

## **Warning And Faith**

### **Hebrews 11:7**

#### **Introduction**

Hebrews 11 began with a definition of faith and continues with illustrations of faith. By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain (v.4). By faith Enoch was translated so that he did not see death, and was not found because God had translated him”(v.5). In Abel we see an illustration of worship and faith and in Abel an illustration of the walk of faith and now in Noah we see an illustration of warning and faith (v.7). In this single verse we find Noah warned of coming a judgment; a judgment so profound and so severe it would result in the extermination of most of the human life and animal life on the planet earth. According to the text Noah was motivated by a godly fear—he prepared an ark for the saving of his household by which he condemned the world and became heir of righteousness which is according to faith.

The writer of Hebrews will cite Noah as an example of faith of someone who believes God and in believing God’s warning of a coming judgment acts on that warning with fearful, reverent faith. Have you noticed that each person cited thus far illustrates another facet of faith? Abel and Enoch illustrate the spiritual power of faith. Noah illustrates a fearful, reverent faith.

#### **Noah’s Identity (v.7a)**

*Hebrews 11:7a; “By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen. . .”*

*By faith. . . “That’s the thing about faith. If you don’t have it you can’t understand it. And if you do no explanation is necessary” (see Kira Nerys).*

Most of us are familiar with Noah’s story. It begins with the last few verses in Genesis chapter five; verses 29-32; “And he called his name Noah, saying, “This one will comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord has cursed.” And he begot Noah, Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years, and begot sons and daughters. So all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy seven years; and he died. And Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth.”

Noah was warned by God “of things not seen”. There had never been a global catastrophic flood. Some scholars suggest the weather patterns may have been profoundly different from the weather patterns we observe today. Imagine—a world where such things did not seem even remotely possible. Some suggest there may not have been rain; Genesis 2:5-6; “before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground. (v.6) but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.” Some suggest this mist was caused by a daily evaporation and condensation which occurred because of the change in temperature between daytime and nighttime.

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In chapter 6 we read about the preparation for the flood and in chapter 7 protection during the flood. Chapter 6 begins with a description of God's grief (vv.1-7); and continues with a declaration of God's grace (chapter 6:8-10) and God's guidance (chapter 6:11-22).

In Genesis 6:8; "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. (v.9) This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God."

Noah like Abel and Enoch exercises righteous living in the midst of a world that quite literally was thoroughly corrupt and completely evil.

According to the account in Genesis 6:11-13; "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth."

The Lord warned Noah of things not yet seen! But Noah believed God.

### **Noah's Survival (v.7b)**

*Hebrews 11:7b; "...moved with godly fear; prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world. . ."*

God's announcement of destruction includes directions for construction.

What do we know? The Lord told Noah to build an ark and that ark would save him, his family, and two of every animal and seven sets of certain animals. God warned Noah of a coming catastrophic judgment.

Our text reads; "moved with godly fear". The word translated fear (*eulabethe*) means with godly fear; the Greek scholar A.T. Robertson says it includes the ideas of reverence; standing in awe of God and His warning; talking heed lest one fall under God's judgment; diligently talking God at his Word; immediately acting upon what God says!

Noah believed God's warning about a future judgment and acted in faith before the judgment came.

Some scholars suggest that Noah built this Ark far from any body of water or harbor.

### **Safe In The Ark**

Did Jesus believe the flood story?

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Luke 17:26-27; “And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: (27) “They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.”

Jesus describes the conditions in the pre-flood world. They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage. The world conducts business as usual. The human beings seemed oblivious to the danger.

Jesus warns of a second and future global judgment.

Why did Noah’s faith condemn the world?

Noah’s life of faith. Noah’s testimony of faith.

Was Noah in the minority?

Were the Hebrew Christians who received this letter in the minority or majority? If Jesus was really the Messiah why was he rejected by the High Priest and the Jewish leadership? If Jesus were really the Messiah why do so few people believe in Him?

And now from the pages of history the writer of Hebrews points to the kind of faith where the minority is right and the majority wrong. Only eight people will survive this global catastrophe. The rest of the world will perish.

How does our faith condemn our world?

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (v.18) He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

The people in Noah’s day rejected Noah’s testimony and faith. God told Noah to warn the world. The Lord also told Noah to prepare an ark to save himself and his family and the animals.

Noah stood fast in his testimony. Noah completed the task of building the ark. Noah stood fast in his faith despite the mockery, and abuse and unbelief of his generation. In the eyes of the watching world Noah was a fool.

What do you believe about this world? Will it last? What do you believe about yourself? What is the focus of your life? What do you trust to save you? Science? Technology? Comfort? Pleasure? Possessions? Do you scoff at the idea of a coming judgment? When judgment is

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preached do you ridicule, or run? Does God exist? Will He judge this world? Will He judge you?

What will God find in your heart? Will he find; “that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually?”

The ark is a type and a picture of Jesus. After God revealed His plans to destroy the earth; He also revealed His plans to save Noah and his family. The world continued to plummet into deep darkness and wickedness. The ark was the only way to be saved in a world destined to die.

By the way. Who came up with the idea of an ark? God did. Noah may have fabricated the boat—but the idea of an ark was God’s idea—and dimensions of the ark was God’s idea. The ark was foreknown—ordained by God—and then supernaturally (revelation) given to Noah by the Word of the Lord (here v.7!!).

Noah had no part in the planning of the Ark—but Noah did play a role in building the physical structure of the Ark. I see in this a kind of picture of the incarnation of our Lord and Savior. Jesus is human. The ark was planned and designed by God but built by Noah. The instructions were very detailed; “make the ark of gopher wood; . . .pitch it within and without with pitch” (Gen. 6:14).

In order for the Savior to be the Savior it required that he be human. Humans required a human savior. The author M.R. DeHaan (*Portraits of Christ In Genesis; p.91*) writes;

*The Savior must be both God and Man. He must be man to atone for man’s sin; He must be God to bear the infinite penalty of man’s sin. Because He was a man, He could stand in man’s place. Because He was God, He could bear in a few hours the eternal, infinite judgment of God upon sin. The spiritually enlightened mind cannot fail to see in this a shadow of the Incarnation—the part that humanity was to play in preparing the Savior Jesus as the Ark of safety. The Savior must have a human body and nature as well as divine. Noah was therefore commanded to build the Ark. Millenniums later the One who foreshadowed by all this came into the world—the product of a human being, called in the Scripture the Seed of the woman. The Apostle Paul makes it crystal clear in Galatians 4: But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Galatians 4:4-5).*

Jesus fulfills the promise given in Genesis 3:15; “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

Noah must have known the promise. Jesus is our perfect Ark. The Ark was perfectly safe—it had to be to bear the storm and weather the judgment. Perfect because it was designed by God.

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The ark was secure. In Genesis 7:1 “And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark;

The word come—makes its first appearance in the Bible—here in Genesis 7:1!! The Lord doesn’t simply say—it’s safe—you can go in now—the way the sentence is structured it implies that God is already—inside that ark—and God bids Noah and his family to join Him in the ark! Think about that for a moment. The ark cannot sink. God’s own presence in the ark guarantees their safety!!! Noah and his family were safe.

Do you remember the story of Jesus in Matthew 8:25 were the storm comes and the disciples fearing the storm cry out; ‘Lord save us: we perish’. They had not yet learned the lesson that when the Lord is in the boat *it cannot sink* (Portraits of Christ in Genesis M.R. DeHaan p.93).

The first mention of the word “come” is in Genesis 7:1. The last mention of the word come is in Revelation 22:17; “And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that hearth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely”.

Isn’t that interesting. Water that leads to death. Water that leads to life.

The ark was safe and the ark was secure. You will remember that the ark had no sails, no motor, no engine, no rudder, no pilot house. God himself directed the ship. Some people believe that the ark was simply at the mercy of the waves—forced to go where the storm led the ship. Not true. It was carefully piloted and steered by God! The same God who said—“Come thou—and all they house into the ark”. The same God who says, “come to me all you who are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” God was talking the ship to Ararat and God was talking our ark to Mount Calvary.

Yes God planned the ark and made it safe and secure—yes God guided the ark through the storm of His own judgement. But that does not mean that Noah had nothing to do. Noah and his family built the ark. Noah and his family feed the animals. Noah didn’t do this because he was afraid he might be kicked out of the ark. Noah remained safe while in the ark. We too are safe in Christ. Jesus is our ark of salvation. Paul writes; “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13).

When we come to the end of chapter 7 in Genesis we read in verse 16; “And they went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the Lord shut him in”.

Noah did not shut the door. The Lord does not place the welfare and safety of His children in the hands of men or preacher or priest. Jesus is the one who opens the door and shuts the door. There was only one ark—one means of safety and security. God did not order a fleet of ships built—but only one ship. There are plenty of religions—but only one source of safety if you

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want to survive past the judgment. Jesus is the door “by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved” (John 10:9).

### **Noah’s Inheritance (v.7c)**

*Hebrews 11:7c; “. . .and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith”.*

The Lord God helped Noah prepare for the flood. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Genesis 6:8-10). With God’s grace came God’s guidance. The warning of destruction prompted Noah’s willingness to construct a wooden boat that would serve as the vehicle for Noah’s deliverance. God provided protection in the storm.

What was Noah’s inheritance? What was Noah’s reward?

1. Noah’s family was saved.
2. The world remained condemned.
3. Noah was counted an heir of righteousness (dikaaios).

“Noah believed God and God counted his faith as righteousness. He “became heir of the righteousness which is by faith”. And Matthew Henry says, Noah had faith in the promised Seed, the Savior whom God was someday going to send to the earth (*Matthew Henry Commentary; Vol.6; p.941*). There is nothing else upon the earth that can cause God to count a man righteous but faith—in the promised Seed, the Savior of the world, even the Lord Jesus Christ” (*The Preacher’s Outline & Sermon Bible; Hebrews/James; p.136*).

*“And he (Abraham) believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen. 15:6). “For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Rom. 4:3).*

Noah becomes heir to a brand new world. The Lord remembered Noah during the flood and after the flood. When the ark finally arrives on Mount Ararat the Lord tells Noah and his family to be fruitful and multiply upon the earth. Faithfulness is rewarded by fruitfulness.

And what about you? Paul writes; “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). Paul would later write again (Philippians 3:9); “And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith”.

Noah experienced salvation through the flood.

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#### **Conclusion**

The purpose of the Scripture is to reveal the Lord Jesus Christ.

The writer of Hebrews has already invited us; “Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith” (10:22).

And what of Noah our Father and faithful example? Well God gives Noah a Rainbow promise! A rainbow covenant. The Lord promises to never again destroy the earth with a flood (8:21; 9:9-17). But the earth will be destroyed once more—by fire (2 Peter 3:1-13). You know the passage; But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10).

The Lord would require the life of a man who murdered another man (9:6).

The Lord would establish the times and the seasons until the end (8:22).

The Lord would place a fear among animals towards man (9:2).

The Lord would permit the eating of an animal’s flesh (9:3).

Noah had every reason to believe God. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. So have you! God revealed His plan to Noah and God has revealed His plan to you! Noah became aware of a future judgment. You are aware of a future judgment. Noah built an ark. But you have an ark provided for you. Safe and secure—go ahead. Go in.

“Some people think that having reasons for faith is an insult to God. But verification itself depends on the unchanging authority and stability of the Word of God. We are not insulting God but bringing glory to him taking his Word as the stable, authoritative truth it is” (Os Guinness).