There are many who cannot get their mind around such incredible physical anomalies. But the most incredible part of this story is not how did the water get so deep, or how God got all those animals in the ark, but how Noah could have such faith in His God.

**A. How would you describe such faith?** It is interesting to note that it never says in the Genesis account that Noah believed, or had faith. Our verse in Hebrews clearly indicates that Noah acted out of (or by) faith.

Notice what Genesis does tell us about Noah:

- **Gen 6:8** – *Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.*
- **Gen 6:9** – *Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.*
- **Gen 6:22** – *Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.*
- **Gen 7:1** – *I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation.*
- **Gen 7:5** – *And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him.*

This is how God describes the faith of Noah. He was **just** (righteous or lawful). He was **perfect** (undefiled or without blemish); **walked with God** and **did what God commanded**. These words all point to Noah's practical obedience toward God. They certainly describe more than a mental assent toward God. The character of the faith that saved Noah is the same as the faith that saves us. I do not know how much information Noah had on redemption, sacrifice or salvation. I doubt he knew as much as you and I know now. But the scriptures use his faith as a lesson for us because it reveals to us what our faith needs to be. The focus in the Hebrews 11 examples is on the activity of faith; faith expressed in the context of God's commands.

**B. The Components of Noah's Faith:** The writer of Hebrews depicts the activity of Noah as being "by faith" (v. 7). In a single verse he characterizes 100 years of Noah's life that was totally consumed by the prophecy and command of God. What does he tell us? *Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*

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1. ***“being divinely warned of things not yet seen”*** – God told Noah that judgment was coming. A flood would overwhelm the earth. Someone has indentified this as the intellectual component of Noah’s faith. He was called upon to accept as fact what God said. He had to reason on it and come to a conclusion – *is it true?* Our faith is based upon God’s word. We must intellectually consider what He tells us and come to a conclusion. The fact that God warned Noah was both an act of mercy and a call to action – this is the nature of the Gospel today – the scriptures are full of God’s warnings of things we cannot see with our eyes. – ***2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, (8) In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: (9) Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;***

***Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.***

b. ***“of things not yet seen”*** – This is one aspect of Noah’s faith that is amazing. God was telling him about things he had no prior knowledge of, and could not understand through his own experience. He probably lived in Mesopotamia, between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, a long way from any ocean or sizable lake. The concept of the earth being covered by water may have seemed absurd. It would seem so even today.

It is often concluded that Noah had never seen rain. **Genesis 2:5-6** tells us that the Lord had not caused it to rain on the earth, ...but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. But Noah was willing to accept the unseen (and somewhat unknowable) as real, because he trusted in God’s words. He was convinced that what God said was true. Are we?

2. ***“moved with godly fear”*** – This is the emotional component of faith – This phrase is translated religiously to show reverence: from a root word that means to fear or dread. Noah was fearful. He acted out of fear. What did Noah fear? Considering the words that God expressed, I would conclude that he feared God’s judgment. But every relationship of love involves an element of fear – you **fear displeasing the other person**. To fear God is to not want to displease Him. ***Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God,***

*and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. (14) For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* This fear is also described as “*godly fear*”. It points to a recognition that God will act as He has spoken, and that God should be respected as such. Notice what the Hebrew writer says. *Hebrews 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:*

**3. “he prepared an ark”** – His faith accompanied by his fear of God caused Noah to build the ark. The fact that he “prepared” implies that Noah saw the flood as a reality. He was convinced that he was going to need that boat to survive. His ark building was to the saving of his family. Three points to note regarding his faith.

**POINT NO. 1** is his **immediate obedience to God’s commands**. No indication that he delayed or argued with God. To surrender all his time and effort to building a boat took a special kind of commitment. He probably had little idea about what an ocean-going ship was like. Certainly he had never seen or even heard of a giant ship such as the ark was to be. He had no experience in shipbuilding, no easy access to building supplies, and no help except that of his sons. Even they were not able to help for many years after the ark was begun, because they were not born until after Noah had worked many years in the building of the ark. One of the greatest practical acts of faith in all history was Noah’s cutting down the first gopher tree for wood to make the ark.

**No. 2 His obedience was comprehensive and specific to God’s commands.** Gen 6:22 – *Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.* Noah made the ark exactly as God specified. There were practical reasons to do it God’s way in order to hold all the animals and to float. But there was also the moral reason that his faith demanded it. If he believed and respected God’s word on one part (coming flood) then he needed to respect his word on everything revealed.

**No. 3 He kept on obeying God** – Noah worked on that ark for over 100 years. He did not give up or abandon the project. Even though there was not ongoing evidence that he would benefit from his obedience, except the words of God. Likely, although not stated in scripture, he was ridiculed and persecuted.

There was once a man who walked up and down the street with a sandwich board on his back – the front side said – “*I am a fool for Christ*”; the back side said, “*whose fool are you?*” Everyone is a fool in the eyes of someone. Many are willing to look like fools for their cause. Noah’s faith allowed him to be a fool for God for over 100 years.

What if he had stopped building? Would he have regretted it? What was the result of Noah’s faith? But once again I must confess how astounded I am at Noah’s confidence in the word of God. His life is defined by the faith he expressed in things not seen. He rested in God’s word alone.

**In 2 Peter 2:5**, the apostle mentions Noah, and calls him a “*preacher of righteousness*”. This seems to indicate that Noah was attempting to get others to accept what he believed and what God had revealed. He preached for more than a hundred years as he built the ark. He only saved himself and his family in all that time. But maybe that preaching and teaching was as much designed to save Noah and those he spoke to. Faith is sustained through our willingness to share it with others. The apostles faced enormous persecution and were made to be fools for Christ, but their willingness to not stop preaching sustained their faith – and their faith moved them to not stop preaching.

Peter also tells us in **1 Peter 3:20-21** that God waited in longsuffering while Noah was preaching and the ark was being prepared. And then he says that the salvation of Noah and his family “through water” is a type of our salvation through baptism. ***1 Peter 3:20-21 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. (21) The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:***

Noah wanted to please God – Do you? IF you seek a clear conscience, then appeal to God through your willingness to be baptized today. Your faith in God demands it.