

Noah's Faith, Fear, Obedience, and Salvation

A Sermon

(No. 2147)

Delivered on Lord's-day Morning, June 1st, 1890,

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At [the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington](#)

"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](#).

THE APOSTLE COULD NOT AVOID mentioning Noah; for in him faith shone forth eminently. He has placed him in due order of time after Abel and Enoch; but he had also another reason for the arrangement. These three ancient believers are declared in Holy Writ to have pleased God. Of Abel, it is said that God testified of his gifts. Enoch, before his translation, had this testimony, that he pleased God: and Noah "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Again, it was meet that Noah should follow close upon Enoch, as one of two who are described as having "walked with God." "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him"; and we read in the sixth chapter of Genesis, verse eight, that Noah also "walked with God." These two spent their lives in such constant communion with the Most High that they could be fully described as walking with God. Oh, that we may, through almighty grace, be so pleasing unto the Lord that we may abide in fellowship with him!

We may take pleasure in thinking of Noah as a kind of contrast to Enoch. Enoch was taken away from the evil to come: he saw not the flood, nor heard the wailing of those who were swept away by the waterfloods. His was a delightful deliverance from the harvest of wrath which followed the universal godlessness of the race. It was not his to fight the battle of righteousness to the bitter end; but by a secret rapture he avoided death, and escaped those evil days in which his grandson's lot was cast. Noah is the picture of one who is the Lord's witness during evil days, and lives through them faithfully, enduring unto the end. It was his to be delivered from death by death. The ark was, so to speak, a coffin to him: he entered it, and became a dead man to the old world; and within its enclosure he was floated into a new world, to become the founder and father of a new race. As in the figure of baptism we see life by burial, so was it with this chosen patriarch; he passed by burial in the ark into a new life. In Enoch we see a type of those of God's people who will go home peacefully before the last closing struggle. Ere the first clash of swords at Armageddon, such Enochs will be taken from the evil to come. But in Noah we see those who will engage in the conflict, and bear themselves bravely amid backsliding and apostasy, until they shall see the powers of evil trodden under their feet as straw is trodden for the dunghill. The fire-flood will devour the wicked, and only the righteous shall inherit the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Let these few words stand as the preface to my discourse; and now let us carefully consider Noah's faith, trusting that the Holy Spirit may bless its teaching to our own souls.

I. First, notice that in Noah's case FAITH WAS THE FIRST PRINCIPLE. The text begins, "*By faith* Noah." We shall have to speak about his fear being "moved by fear"; we shall also remember his obedience, for he "prepared an ark to the saving of his house." But you must take distinct note that at the back of everything was his faith in God. His faith begat his fear: his faith and his fear produced his obedience. Nothing in Noah is held up before us as an example, but that which grew out of his faith. To begin with, we must look well to our faith. May I pass the question round these galleries, and put it to you also in this vast area? Have you faith? Let each one hear the question in the singular number. "Hast thou faith? Dost thou believe on the Son of God? Art thou resting in the promise of a faithful God?" If not, thou art nothing as to spiritual things. Without faith thou art out of the kingdom of grace, a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter if thou hast no faith. But if thou hast even a trembling faith, thou hast the root of the matter within thee. Even if other gracious things be not in thee as yet, they will be ere long produced by faith. Faith is the acorn, from which the oak of holiness will grow. Faith is that handful of corn, the fruit whereof shall shake like Lebanon. Without faith it is impossible to please God, but with faith we become "accepted in the Beloved."

Notice, first, that *Noah believed in God in his ordinary life*. Before the great test came, before he heard the oracle from the secret place, Noah believed in God. We know that he did, for we read that he walked with God, and in his common conduct he is described as being "a just man, and perfect in his generations." To be just in the sight of God is never possible apart from faith; for "the just shall live by faith." It is a great thing to have faith in the presence of a terrible trial; but the first essential is to have faith for ordinary every-day consumption. Hast thou faith in God as to thy daily bread? Hast thou faith as to thy children and thy house? Hast thou faith about thy trade and business? Hast thou faith in the God of providence? Faith in the God who answers prayer? Is it habitual with thee to roll thy burden upon the Lord? If it be not so with thee, what wilt thou do when the floods break forth? Faith will not come to thee all of a sudden, in the dark night, if thou hast shut it out through all the bright days. Faith must be a constant tenant, not an occasional guest. I have heard of Latter-day Saints, and I do not think much of them: I far more admire Every-day Saints. Thou needest faith this Sabbath-day: have it, and come to the communion-table with it. But thou needest faith on Monday, when the shutters are taken down to begin another six days' trading. Thou wilt need faith the next day; for who can tell thee what will happen? To the end of the week thou wilt need to look to the hills whence cometh thine help. Thou needest faith anywhere and everywhere. A man of God alone in his chamber still needs faith, or solitude may be a nest for temptation. When the servant of Christ is at his ease, and has no work pressing upon him, he has need of faith to keep him, lest, like David, he fall into

temptation, and commit folly. Rest days or work days, we alike need faith. By faith Noah did everything before he entered the ark. This is an important observation, though it may appear a very simple one. I could not omit it; for I feel that a practical work-day faith is what we most of all need. Men think that they need faith in building a temple; but faith is also needed in building a haystack. We need faith for ploughing, for buying, for selling, for working, quite as much as for praying, and singing, and preaching. We want faith on the market as well as in the prayer-meeting. We wish everywhere to please God, and we cannot do it anywhere unless we have unfeigned faith in him. The Lord teach us to have faith seven days in the week!

Note, next, that *Noah had faith in the warning and threatening of God*. Faith is to be exercised about the commandments; for David says, "I have believed thy commandments." Faith is to be exercised upon the promises; for there its sweetest business lies. But, believe me, you cannot have faith in the promise unless you are prepared to have faith in the threatening also. If you truly believe a man, you believe all that he says. He who does not believe that God will punish sin, will not believe that God will pardon it through the atoning blood. He who does not believe that God will cast unbelievers into hell, will not be sure that he will take believers into heaven. If we doubt God's Word about one thing, we shall have small confidence in it upon another thing. Sincere faith in God must treat all God's Word alike; for the faith which accepts one word of God and rejects another is evidently not faith in God, but faith in our own judgment, faith in our own taste. Only that is true faith which believes everything that is revealed by the Holy Spirit, whether it be joyous or distressing. Noah had, in this case, received a promise; but, as the dark background to it, he had listened to the terrible threatening that God would destroy all living things with a flood: his faith believed both the warning and the promise. If he had not believed the threat, he would not have prepared an ark, and so would not have received the promise. Men do not prepare an ark to escape from a flood unless they believe that there will be a flood. I charge you who profess to be the Lord's not to be unbelieving with regard to the terrible threatenings of God to the ungodly. Believe the threat, even though it should chill your blood; believe, though nature shrinks from the overwhelming doom; for, if you do not believe, the act of disbelieving God about one point will drive you to disbelieve him upon the other parts of revealed truth, and you will never come to that true, child-like faith which God will accept and honour. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark." With solemn awe believe the bitter word of judgment, that the word of mercy may be sweet to you.

Furthermore, *Noah believed what seemed highly improbable, if not absolutely impossible*. There was no sea where Noah laid the keel of his ark: I do not even know that there was a river there. He was to prepare a sea-going vessel, and construct it on dry land. How could water be brought there to float it? O mad old man! how canst thou play the fool on so huge

a scale as to build a three-decked vessel of vast dimensions where no waters can ever come? Yet he was bidden of the Lord to do it, and he was persuaded that the Lord's command involved no blunder. The floods would fill the valley, rise up the hills, and prevail above the tops of the mountains. He believed all this, although it did seem an unlikely thing. That faith which believes in the probable is anybody's faith: publicans and sinners can so believe. The faith which believes that which is barely possible is in better form; but that faith which cares nothing for probability or possibility, but rests alone in the Word of the Lord, is the faith of God's elect. God deserves such faith, "for with God all things are possible." Not probability, but certainty, is the groundwork of faith when God has spoken. Noah believed firmly, and therefore prepared his ship on dry land, quite as cheerfully as he would have built it by the sea.

At times you and I are assailed as to our faith in the Bible, by people who say, "How do you make that out? It is in the Scriptures, certainly, but how do you reconcile it with science?" Let your reply be 'We no longer live in the region of argument as to the Word of the Lord; but we dwell in the realm of faith. We are not squabblers, itching to prove our superiority in reasoning, but we are children of light, worshipping our God by bowing our whole minds to the obedience of faith. We would be humble, and learn to believe what we cannot altogether comprehend, and to expect what we should never have looked for, had not the Lord declared it. It is our ambition to be great believers, rather than great thinkers; to be child-like in faith, rather than subtle in intellect. We are sure that God is true! Like Noah, we stagger not at the Word of God, because of evident improbability and apparent impossibility. What the Lord has spoken he is able to make good; and none of his words shall fall to the ground.

Note well, that *Noah believed alone, and preached on though none followed him*. There were no other believers, if you except his wife and his sons and daughters. There were eight in all; but I am afraid that some of these rather believed in father Noah than in the living God. Noah shone as a lone star. He stood like yonder solitary column in the midst of a ruined temple. He believed with an unbuttressed faith. How pleasant it is to associate with our fellow-believers! It is a great refreshment for a solitary Christian to get into a large congregation, and to feel in unison with the child's hymn'

"Lord, how delightful 'tis to see
A great assembly worship thee!
At once they sing, at once they pray,
They hear of heaven and learn the way.
I have been there, and still would go,
'Tis like a little heaven below."

But how would you fare if you were alone, or were surrounded by those who called you a fool for believing in the Lord? To dwell where everybody is sceptical is as injurious to faith

as for a man to live where the yellow fever is raging. To have your faith pulled to pieces, and held up to ridicule, is an ordeal which some cannot stand. What if you should be like Noah, a preacher of righteousness; how stern the duty of being a solitary witness! He preached for one hundred and twenty years, and at the end of it not one person was ready to go with him into the ark. His own family was saved, but nobody else-not a solitary one. What a trial! How it has made my heart glad, during the month of May, to see and propose for church-fellowship no less than sixty-nine! But if I had to preach for a year with no converts, what should I do? I hope I should persevere, in the name of the Lord God; but what a trial! What if life were prolonged for one hundred and twenty years, and after all that preaching nobody believed your word! That would be an infliction indeed. Many people may have been converted under Noah, and may have died before the deluge came; but he had not one convert in the ark with him. His wife had not even a servant to help her in domestic work, and his sons' wives had to wait on themselves. There was not even a boy to clean the shoes, or help feed the animals. Many were called, but only the eight were chosen. Noah had preached apparently in vain, and yet he believed with none the less of dogged resolve. The old man was not to be moved. That ark of his would float; he knew it would. The world would be destroyed; he was sure of it; as sure as if he had seen it. "Things not seen as yet" were to his faith substantial and evident.

Noah believed through a hundred and twenty solitary years! It was a long martyrdom. Our life is quite long enough for the trial of faith. Even if a man lives to be eighty, and has sixty years of that life spent in the exercise of faith, it is only by almighty grace that he holds out. Noah lived two of our lives in this way. If a little flood had happened and moved his ark a little, he would have had some evidence for his faith; but there was no flood at all; and his ark lay high and dry for a century and a quarter! How few could endure this! Yonder dear friend has been praying for the last six months, and the Lord has not heard him, and he begins to doubt whether the Lord does hear prayer at all. You are not much like Noah. You can hardly believe for one hundred and twenty days. "Alas!" says one, "I have prayed for my husband these twenty years!" It is a long time to wait; but what would you do with a hundred added on to it? Years made Noah's faith more mature, and not more feeble. This grey father of the age went on with his preaching, went on with his intercession, and, without a doubt, waited for God in his own time to justify his servant before the eyes of men.

Once more: *Noah believed even to separation from the world.* See Noah and his family entering the ark! I do not think I should have selected the ark as a place of residence myself, nor would you have chosen to live in a place pitched within and without with pitch, with only one door and one window to it, and a great menagerie of birds, and beasts, and reptiles inside it. Whether that window ran all round the top just under the roof, so as to let light into the whole structure, I cannot tell; but I have no doubt that the jeering world said to Noah, "Well, old man, you have built a prison for yourself, and the sooner you go inside

and shut yourself in the better; for we have had enough of your preaching!" When the good man and his family went in, and the Lord shut the door, they were dead to the world. Had Mrs. Noah been like some of you she would have said, "The girls cannot go out to any more parties, and our sons are shut out from all society. We are out of the world, and shall soon be forgotten." Yes, yes, and Noah was glad of it, since it was the Lord that shut him in. When the Lord shuts you off from the world, you are best alone. Nowadays professors have not faith enough to dwell alone. They want two or three doors in the back of the ark, so that they may slip out every now and then, and do a little pleasuring with the world, and then glide back again and look like saints. As to being shut in with God and separated from the world 'religious and irreligious' how few will endure it! How little is ever heard of that cry "Come out from among them, and be ye separate!" "You might as well be dead," cries one, "as be out of society." Exactly so: and that is what the child of God looks for. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." "Buried with him by baptism into death." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." That separatedness which Noah took upon himself so willingly was involved in his salvation; for if he had lived with the world, he would have died with the world. Only in separation is salvation.

Thus have I worked out the idea that the first principle which actuated Noah's heart was faith in the living God.

II. Secondly, FEAR WAS THE MOVING FORCE. Faith was the living principle, but fear was the moving power; for the text puts it, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, *moved with fear*." Faith moulded him, but fear moved him. How was this? "I thought," says one, "that perfect love casteth out fear." Yes, fear of a certain sort; but there is another fear which perfect love embraces and nourishes.

Noah had no evil fear. He had not a servile fear: he was not afraid of God as a culprit is afraid of a judge, or a convict of the hangman. He knew whom he believed, and was persuaded that he had a favour towards him. Noah had not a careless fear, as some here have. Fools say, "We never shall be saved, and therefore it would be useless to care about it. We may as well gather the rosebuds while we may. There is no heaven for us hereafter, let us make the best of the present." No, Noah was a witness against such sensual carelessness. He so believed, that fear came upon him, and that fear made him act as God bade him. Beware of the unbelief which enables you to trifle; for trifling with eternal things is the suicide of the soul. Noah, on the other hand, had not a despairing fear, as some have. They say, "There is no hope. We have gone too far in sin already to dream of pardon and favour. We may as well let things take their course." Beware of the poison-cup of despair. While life lasts hope lasts; and we beseech you not to lie down in sullen hopelessness. Noah was a stranger to this paralyzing fear: he bestirred himself, and built an ark. Some allow a presuming fear: "If I am to be saved," say they, "I shall be saved; and if I am to be lost, I shall be lost. I may as well be hung

for a sheep as a lamb, and so I will have my fling, and go into sin even as I please." Noah never spoke thus; for with his fear he had a good hope. He prepared an ark. He knew that none could save him but God; but as God bade him prepare an ark, an ark he prepared, and thus he was saved and his house.

What kind of fear was that of Noah? Well, *Noah had a loyal reverence of God*. He feared him as the King of kings and Lord of lords, and when he went about through the wicked world Noah often said to himself, "I wonder the Judge of all the earth does not destroy these rebels, who dare to be so vile and violent." When he saw their gluttony, their infidelity, their lasciviousness, their oppression of one another, *the preacher of righteousness had a holy fear of judgment*. Often his righteous spirit indignantly cried, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" He wondered how God could be so long-suffering. When it was revealed to him that God was going to destroy the whole race from off the face of the earth by a flood, he said to himself, "I thought he would." He felt exceedingly afraid; for he knew that when God once makes bare his arm for vengeance, the pillars of the earth must shake, and the stars of heaven cease their shining. Thus the holy man of God passed the time of his sojourning here in fear. Who among us would not fear if we were to consider at this time the holiness of God, and the provocations inflicted upon him by our guilty race? What sin defiles this earth! Oh, the wrath to come! How awful will the judgment be! It has not come yet; it may not come for years; but, when the Lord begins to deal with men in justice, how will that day burn as an oven! "Who may abide the day of his coming?" Noah by faith heard the cries of men and women swept from their feet by the torrent. He heard the cries of strong swimmers in their agony yielding to the overflowing death, and sinking to their doom. Do you wonder that his heart sank within him, and that he was moved with fear? He had a holy awe of God, and a solemn dread of the judgments which sin was drawing down upon the giddy world.

Noah had a very humble distrust of himself. I wish we all had such a fear. Let us fear God because of his greatness; let us fear ourselves because of our sinfulness. Let us fear lest we should fall into sin, and perish with the rest of the sinners. Let no man say, "I shall never fall." Alas! those are the most likely to slip. Did you never note that those who seem least likely to fall into a sin are the very people who commit it? You would not have dreamed that sober Noah should be found drunk; nor that righteous Lot should commit incest; nor that David, whose heart smote him when he only cut off the lap of Saul's garment, should be guilty of murder; nor that Peter, who said, "Though all men should forsake thee, yet will not I," would have denied his Master with oaths and cursing. Ah, friends! we may not trust ourselves; but we ought to stand in daily fear lest we be guilty before God. Here was Noah filled with such a holy fear of himself, that he took care to do what the Lord bade him, even to the most minute particular. He did not choose another sort of wood, nor alter the shape of the vessel, nor make more stories, nor more windows, nor more doors; but he distrusted his own judgment, and leaned not to his own understanding. He did exactly what he was

told to do, and thus left the consequences with the Lord who commanded him. He feared his own wisdom: for he knew that man is like to vanity, and no more to be relied upon than the mist of the morning.

Fear made Noah hew the trees and square the timbers, and wield the axe and the hammer. Fear wrought in him diligence and speed. It made him despise the observations of onlookers, and build for his life in brave defiance of the spirit of the age, and the judgment of the wise. Perhaps I speak to persons who are in fear of the wrath to come. I rejoice that you have faith enough to fear. By the way of that faith which brings you unto fear, you will be brought out of it. Believe God in justice till you tremble; then see that justice vindicated in the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus, and rest in the mercy of God, which, through the cross, comes justly down to guilty men. A holy fear will put wings upon your heels, and help you to fly to Jesus. Moved by fear, may you be drawn and driven to the Lord Jesus!

III. Thirdly, OBEDIENCE WAS THE GRACIOUS FRUIT. Faith and fear together led Noah to do as God commanded him. When fear is grafted upon faith, it brings forth good fruit, as in this case.

Noah obeyed the Lord exactly. How often does the Scripture say, "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he"! See again and again, "Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him." Those who have faith in God should show it by a holy fear, which makes them zealous to leave nothing undone which is commanded of the Lord, and to add nothing of will-worship to the perfect law of God. "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it;" was the wise word of the Virgin. Obey the Lord with all your mind and all your heart, in the way of faith, if you would find salvation. Prove that you have grace, by your accurate obedience.

Noah obeyed the Lord very carefully. God said to him, "Make an ark"; and we read in answer thereto that he *prepared an ark*. There was careful preparation, and not hurried, thoughtless activity. He prepared the right materials; he prepared the different parts so as to fit together: he prepared his mind, and then prepared his work. In seeking the Lord, let us exercise our best thoughts. People do not go to heaven in the fashion of "hop, skip, and jump." Carelessness cannot tread the highway of holiness. If you would know the way to hell, you may shut your eyes and find it: a little matter of neglect will surely ruin you "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" But if you desire to go to heaven, I beg you to remember that "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." There must be determination, thought, care, attention; and faith must work with all these to produce obedience to the will of the Lord. Men are never right by accident, nor obedient to the Lord by chance; preparation of heart is wanted, and this the Lord must give. Alas! I fear some of you will miss eternal life, for you trifle about it! If you had a business to settle which involved the gain or loss of ten thousand pounds, how particular you would be; but

when your whole soul is at stake, how many take up such matters at haphazard and risk eternal destruction! Not so Noah: he was precise in his obedience, and careful to remain so.

Noah obeyed at all costs. To build the huge vessel called "the ark" must have cost Noah a great deal of money and labour. He could not get everybody to work at the absurd task of building a vessel on dry land. As they would be laughed at, his workmen would be sure to demand extra pay. Possibly he had to pay double wages to every wright employed on the ark. The patriarch was content to sink all his capital and all his income in this singular venture. It was a poor speculation so everybody told him; and yet he was quite willing to put all his eggs into that one basket. God had bidden him build, and build he would, feeling that the divine command insured him against risk. Can we do the same?

Noah went on obeying under daily scorn. The men of that generation mocked him. He went out and preached to them; but many would not hear him, for they thought him mad. Those who did listen to him said to each other, "He is building a vessel upon dry land: is he sane? We are scientific, and therefore we know how absurd his preaching is; for none ever heard of the world being drowned by a flood." They called his warning "an old wives' fable," and he himself was "an old fossil." Doubtless he was the frequent subject of sarcastic remark. I cannot reproduce the letters that were written about the sturdy patriarch, nor can I recount the spiteful things which were said by the gossips; but I have no doubt they were very clever, and very sarcastic. Those productions of genius are all forgotten now; but Noah is remembered still. For all the scorning of many he went on obeying his God: he stuck to the lines on which God had placed him, and he could not be turned to the right hand or to the left, because he had a real faith in God.

Noah's obedience followed the command as he learned it. I admire his going into the ark without a question. All the cattle and the beasts and flying things are in the ark with him, and he does not pray to be let out. We may equally admire him for coming out again when called upon to do so. After we have once been shut in, some of us had rather stop in. We are not fond of changes. We grow accustomed to a certain line of things, and find in use a second nature; and we wish to remain as we are. It is so safe in the ark, and we are so peaceful, so conscious of being in the hollow of God's hand, that we fear to come forth into a world so lately cursed. Noah came out without a question, and the first thing he did was to build an altar to the Lord, and so to prove that he was at home with God. Oh, for faith that will obey God anyhow and anywhere! You remember how God said to Elijah, "Hide thyself"; and away went the prophet to the brook Cherith, where none saw him but the fowls of heaven. A brave prophet like Elijah finds it hard to be in hiding; yet he does not disobey. Presently comes the command, "Go, show thyself"; and out he comes from his exile and stands before King Ahab, according to the word of the Lord. Whether God bids his true servants show themselves or hide themselves, they do his will at once.

"Theirs not to reason why,

Theirs but to dare and die."

The will of the Lord is to be done by his servants, whether on earth or in heaven. If he saith, "Go," they go; if he saith, "Stay," they abide in their places. Oh, for such a faith as this! It was easier for Noah to build the ark than to render so complete an obedience; but the Lord wrought in him by his grace.

IV. And now I come to my last point, upon which hear me patiently. RESULTS DID NOT FAIL TO COME. One hundred and twenty years preaching, and no converts remaining! One hundred and twenty years building a ship, and yet no water to float it! One hundred and twenty years warning people that God is about to destroy them, and yet no flood! Surely, the good man's life is a failure. No doubt wise folks said of him, "He is a good old man, but he is uncharitable, and has become an alarmist." Some style him a "pessimist," others say, "He is a bigot"; others, again, affect to deplore that the good man has made such a great mistake, and is wasting his influence under a delusion. I hear fine gentlemen saying, "Do not take much notice of the old gentleman. No doubt he is a very good man, but at the same time he is only one, and his views are very peculiar. He has gone on chopping this logic for one hundred and twenty years, and the world is not drowned yet: it is really too ridiculous." The wilder spirits meet him in the morning, and they say, "Well, father Noah, when is this flood coming? The country would be improved by a good soaking. You have raised our expectations so long, that it ought to pour when it does come. You ought to have minded the old saying, 'Never prophesy till you are sure.'" Thus would they jest at the preacher of righteousness; but Noah knew what he was at, and was not silenced. All that he did was simply to repeat his warning, and go on with his ship-building. God's time was coming on: the storm was gathering, and before long the deluge would end the mirth of the godless.

What did come of it? The first result was, *He was saved and his house*. Oh, that God would give to every preacher of righteousness this full reward himself and his house! O my brothers in the ministry, there is no greater joy for us than to know that our children walk in the truth! Perhaps some of you fear the Lord; and yet he has never given you your Shem, Ham, and Japhet. Alas! it may even happen that she that lieth in your bosom does not yet know the Lord. Nevertheless, be you faithful to your God, and to the souls of men. Hold the truth, if you stand alone. Even if in your own house you find your worst foes, hold on, and never doubt. Do not come down a stop or two as to holiness, nor seek a lower platform upon which to meet more cordially an ungodly world. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and in the power of the ever-blessed gospel. That is the one business of your life; and I believe that if you have faith in the Lord as to your family, your beloved ones shall be given you as a prey. Remember the Philippian jailer, to whom Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house*." Do not rest content with half the promise. Grasp firmly the words, "and thy house." Have you an Ishmael? then get alone, and, like Abraham,

cry to God, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" God will hear your prayer and bless Ishmael also. Oh, what a privilege it will be if you yourself and all your house are saved!

The next result was, that *he condemned the world*. Read, "By which he condemned the world." "Ha! ha! ha!" they said, "we judge the old man to be out of his mind." But he was their judge. The merriest jest that flashed forth at the banquet of wine was pointed with a sarcasm about old Noah and his dry-land ship; but all the while he was solemnly judging and condemning that ribald world. The Lord had made him serenely bear witness against iniquity; yes, and even to sit on the throne and condemn the world. I do not read that Noah ever entered into any dispute with the men of his times. He never argued or cavilled, much less did he wish them ill; he simply believed and told them the truth, kept his own faith intact, and went on building his ark; thus practising what he believed. In this way he condemned those who criticized him. Ah! you may laugh, ye worldlings; but the man of God is your master after all! His preaching condemned them: they know the way, and wickedly refused to run in it. His warning condemned them: they would not regard it and escape. His life condemned them, for he walked with the God whom they despised. Most of all, the ark condemned them. Did none of them ever say, as he passed it in the morning, "This is the strangest fabric that ever was. There is not, in all the world besides, such another thing as this. Yet Noah is no fool. He can make a bargain, as I found to my cost, when he was buying nails, and I tried to get double their value from him. The man is cool and calm, shrewd and sharp. He bought my wood upon the hill; but he first made an accurate estimate of the timber in it, and its worth: he bought as well as any man could do. How is it that on this one particular point he is so strange?" Did not such men at times think that there must be something in it after all? If they did not think so, at any rate the fact that Noah carried out his principles to the full, and invested all he had in the building of this strange ark, would have forced them to conviction if they had not been hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. How his faith condemned them! When the floods began to rise, and the door was shut, how the sight of the ark condemned them! I can imagine, when the water began to get knee-deep, there would be frightened ones around the ark door; but it could not be opened, since God had shut it. When the ark began to float, some of them fled to the sides of the mountains; and what a condemnation the sight of the floating ark was to them! Noah could not help them then. The day in which they might have entered was gone by. If they ever saw Noah look out of the ark, how the face which once pleaded with them would condemn them! Oh, my hearers, how often have I warned you to flee from the wrath to come! I have warned you of those dread waves of fire, and of that horrible tempest, which will sweep over all the earth, and destroy ungodly men and their works. How often have I spoken of the pit which God hath digged for the wicked, into which your feet will slide in due time unless you seek the Saviour! May be, in those days of terror, the face of the preacher will condemn you, as you remember how he looked at you with earnest love, but you would have none of his

pleading, and chose to perish in your sin. Your blood shall be upon your own heads. It is a solemn thought, that one lone man condemned a world. It was one against millions! Yet the one condemned the millions. If God is with a man, though that man be only one, he is in the majority. Men of the world wilt soon become a weeping, wailing, and despairing company; but he that stands alone for God shall be had in honour, and shall both judge and condemn the guilty world.

The last thing Noah earned by his faith was this, *he became heir of the righteousness which is by faith*; for God said of him, when he bade him come into the ark, "Thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." God declared him righteous; not righteous by his works, although his works, following upon his faith, proved him to be righteous; but righteous by his faith. He believed God, and found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He received the righteousness which God gives through Jesus Christ to all them that believe. Wrapt in this he stood before the Lord, justified and approved. By faith he was adopted and became a son, an heir. For him the promise of the woman's seed, though it was all the Bible that he had, was quite enough. The woman's seed, and the Lamb's sacrifice, which Abel had seen, these were almost all the revelation he had known. He had no Pentateuch, no Psalms, no Gospels, no Epistles; but he so believed that little Bible of his, that he expected that Christ in him would bruise the serpent in the world. God honoured his faith, and he condemned the world. He lived when the rest perished; he was secure in his ark when the myriads were sinking in the deluge: he became "heir of the righteousness which is by faith" when others were condemned. May God make us all so, and unto his name shall be the glory through Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON [Genesis 6:5,22](#); [Hebrews 11:1-7](#).
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK" 913, 652, 504.