

But Noah

by Steve & Carol Ryerson

All around us the world is getting darker and darker. It is easy to look around and wonder how we can ever raise our children to walk with God.

Matthew 24:37-39 ~ But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Noah lived in a very wicked age. Let's take a look at it.

Genesis 7:5-7 ~ And 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. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 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.

The Hebrew word for 'every imagination' does not just mean imagination. It goes much deeper than that. It encompasses the purposes and desires. Men's lives were totally devoted to thinking up and doing evil. This was the world of Noah. Sometimes we might think that this is also the world of today. It was so bad that God regretted having made his creation and determined to wipe it out.

Just when things looked bleakest, what we call 'the three-letter world changer' came to the rescue. What is the three-letter world changer? The word 'but.'

Ephesians 2:1-7 ~ And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Notice in the above passage that the people were dead spiritually, living utterly depraved lives under the power and bondage of Satan. What changed things? But, God. That word 'but' changes everything before it. God stepped in and allowed us to be saved, totally changing the picture.

Back to Genesis, we see what happened with God's total frustration with His creation.

Genesis 6:8-9 ~ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

Do you see that three-letter-world-changer? But Noah. Noah changed the course of history. He changed God's plan. How, by finding grace in God's eyes. Noah walked with God. What does it mean to walk with God? We saw that the wicked people of the day were totally consumed with doing evil. It was their total purpose in life. Walking with God is the same and the opposite at the same time. It is the same in that it is a totally life-consuming purpose. It is different in that object of that purpose or devotion is God.

In the midst of a crooked and perverse world, Noah walked with God. He trained his sons to walk with God. We see later that even though they were married men, those sons followed their father and the God of their father right into the ark. Noah trained his sons to do what was right regardless of what everyone around them was doing.

As a result, God told Noah to make an ark, with specific instructions on how to do it. We again see how Noah's walk with God made the difference.

Genesis 6:17-18 ~ And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

God was preparing to destroy all living things. Yet, Noah's faith saved him. Again we see the three-letter-world-changer. Because of that faith, God said, "But with thee will I establish my covenant." Noah and his family had a different fate because of his faith.

It had never rained, but Noah believed what God said and took action, building the ark that saved him and his family. True faith brings action, obedience. That is another article, though.

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

Genesis 7:5 ~ And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him.

Read the above two verses carefully. Notice an important aspect of Noah's walk with God. Remember, walking with God does not mean to just read one's Bible and pray for fifteen minutes a day. It means to be totally consumed with doing what God wants. Noah did ALL that God commanded him.

A number of years ago a person who had very little musical training was directing a choir. She was struggling with a number of things and came to me for advice. I was somewhat familiar with the situation and gave her a list of five things she should do in succession. I told her that if she did those things, the particular song she was asking about would go great. She thanked me for my advice and promptly did the first thing. All was looking good, so she did the second thing followed by the third thing. At that point she got cold feet and became concerned that maybe I had not been right. She failed to follow through with the final two points I had told her to do. When the choir sang the song, it did not go as the director had hoped. She came back to me and informed me that my suggestions had not worked. What was my response? She did NOT DO ALL five things I had told her to do. Partway did not work. She needed to do all.

In two separate verses, God makes a point of letting us know that Noah did ALL God told him to do.

We may not understand everything God is doing in our lives. Why am I going through this trial? Couldn't I just do thus and so to make life easier? Won't my children turn away from God when they see people of the world having life so easy and we are struggling?

We must do ALL God tells us to do. Obeying partway won't work. Do it all.

Genesis 8:20 ~ And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

When Noah and his family left the ark, they worshipped. Under the new covenant, we are not to offer burnt sacrifice, but we must worship. We must thank God for what He is doing in our lives. We must adore Him for Who He is. We must tell Him that we love Him and want to do all that He desires.

Noah was not a perfect man. We see that clearly when we read that he became drunk on the wine from his vineyard. Yet, even in that story we see something interesting regarding his parenting.

Genesis 9:24 ~ And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.

How did Noah know what Ham had done? Did Shem or Japheth tell him? I don't believe so. Noah spent time discipling his children as they were growing up. That is why they still trusted God and followed God and their father. There is another benefit, though, to spending time with one's children. A father, or a mother, gets to know their children. They know the personalities of each child. They know the likes and dislikes of each child. They know which one wants to please and which one will push the limits.

So it was with Noah. He knew his sons so that when he awoke and realized he was covered, he knew what had transpired.

Don't despair of the world around us.

Romans 5:20 ~ Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

God's grace is available all the more to get us through this dark world. Don't look at Noah as someone who was so super spiritual we could not possibly be like him. He was a man just like we are. Noah changed the course of history by walking with God when literally no one else was. (Don't you think God would have saved others if they had also been walking with God?) We can not say we are in the same position as Noah.

Trust God. Ask Him to lead you and give you grace to obey Him in all things. Then, no matter how bleak things look, people may say, "Wow, the world is really sinful, but, Tim" or "But Mary," or "But (insert your name)."

You can do it.