



## BELLVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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# Noah

## Genesis 6: 9 & 8:22

~ Brent Russell ~

### Read Genesis 6:9- 8:22

- This is the story of **Noah and his ark**
- A wonderful story **taught to children** year after year at Sunday School
- Other than **Adam and Eve** this is perhaps the most **universally known** Judeo-Christian story
- **But also one that presents some worries and complications especially to people outside of the faith**
  
- **Some of the difficulties some people have with the scriptures is the unlikelihood of some of the events having happened**
- **Simply they find it hard to believe that the events recorded in the Old Testament happened the way the Bible says they did**
  
- **Almost all Christians including ministers and theologians have some questions about some parts of the Bible**
- For those who know the **author of the Bible - God**, some of these problems are easy to understand or shall I say **easy to make peace with**
  - **Firstly when we know Jesus, we understand that he is a worker of miracles and so the impossible is possible with Him – If He can raise the dead then a flood is possible too**
  - **Secondly when we know Jesus parts of the Bible that are just confusing no longer bother us because we trust Him and believe that in time He will help us to understand them**
  
- Of all the parts of the Old Testament that people have difficulty believing, the story of **Noah perhaps ranks as the toughest nut to crack**
- **Perhaps more than any other, there are some difficulties understanding this story in the light of modern thinking – or so some people seem to believe**

- Now I **don't want to get into a theological debate** but let me share with you two things that may put your mind at rest if you do have questions about Noah:

### **Every culture or religion has some account of this event**

- Noah we believe had to repopulate the world
- And so every culture should have some record of Him not just the Judeo-Christian faith
- And this is in fact the case
- In **Asia**: Thailand, China, and Vietnam have stories of a flood with variations of people being saved in an ark with animals
- In **Australia and Pacific**: Aborigines have a story of a flood sent by God because of mans wickedness. The Hawaiians believe in a man called Nu-u who was saved from the flood and God sent the rainbow as a promise
- In **America**: Alaskans believe that father of their people built a raft after God had warned Him on which he saved his family and the animals
- In **Europe**: The druids recorded that the earth was purified by a flood except for a man and his family on a barge. The Greeks have a flood tradition
- In **Africa**: Egyptians believe the Gods destroyed the earth with a flood. And even to this day lake Chad is known locally as the 'Lake of Noah'
- If all these cultures stem from Noah as we believe from the Bible then they should have some recollection about Him
- And so it is clear that almost every worldwide culture has some tradition or myth about a worldwide deluge anthropologists have collect around 300 of these accounts from around the world

### **Geology clear evidence for a worldwide flood**

- Science itself tells us that the earth was indeed covered at some point by a worldwide flood
- The geological evidence is absolutely clear
- And so even scientists must admit that there are parts of the story that they have to acknowledge happened

- **So whilst I am not going to give an exhaustive list of answers to the questions that have been posed over time by sceptics**
- **Trust God**
- **Perhaps these two points may put to rest some of the questions that you might have in your mind concerning the validity of the story of Noah**
- **We are not holding onto some religious legend, but a real account of a man, His family and God**
- So let's get to the story...

- **God has created humanity to worship and love Him**
- We exist because **God desired to share life with us**
- He wanted to **love and to be loved** in return
- **A desire that we all have because we are created in God's image**
- But to give us the ability to love Him, God has given to us also then the ability to **choose to love Him or not to love Him**
- To make something that loves because it can do no other is not to get love but to get subservience
- And so **God has to give to us the ability to choose** between good and evil for it to be love at all
- **And so as mankind develops, multiplies and expands so to does the wealth of evil spawned from our inbuilt ability to have free will**
- **Even after the flood in Genesis 9:21 God acknowledges that our hearts desire is to do evil even from childhood**
  
- And so as we come to the story of Noah we find humanity in such an **appalling state that God is ready to unleash fury unlike anything seen before or since**
- **The violence and evil that people are up to has gotten to the point where God has to put a stop to it and restart**
  
- **The danger is there that humanity may destroy itself**
  
- **And so God sets Noah the task of Literally saving the world**
- And so to echo the passage in Johns gospel Jesus says **"I will build my church and the gates of hell will not overcome it"**
- **The ark like the church protects the righteous from the coming destruction**
  
- **This is not a pretty story**
- We have spared some of the horror when speaking of it to our children
- But we all saw the shocking footage of the **Tsunami** and the devastation it wreaked
- The **destruction** of land and buildings
- **The people swept away and destroyed**
- It was almost as if we had been transported back thousands of years and where watching the great flood itself
- **I believe the heart of this frightening story is a man who trusted God**

- **Life for all of us will end at some time**
- Some of us may have **some warning** about the end
- Some of us will die quite **suddenly**
- **But like taxes death is an unavoidable reality of life on earth**
- And if we have a **tombstone or a memorial plaque** on it will stand two dates separated by a dash
- **Born 12<sup>th</sup> Feb 1936 – died 24<sup>th</sup> July 2005**
- But the dash is our life – the once off chance to achieve what we can in the years between birth and death
- **And for Noah he has made these years count**
- **Have you ever wondered what your funeral will be like?**
- **What will people say about you?**
- Who will say the **eulogies**, will they say **nice things** about you or will they have **very little to say** at all
- Noah's story is about making life count no matter what the cost
- You get one life – make it count for everything we can
- **I believe that almost all people want to make life count**
- Unless there is something wrong with someone, they want to **leave a legacy** that will last for many years
- **We want people to say nice things about us when we die**
- **We want people to talk about us for many, many years**
- **Perhaps more than anything else those who are part of the Christian faith want to do something for God**
  
- **Noah desired the same things we all desire– he wanted to make his life count**
- He realized even long before God revealed to him the forthcoming flood that there was a **bigger picture** to life
- **And so God uses Noah to literally save the world**
- **And here several thousand years later we recount His story again**

- **Why Noah?**
- **Why are some used so mightily by God and others seem to achieve so little?**
- **Desmond Tutu, Mother Theresa, Martin Luther, Paul, David, Abraham**
- There are some **characteristics that God desires** in us if he is going to do something with us
- Well, there are **five characteristics** about Noah that caused God to bless Him
- Five qualities that God used to make His life count – there are others too that others have exhibited but let's stick to these five from the text

## **1. Noah was a man of character**

- **In verse 9 of chapter six we read that Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time**
- If the people in the area were **voting for mayor** Noah was your man
- A man of real character, upright, good with a impeccable reputation
- **It is hard at times to find people**, sometimes even in the church who are godly characters
- **People of high integrity and people of honour**
- And so often God does not use us simply because we do not have the character to handle the job he wants to give to us
- **Ever wonder why God does not use you for mighty things, perhaps your character is lacking**
- **I recall a friend of mine who desperately wanted to be able to do a miracle**
- He prayed and prayed
- Eventually one evening on his balcony he looked at a hill just in front of his house and pleaded with God
- "You said if we have faith we can move mountains into the sea, so I just want to move this hill 6 inches to the left"
- "Just six inches"
- And all of a sudden he had a deep sense in his spirit of God saying to Him
- "Your character is just not strong enough yet to handle that kinda job"
- **2 Timothy 2:21** If a man cleanses himself from evil, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.
- **Noah simply put was a man who had godly character and so was used by God**
- If you allow God to create in you a new heart
- **Literally to give you a new character then you will see how he will use you in mighty ways as he used Noah**

## 2. Noah Walked with God

- **Again in vs. 9 We read that Noah walked with God**
- The language here speaks to me of **deep intimacy** with God
- If I close my eyes I see **two close friends strolling through a forest**
- **Talking, reflecting and playfully jousting with each other as they discuss life and it's marvellous complexity**
- A simple **familiarity** with each other and their uniqueness
- A **ease and a comfort** of gentle conversation
- There are only two people in the scriptures of whom it is said they walked with God and that is **Enoch and Noah**
- **Men who had an intimacy and a friendship with God**
- One day someone might say of me
- **"Well Brent, he climbed mountains"**
- **Or of Rod "Well, he liked food"**
- **"Noah he walked with God"**
- The truth be told it would be AWESOME to have it said of you "They walked with God"
- A kind of "don't get too close to that person you never know what might happen – 'cause they walk with God"
- **A deep and profound nearness of God to Noah**
- And it is not so hard to do really
- The truth be told we could all walk so much nearer to God
- Yet as I look at the lives of people we seem to do everything we can to avoid walking with God
- **We fill every day, hour and moment with so many things and we find little time to wander with God**
- **To walk with Him and to learn his ways**
- **To talk and debate with Him seeking wisdom and truth**
- Talk about **daydreaming** with God

## 3. Noah was obedient to God

- **The essence of all of these chapters on the life of Noah speaks volumes about his obedience to God**
- The commands that God gives about building the ark are exact
- **I am not sure that Noah had ever built a boat before, but I am pretty sure that no one including Noah had built a boat of this scale before**
- And he builds it to the dimensions that God gives to him
- Simple obedience

- But for the most part all we find it hard to be obedient to God even in the little things
- Or the basic things
- **We struggle to honour our parents or to not covet our neighbours stuff**
- **We struggle to pray regularly, or to read our scriptures**
- **And yet somehow we are surprised that God is not doing something mighty in our lives**
- **Let me give you a challenge**
- I promise you that you will see God do awesome things in your life in 6 weeks
- **Bio slim promises you can lose 15kg in 6 weeks**
- **We I promise you that God will do awesome things in your life in just six weeks**
- If you are **obedient in the small things** of life for just six weeks
- **Pray regularly, read your Bible daily, resist temptation**
- Just listen to God's commands for 6 weeks you will begin to see God do things in you and with you that you have never thought possible
- Test me with this
- Obedience is why God chose Noah
- Noah had been obedient before the flood with the basics of righteous living and so God knew when it came to the crunch or should I say when it came to the splash
- **That he could trust Noah because with obedience in little things Noah had proven himself worthy of the big things too**

#### 4. Noah understood the priority of Worship

- Talk to each other for a moment to answer this question
- **You have been cooped up in the ark for more than a year with smelly animals, little ventilation and just your family for company, no TV or radio**
- The food is pretty basic, the accommodation cramped the weather appalling
- The **six rabbits, mice and rats** are now six hundred strong
- Can you imagine the mess?
- After more than a year you finally step out of the ark onto dry land, what would you do first?
- **I'd probably climb a mountain**
- **Noah builds an altar and worships God**
- **In Chapter 8 vs 20 we read: "Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it."**
- He gets off the ark and worships God
- He understands the priority that worship plays in His life

- We spoke many times over the last months about how we are designed for worship
- And how we will always worship something
- **Well, Noah has chosen to make the centre of his life God and he worships God**
- **All of his action throughout all the records we have of His life point to the fact Noah built his life around God**
- **And the fact that the first recorded action he does after getting off the ark is to worship God give us insight into why God would choose him**

## 5. Noah took risks

- Finally Noah was ready to take a risk for God
- **Can you imagine one morning eating breakfast**
- Coffee in one hand paper in the other when all of a sudden a booming voice echoes through the house
- **"Brent I am going to destroy the earth. Build a spaceship and save the animals and your family"**
- You must be joking?
- **Well God thankfully does not always want us to take those kind of risks**
- But he does ask to take many other kinds of risks
- He may not be asking you to build a 450 foot long wooden barge
- But he may be asking to **apologise to someone who you have hurt** – asking you to risk your pride in the name of reconciliation
- He may be asking you to **tell a friend about Jesus** - risking the very friendship for someone's salvation
- He may be asking you to **spend big money** to help a poor person have a house
- He may be asking you to **change jobs** – risking every bit of security to find true purpose in life
- He may be asking you to be a **minister or missionary** – risking the ridicule of friends and family for ordination
- He definitely is asking each and every one of us again follow Jesus – take the risk of trusting Him and He will give you life in abundance and all the inheritance of heaven
- **Be a person of character**
- **Be a person who walks with God**
- **Be a person who is obedient in all things**
- **Be a person who puts a priority on worship**
- **Be a person who is prepared to take risks for God**
- **And God will use to do great and mighty things**
- **He used Noah because Noah's life exhibited these characteristics - seek them and God will use you too**