

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
Paul Gunn, Pastor

Sermon Title: By Faith: Noah, Hebrews 11:7

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INTRODUCTION: Today, I want to start with a review of Hebrews:

- We don't know the author.
- Jews were the intended audience—
 - a. Who were considering leaving the faith
 - b. Or, needed encouragement.
- And, all these years later, Hebrews fulfills the same roles. Those who are considering leaving the faith should take Hebrews seriously. Those who need encouragement in the faith should take Hebrews seriously.

We've been in this a long time, and hopefully you've learned a lot. I appreciate when people tell me what they've learned or new thoughts they've had. I really appreciate the encouragement.

Now, we've made it to Hebrews 11, the great Hall of Faith. And, here's a review of where we've been on the Chapter 11 journey. Verses 1 and 2 tell us what faith is, and honestly, these two verses are very hard to understand in the abstract way they are written and understood.

Then we studied about Abel and how his offering pleased God. And, we looked at Enoch and how he pleased God. Now, we've come to Enoch's great-grandson, Noah.

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 11:7 Look in verse 7: *By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteous that comes by faith.*

EXPLANATION: I don't know about previous generations, but in my generation, we've turned Noah into a story for children. It's as if he's been "fable-ized."

Probably the average person on the street doesn't know anything of Noah as a person the Bible but more of a story in children's fiction. I heard there was a movie about Noah last year, which had nothing to do with the biblical account.

But, let's take a new look at Noah today as the man that he was:

1. How do we know Noah was a man of faith? Because, he lived out his faith.
2. How do we know Noah was a man of faith? Because, he lived in holy fear.
3. How do we know Noah was a man of faith? Because, he condemned the world.
4. How do we know Noah was a man of faith? Because, he condemned the world.

READ SCRIPTURE: Genesis 6:5-7:5

First, HOW DO WE KNOW NOAH WAS A MAN OF FAITH? BECAUSE, HE LIVED OUT HIS FAITH.

SCRIPTURE: Look back at Hebrews 11:1 *¹Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*

EXPLANATION: Noah understood this verse although it had not yet been written. You see, he lived out a life of faith. He lived out his faith years before he heard this message from God. Without a Bible to guide him, without a Sunday School where he would learn, without a pastor who he could hear preach, Noah was a man of faith.

But, his faith goes back further than his adulthood to when he was a child.

When we look at the Biblical report as to how long these people lived, it is quite incredible. I've heard a few theories these years weren't real years as we measure them. But, I don't hear anything convincing in those theories.

I did some math from the people listed and their ages from Genesis Chapter 5, and it appears at the time when Noah was born, many of the previous generations from his family tree were still alive...his father and his grandfather. His great-grandfather Enoch was gone, but there were four greats before Enoch which were still alive.

Second, HOW DO WE KNOW NOAH WAS A MAN OF FAITH? BECAUSE, HE LIVED IN HOLY FEAR.

So, Noah no doubt heard about great-grandfather Enoch's disappearance. He had heard that great-grandfather, Enoch, walked with God, and then one day, he was no more. He heard God took Enoch because he pleased him. The legacy of Enoch was alive and well. And, along with this, Noah had the privilege of being schooled in the oral tradition of those who were still alive.

This "holy fear" means a healthy respect for the holy.

I have to tell you that stories handed down generation-by-generation can instill such holy fear in a child that he or she will never shake from it. Probably none of us here today have written family stories. What we tell our kids becomes part of the oral tradition...a story passed from one generation to the next. I know almost nothing of my grandparent's faith backgrounds, but my parents told me a lot about theirs'. Make sure you tell your children, your grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and your great-great- grandchildren about how God has blessed you...Tell them true stories, which will instill holy fear in them.

ILLUSTRATION: One time, I preached at the rescue mission, and I said, "Some of you know the truth, and you have parents that are praying for you." When I said this, one man turned his head away. I felt this man had a holy fear and was running from it.

Noah's holy fear led him to actually believe God's instructions to build an ark were to be taken seriously. And, the Bible spells out how he did it.

APPLICATION: I wonder if any of us live daily in holy fear, in the reality of serious respect and reverence, and in awe of God. No doubt, he works with us all in different ways, doesn't he? I've thought a lot about Noah when I was laboring for something I believed in. Noah, as he labored, building a massive boat on dry land, in spite of the insults he heard constantly, remained faithful. And, when all around him were drowning, he and his family were saved.

Third, HOW DO WE KNOW NOAH WAS A MAN OF FAITH? BECAUSE, HE CONDEMNED THE WORLD.

EXPLANATION: What in the world does this mean? It means his faith revealed the world's sin and unbelief. It's hard to believe in such an early world, much closer

to the very beginning than we are today, the whole world was corrupt. By now, any of Noah's godly extended family had died. The only ones who believed were his wife, his sons, and their wives.

I thought about the families of the son's wives. None of them believed. Their relatives must have thought the girls had married into a family of kooks...a family of morons...all focused around the construction of one man's lunacy of building a large boat. II Peter 2 tells us he was a preacher of righteousness, so as Noah reminded faithful during the construction period, he also preached. But, no one outside his family believed.

ILLUSTRATION: Can you imagine a life dedicated to preaching and gaining no converts? I wonder what would happen to a pastor of any Baptist church who had no response to any of his sermons year after year even though he preached what God wanted him to preach. I know the answer to that question and suffice it to say, it's a good thing Noah wasn't a Baptist preacher!

EXPLANATION: When we read Noah condemned the world, it sounds harsh doesn't it? But it was his faith which proved everyone else wrong, revealed their sin, and proved Noah had been right all the time.

Fourth, HOW DO WE KNOW NOAH WAS A MAN OF FAITH? BECAUSE HE WAS THE HEIR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS [according to Hebrews 11:7].

EXPLANATION: If someone is an heir, it means the person has inherited something. In Noah's case, he inherited righteousness. What an inheritance to receive. I don't think I understand this fully, but let me explain it as best I can.

Noah was saved by grace, through faith. And, his faith became active. That action took the form of preaching and construction. He became completely wrapped up in these two things to the point it completely consumed him.

His holy fear of God's justice and judgement fueled him to be faithful. While he preached righteousness, which would have included God's hate of sin and salvation through belief, he constructed the object which provided salvation from God's judgement.

And, when Noah and family and all the animals were on the ark, God closed it, according to Genesis 7:16. And, when God closed it, the previous decades of Noah's preaching and construction condemned the world.

CONCLUSION: So, there we have it, Noah, the third person listed as faithful in Hebrews 11.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 24:36-38 [The Bible says in Matthew 24] ³⁶"*But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.* ³⁷*For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.* ³⁸*For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.*

And so, we come once again to decision time. Noah gave warnings. I am giving warnings. In Noah's day, there was only one person giving warnings, him. Today there are many, many people giving warnings. How many listened to Noah outside of his own family? None. How many are listening today?

Jesus is going to return when people least expect it. I picture those people who heard Noah preach for years and years. They disregarded his message, and some probably said, "I'll wait until the water comes and then I'll believe." When the rain started, it was too late.

As in the days of Noah...today, here we are, all these centuries later. It's as if we've gone back in time and are living as in the days of Noah. May God have mercy on us as a country, and may we be prepared for Jesus' return.

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Thanks to Judy Andrews and Nancy Claire Smith for their editing assistance.

Sincerely, Paul Gunn
Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
Nashville, Tennessee
USA