

Noah

“In the Beginning”



“And spared not the old world, but saved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.”

II Peter 2:5

We have all heard of the great flood when all the earth was covered with water and only Noah and his family were spared. God told them to build an ark and take two of every living creature, male and female, into the ark along with his family. We are told in the Scriptures that all the other people were sinning and would not repent.

Noah was a very righteous man and he had absolute faith in God. We have to believe this if we stop and consider how people must have ridiculed him and mocked him for building such a large vessel and believing that the world would be destroyed by water. Also, he was trying to tell people to repent of their evil ways, so we can imagine that he was not very popular, and that he was often the subject of

criticism. Noah was supposedly the tenth generation after Adam so the world of that time had quite a few people. Those people had been given everything and then turned against the very God that had given it to them. Noah was 600 years old when the Lord came to him and told him to build the ark. Supposedly it took over one hundred years to build the ark according to some sources and nothing like this had ever been built before, but Noah was guided by God and he was diligent in his efforts to do as God commanded.

We don't know how far the ark traveled after the flooding took place, but we are told it came to rest on the mountains of Ararat, in what we would know today as Turkey. It seems that people have been trying to find it, and claiming to have found it for years.

After the flood, Noah built an altar to God and made an offering. God made a covenant with Noah that the land and every living creature would never be destroyed again. God promised that while the earth remained there would be seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night. There would be green plants and meat for food. The sign of God's covenant was the rainbow which many of us see and recall the beauty that only a great God could create as well as other promises of that covenant.

Noah lived to be 950. Many stories are told about his three sons. Noah's three sons were generally thought of as the founders of the populations of the three known continents, Japheth's descendants went to Europe, Shem descend-

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

Romans 8:28



ants went to Asia, and Ham descendants went to Africa.

Many theories have been written over the years about Noah and his family, but none have been able to destroy the story or the faith of Noah in God through this miracle. Noah's building the ark alone was a sign of his absolute faith. I can't imagine the ridicule and laughter that Noah must have endured during the building. But, I can imagine that when the rain began to really pile up there must have been many who wanted to get into the ark. One picture I saw one time shows people in the water trying to get onto the ark. There must have been panic and anger when they were not accepted by Noah. All of a sudden he would have had many friends.

A musical TWO BY TWO was written about this story. It never made it big on Broadway, but it has a couple very interesting songs. One talks about an argument between Noah's sons. They think the ark needs a rudder. Noah protests that if God had wanted it to have a rudder, He would have said to make a rudder, but God didn't say make a rudder, so there was not going

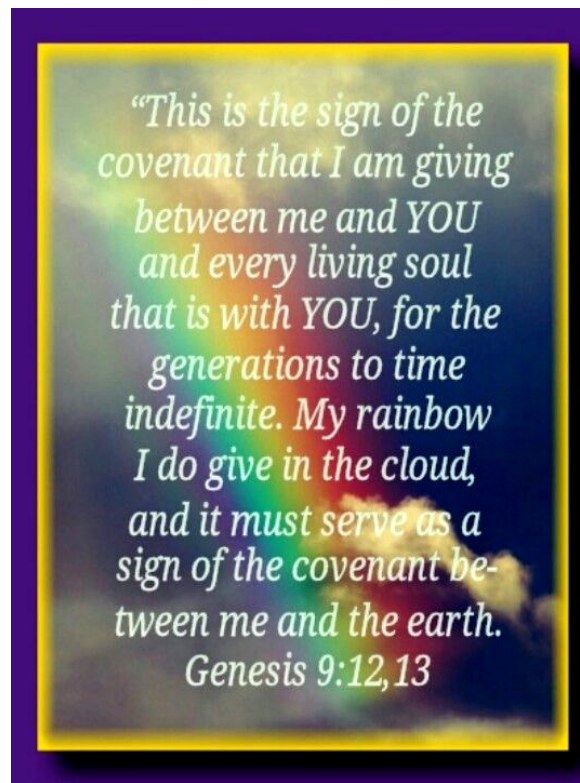
to be a rudder. The sons are very disturbed because they think Noah is crazy anyway, and especially if he doesn't want to put a rudder on it so he can guide it.

Noah was going on God's guidance in building the ark. He certainly must have had enough faith to think God would also guide him after it was built. I wonder if we sometimes forget to let God be our rudder! The song also shows disagreement between Noah's sons and their father. Sometimes we also have disagreements between parents and children in today's world. Again, is it a time when we need God's rudder?

Another song is a love song between Noah and his wife called "Hey Girlie". According to this song, Noah's wife, Esther, dies in his arms before they all leave the ark. The musical is of course very loosely based on the actual Bible story, but it gives us thought as to what might have been going through the mind of Noah and his family as they are building this ark when no one else knows why.

Sometimes we are called to do something that no one else can understand, but God has a plan for us if we ask. Often people have said, "Don't ask God for guidance if you don't want it!"

Noah has become a symbol for hope with the rainbow and the dove. People seem to accept it as a promise even if they are unaware of the real covenant behind it. We just need to remember who holds the "rudder"!!



Noah: Noah's birth is mentioned in the long lineage in Genesis 5. His story continues through Genesis 9, but references are made to his faithfulness throughout the Bible. In the New Testament, three references are made to his faithfulness and the flood in Hebrews 11:7; I Peter 3:20 and II Peter 2:5.



Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father we know that you have created everything on earth and that you have done it all for good. Help us to have the faith of Noah as we accept each day on this earth knowing that you have also prepared another place for those of us who believe, just as you restored the earth to Noah and his family so many years ago. Amen.

1. How do you suppose Noah's wife and the children reacted to this vision from God? Remember an angel appeared to both Mary and Joseph!
2. Can we compare anything in our life to the faith shown by Noah at that time?
3. How can we believe the story of Noah to be true? What signs do we have?
4. Has God ever asked you to do something that you thought was out of line? What about talking to someone about your faith? What about taking a stand or not going along with "the crowd?"
5. Can we accept that prayer is the only answer in difficult times?
6. Do we have a rudder?

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