

Text: Heb. 11:7

Title: "By faith Noah prepared an ark"

Time: 3/20/2016 am

Place: NBBC

Intro - It is popular today to deny the biblical account of Noah's flood. It was popular in Noah's day not to board the ark and to deny that the flood was coming.

Some of you may remember a couple of years ago (Feb 2014) the great debate between Ken Ham of Answers in Genesis and Bill Nye, PBS's self-described "Science Guy," about young-earth creationism vs. big-bang-to-man evolutionism. I am told that some 5 million people watched that debate, and I was one of those 5 million. What caught my eye, and honestly concerned me a bit at the time, was an argument against the global flood that Nye made by referring to a tree in Sweden that he claimed had been dated to be about 9500 years old. He rightly observed, I thought, that a global flood some 5500 years or so ago should have wiped that tree out.

Well, it turns out that it is actually the root system of the tree that, with radiometric dating methods, calculates to 9500 years old. The trunk and branches of the tree actually die out every 600 years or so, and then they regenerate and grow anew. All of a sudden, it was easier for me to see how a tree like that could survive the cataclysmic global flood described in the Bible. That missing detail in Nye's presentation was an important one. His strongest argument against the flood communicated to that huge audience that evening was at best based on a colossal misunderstanding, and at worse was a deceptive form of manipulative lying. It is hard to imagine how a scientist like Nye could have missed a detail like that about that tree.

The author of Hebrews not only believed that the biblical account of Noah's flood is true, but also that the biblical account of Noah's faith is critical to our lives today. We are called to be faithful like Noah was faithful. As we examine this next exhibit in the Hebrews 11 Hall of Faith, I want us to notice four things about Noah's faith that should also be true about ours.

I. Noah's faith responded with reverence to God's revelation (v. 7; "being warned of God . . . moved with fear").

III: Ken Ham's central argument in that debate with Dr. Nye focused on the nature of the question being debated. He emphasized that choosing between young-earth creationism and big-bang-to-man evolutionism is really a religious question that requires faith in the word of an authority. Young-earth creationists believe the biblical record of creation found in Genesis 1-2. Big-bang-to-man evolutionists believe the interpretations of evolutionary scientists who are committed to certain philosophical presuppositions, like the idea that all reality is material or physical, and that it can all be reduced to scientific explanations (scientific reductionism). Nye argued that forensic scientists today examine evidence and are able to determine scientifically what happened in the past. But here again, no forensic scientist would purport to be able to solve a crime that happened billions of years ago, another detail missing in Nye's logic.

Appl: When Noah built his ark, he did so with a specific response to the authority of God's revelation – by faith he was moved with fear. The word translated *being warned of God* refers in the New Testament to a work of God's authoritative revelation to man. Wise men experienced this in a dream and were warned against returning to Herod (Matt.

2:12). Joseph received direction in Egypt to bring his family to Galilee in a similar manner (Matt. 2:22). Simeon in the temple had been told that he would not see death until he had seen the Messiah – Christ (Luke 2:26), and it was revealed to Cornelius by an angel that he should send for Peter (Acts 10:22). This word is used in all of these passages.

It is also used in Rom. 7:3, “she *shall be called* an adulteress.” Paul here says that a woman who is married and sleeps with another man is literally *revealed to be* an adulteress, and he mentioned that this revelation comes to us from our Bibles – the law (vv. 1-2; specifically, the seventh commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery”). So our Bibles are a revelation from God to us, just like Noah received revelation from God about the coming flood. How did Noah respond? He was moved with fear. He revered what he heard. This idea is repeated when it comes to our worship of the Lord (Heb. 12:28-29).

III: Failure to listen can be a troubling form of disrespect. You ever have to tell a child, “Look at me when I am talking to you?” You ever ask a question and not get a timely response, and then have to repeat that question? Have you had to ask a third time? How did you feel after time number three? Well, if you are normal, you felt disrespected.

Before the Word of God, Noah showed great respect. He listened and was moved with fear. What must be said about our response to our Bibles – the reading and study of the Word of God and the preaching and teaching of the Word of God? Do we respond to our Bibles with godly fear? Or can we take it or leave it? Are we neglectful of the reading and studying of God’s Word and the preaching and teaching of God’s Word? We need Noah’s faith. No-

ah's faith responded with reverence, not neglect, to God's revelation, and it changed the course of his life.

II. Noah's faith saw unseen things that save (v. 7; "of things not seen as yet. . . prepared an ark to the saving of his house").

III: You ever say to yourself, "Boy, I wish I had a nickel for every time someone asked me that"? I imagine that presidential candidate John Kasich says to himself at times, "Boy, I wish I had a nickel for every time someone asked me why I am still in this race." I am sure that would make him a very rich man.

Appl: Well, I imagine there were days in Noah's life as he built that ark that he said to himself, "Boy, I wish I had a nickel for every time someone asked me what I am doing?" Can you hear it? "Noah, what in the world are you doing?" That is a question that faithful believers have always heard. What are you doing here this morning? What are you doing in a church like that? What are you doing giving that up? What are you doing wasting your time serving so much? What are you doing telling me that again?

Noah's answer was simple: "I am doing this because I see things unseen that can save." Noah saw the coming flood, and he saw how the ark was needed to save people from that flood. This was his faith, and it was not shared by many others. As believers, the Holy Spirit has used the Word of God to open our eyes to see the unseen, the reality of our sin and of God's coming judgment upon our sins. And He has told us about the ark that can save us and anyone else who will come with us - Jesus Christ, God's Son who became a man, died as a sinless sacrifice for our sins, and rose again victorious over the grave.

Jesus Himself spoke of Noah's representation of these unseen saving realities in Matt. 24:36-39: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah 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 Noah 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." That chapter ends predicting weeping and gnashing of teeth for those who are not ready for this second coming of Christ. Are you ready? Do you see it coming? Are you safely on the ark? Do you have Christ as your Savior, so that you can look forward to His return? Noah's faith saw unseen things that save. Do you have that saving faith?

III. Noah's faith condemned the world (v. 7; "by the which he condemned the world").

Ill: There are many signs in our world today that things are getting worse, not better, spiritually speaking. Abortion proliferates, unchecked even by those horrific videos that were made public. Drug addiction in our state is an epidemic. The institution of marriage is crumbling under the weight of infidelity, divorce, and homosexuality. Bible-believing churches are filled with apathy, and false churches and Islam are on the rise. Pornography proliferates aided by modern technologies, so much so that the Republican frontrunner for the presidency happens also to be the first to bring a strip club to casinos in Atlantic City. Few have been qualified to appear on the Howard Stern show like he has. The Democratic frontrunner is under federal investigation for serious violations of the law. One of these two will probably be our next president.

Appl: Well, in so far as the spiritual condition of our day continues to worsen, it is becoming more and more like the day in which Noah was called to be faithful. Gen. 6:5 describes that world, "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." Our text tells us that Noah's faith condemned that world. There is a sense in which it was not the world's sin that condemned them.

Did you notice that Jesus, in His description of Noah's day, never mentions their sin? He only says that they failed to heed Noah's warning and get into the ark. That is what condemned them. It was Noah's faith that built the ark that provided salvation. The phrase *by the which* grammatically can refer to any of those three things: Noah's faith, the ark, or the salvation. They all go together. It is the rejection of these things that brought condemnation on Noah's world.

The same will be true for our world. Ultimately, it will not be condemned for its sin. It will be condemned for its failure to get into the ark of salvation – Jesus Christ. We must be faithful witnesses to the truth that Jesus Christ is this dark world's hope of salvation. That witness will not return void. Even if rejected, it will condemn the world. But if we fail to be faithful witnesses, we shall have blood on our hands. Imagine Noah building his ark in secret for only his family. How often do we fail to share the gospel that way?

IV. Noah's faith justified Noah (v. 7; "and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith").

Appl: Paul writes in Rom. 5:1, "Therefore, being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The Bible is very clear from cover to cover – a man

is made righteous by faith, not by works. We are told in Genesis that Noah was just or righteous (Gen. 6:9). Paul and the author of Hebrews tell us that Noah's righteousness came to him by faith. Like Abraham, he believed God, and it was counted righteousness for him.

And we are also told that those who are declared righteous this way are heirs. The book of Hebrews teaches that Christ is the heir of all things (1:2), and so are those who have received God's covenantal promises by faith (6:12). Esau failed to inherit God's blessing on his life because he had no faith and he did not repent of his sin (12:17). Noah's faith justified Noah; it made him righteous; and it made him a joint-heir with Christ, the Heir of all things.

Conclusion: Faith is just believing what God says He will do. We learn from Noah that it involves a reverent response to God's Word. Do you have faith to treat the reading, teaching, and preaching of God's Word with godly fear? Or have you been faithless in your neglect and disrespect of these things? We have learned that this faith can see unseen realities that save, so that a sinner is made righteous and heir of all things rather than condemned with the world in a blind rejection of God's way of salvation in Jesus Christ. Again, do you have that saving faith? If not, ask God to help you believe, to give you this faith. Pray the prayer of the disciples, "Lord, I believe; help Thou my unbelief."

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*