

NOAH—CARPENTER, PREACHER, AND OBEDIENT PATRIARCH

Presented by

Blake Brown

Genesis chapters 3 and 4 must surely be among the saddest chapters in the Bible. In Genesis 3 we see Adam and Eve introducing sin into our world, and losing their precious covenant relationship with God as a result. In Genesis 4 we see Adam and Eve's son, Cain, killing his brother Abel. In the New Testament, the apostle John referred to Cain as "the wicked one," and then asked, "Why did he murder Abel?" The answer John gave was, "Because his works were evil, and his brother's were righteous" (1 John 3:12). After Cain's murderous act against his own flesh and blood, he moved to the land of Nod where he lived in exile and spawned a group of people who were every bit as evil as he was. Jude, in the New Testament letter that he wrote, warned his readers to beware of those who have "gone in the way of Cain" (Jude 11).

While all of that was happening, Adam and Eve had another son, Seth. Genesis 4:26 informs us that after Seth's birth, "men began to call on the name of the Lord." Like two separate streams, the groups of people that arose from Seth and Cain flowed along side by side for more than a thousand years. Eventually, however, the righteous descendants of Seth began to intermarry with the wicked descendants of Cain. Genesis 6:2 tells us that "the sons of God [a phrase used to describe the righteous] saw that the daughters of men [a phrase used to describe the wicked] were beautiful, and took wives for themselves of all whom they chose." These marriages eventually gave rise to people who found themselves in total rebellion against God, as described in Genesis 6:5-7.

"Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the Lord said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping things, and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.'"

There was, however, one man who had refused to participate in the evil that was swirling all around him. His name was Noah. Genesis 6:8-9 says simply that "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He was a just man, blameless in his generations, and walked with God." When the Bible tells us that Noah was "just," it means that he exhibited genuine honesty—a trait that apparently was in short supply in his day and age. When the Bible tells us that Noah was "blameless in his generations," it means that he had a complete, well-rounded relationship with God. When the Bible tells us that Noah "walked with God," it means that he was totally and completely loyal to God, just as Abraham was as "the friend of God" (James 2:23). As a result of Noah's faithfulness, God said to him in Genesis 6:13,

"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. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the

door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks. And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive. And you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather it to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them."

Genesis 6:22 then says simply, "Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did."

One chapter later, in Genesis 7:20-21, we read that "the flood waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward above the highest mountains. All flesh died that moved on the earth—birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man."

In the New Testament, the apostle Peter wrote that "God saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly" (2 Peter 2:5). The Bible informs us that Noah was 500 years old when God gave him the instructions for the ark, and 600 years old when he went into the ark. This would seem to indicate that Noah preached to the people of his generation for something close to 100 years while the ark was under construction. Yet for all his preaching, Noah's only "converts" appear to have been members of his own family unit. Nevertheless, Noah faithfully carried out the instructions that God had given him. And as a result, he and his family were spared the death and destruction that came upon every other living creature outside the ark.

In our Sunday-morning Bible class on "a journey through the Old Testament," Tyler and I have studied the detailed directions that God gave Noah in Genesis 6-8 regarding the construction of the ark. We also have studied the intricate instructions that God gave Moses in Exodus 25-30 concerning the construction and use of the tabernacle, which the people of Israel used in their worship of God during their time in the wilderness after leaving Egypt. During our examination of these historical events, we have come to realize three important things.

- First, God always has a specific purpose in mind whenever He issues a command. In short, God says what He means and means what He says. In Isaiah 55:11 God said, "My word that goes forth from My mouth shall not return to Me void, but shall accomplish that which I intend, and shall prosper in the purpose for which I sent it."
- Second, those people who carried out God's instructions to the letter were counted as faithful, and as a result they received the Lord's blessings. As God Himself said, "Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people; walk only in the way that I command you so that it may be well with you" (Jeremiah 7:23).
- Third, those individuals who ignored God's commands or varied from His instructions ended up having to endure His wrath. In Leviticus 26:27 God told the Israelites, "If you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I will chastise you for your sins." The millions of people who died in the Flood, and the thousands of Israelites who died in the wilderness because of their sins against God, provide ample evidence concerning the terrible consequences of disobeying the Lord, do they not?

In Deuteronomy 11:26-27 God said, “Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse—a blessing if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you today, and a curse if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God.” It is clear from that statement that **the type of relationship we have with God is entirely up to us**. We can choose to be like Cain, whom the Bible refers to as “the wicked one.” Or, we can choose to be like Noah and Abraham who “walked with God.” Considering what is at stake, that is not a difficult choice, is it?