

On the Beginning

12. The Grace of God

NOTE ESPECIALLY Genesis 6:7-22

After 1,656 years, mankind was to be judged and destroyed by their holy Creator. They had “*corrupted*” themselves to such a degree that God was going to wipe out the human race. However, there was an exception to this generalization. The exception was Noah and his family.

“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. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.” (Genesis 6:8-10)

The New Testament says of this great man,

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” (Hebrews 11:7)

In Noah’s story (Genesis 5:28 - 9:29) the Bible introduces us to the concept of the grace of God. It was the “*grace*” that Noah found in God’s eyes that spared his life, the life of his family, and the human race through him. Grace fundamentally means “favor,” but in God’s Word it has the special meaning of God showing favor to people who don’t deserve it. Look at these classic passages about God’s grace: Psalm 84:11-12; Proverbs 3:34; Zechariah 4:6-7; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24; Romans 5:1-2; Galatians 2:20-21; Ephesians 2:8-9. As it did for Noah, the grace of God comes to people through faith.

1. Grace Made Noah Righteous.

In Genesis 6:8-9, Noah is not only described as having “*found grace in the eyes of the LORD*,” but also as “*a just man*.” The Hebrew word translated “*just*” here is the usual term for being righteous. As a matter of fact, the same word is translated “*righteous*” in Genesis 7:1.

“And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.”

How a man can be considered righteous before God is one of the most important questions of the Bible. Job asked,

“... but how should man be just with God?” (Job 9:2)

The normal answer in the human mind is that men are righteous in God’s eyes when they do right things. But there is a big problem with this idea.

“For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.” (Ecclesiastes 7:20)

Nobody does right all the time, and therefore nobody is righteous in the sight of a holy God on the basis of his own actions. The Bible teaches that God regards men as righteous based on His own righteousness.

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested,

being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Romans 3:20-26)

By God’s grace (See Romans 4:4-5), man is justified by faith in Jesus Christ and what He did for us on the Cross (Romans 3:28). Even before Jesus came, men (like Noah) were righteous in God’s sight if they had their faith in God to provide for their salvation through the coming Savior. Noah wasn’t just because he was sinless; he was justified by God’s grace through faith.

2. Grace Enabled Noah to Be Perfect.

Both in the Old and in the New Testaments, the word “*perfect*” in reference to a man means “complete.” It doesn’t mean the man is sinless. However, it does indicate that a believer can live a spiritually mature and holy life. The grace of God makes it possible. Noah was both righteous before God (justified) and upright in his behavior. Justification by God’s grace through man’s faith will save a man from his sins, and sanctification by the believer’s faith in God’s grace will give him a holy life. Justification will get you to Heaven, and sanctification will spare you the earthly consequences of bad behavior. We should all seek both.

3. Grace Allowed Noah to Walk With God.

Like his great-grandfather Enoch (Genesis 5:22-24), Noah “*walked with God*” (Genesis 6:9). Fellowship with God is the secret to happiness.

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.” (1 John 1:3-4)

Such fellowship is possible only by the Lord’s grace. Justifying grace along with enabling grace and grace to forgive sins upon confession (1 John 1:5-9) give us the opportunity to walk with God every day.

4. Grace Selected Noah to Save Mankind.

Because of his standing before God, Noah was chosen to preserve the human race by saving his family from the Flood. He was to build “*an ark*” of enormous size (vs. 14-16). It was an air-tight, oblong box designed to float on the turbulent waters of the Flood. The word for ark does not necessarily mean a boat—it was a big box. The God-given plans for the ark say much about salvation.

- a. It had many rooms, just as our Father’s House has many “*mansions*” (John 14:2).
- b. It was pitched with “*pitch*,” the Hebrew word which refers to atonement.
- c. It was big enough to contain specimens of all the types of animals in the world: 1,400,000 cubic feet in volume! God’s love and Christ’s sacrifice are big enough to save the whole world!
- d. It had a window looking Heavenward.
- e. It had one door, like our Savior, Who is “*the Door*” (John 10:9).
- f. God made a “*covenant*” with those chosen to ride out the Flood inside it, like God’s New Covenant with believers (vs. 17-18).
- g. Noah obeyed God and worked hard to save his family, just as we are to obey Him about working to save ours (vs. 19-22, Acts 16:30-34, Hebrews 11:7).