

Day 1 - By Faith: Noah

By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. Hebrews 11:7 (ESV)

Introduction:

Noah is a historical figure. He actually lived. He actually ran a portable zoo. As a real person, he has something to teach us.

I. The Days of Noah

Genesis 6:5-8: ⁵The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷So the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” ⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. (ESV)

Matthew 24:36-39: But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. ³⁷For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, ³⁹and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. (ESV)

Luke 17:26-30: ²⁶Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. ²⁷They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, ²⁹but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all—³⁰so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. (ESV)

- A. Evil (Genesis 6:5)—enough to bring destructive judgment
- B. Complacent
 - 1. Looked good to men
 - 2. Self-satisfied
- C. Indifferent
 - 1. Whole point of Christ’s reference to it
 - 2. No thought of impending judgment

II. The Faith of Noah: “By faith Noah....”

- A. Instructed by God (**Genesis 6:13: And God said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”** ESV)
 - 1. Was told all he needed to know

- 2. God tells us all we need to know
- B. Heard what God said and believed it
 - 1. Enough to do it (**Genesis 7:5: And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him.**) ESV
 - 2. Always a challenge to us
- C. Essence of his faith was obedience
 - 1. This is the essence of all faith
 - 2. Anyone known for faith must be known for obedience

III. The Preaching of Noah

- A. He is called a herald of righteousness (**2 Peter 2:5: If he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;**) ESV. This is a strange term for Old Testament times
- B. He preached by action
 - 1. It was what he did that revealed his belief
 - 2. He impacted his family
- C. Note the contrast between him and Lot (Luke 17:26-29, above)

IV. The Witness of Noah

- A. Notice the progression of the chapter
 - 1. Abel—peace with God
 - 2. Enoch—walks with God
 - 3. Noah—witness for God
 - a. This order is important in life
 - b. There is a danger in reversing the last two
- B. Note his obedience—he did what he was told
- C. Note the meaning to the readers of Hebrews
 - 1. Keep hanging on (Abel, Enoch, Noah did)
 - 2. Explained further in the next point

V. The Results of Noah

- A. The eighth person
 - 1. Not genealogical
 - 2. Just eight saved
- B. He was not successful
 - 1. By modern standards
 - 2. He did just what he was supposed to do
- C. He shows a principle: Faithful obedience is key

Conclusion

To people in trouble, tempted to quit, follow the example of Noah. Find out God's will. Do it. Leave the consequences to Him. Never base your obedience on success.

Day 2 - The Faith of Moses

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶ He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. Hebrews 11:24-26 (ESV)

Introduction

The world has an enormous appeal. Do not ever forget it. The appeal comes through so many different forms: the siren song of supple sexual seduction; the pounding pulse of potential power; the maddening magnetism of monarch money. It is not easy to stand against it. However, Moses managed to do so.

I. The Crisis of Moses (v. 24)

- A. "When he was come to years"
 - 1. May mean, "when he was to become great"
 - 2. Was at least forty years old
- B. He had been adopted by Pharaoh's daughter
- C. He possibly was in line for the throne—great power at least
- D. He had every positive: personal fame, wealth, power, ease
- E. He could have greatly reversed trends for Israel and greatly eased its suffering
- F. It must have been an enormous pull for him

II. The Choice of Moses (v. 25)

- A. Chose to reject elevation through identification
- B. Chose to go with Israel
- C. He knew the price of choice and went against every intelligent conversation

III. The Criteria for Moses (v. 26)

- A. He must have had information from God
 - 1. His faith would almost assure that fact
 - 2. "Pleasure of sin for a season"—He could have identified with Egypt and not sinned unless that choice would have gone against what he knew he should do
- B. He knew what he was getting into
 - 1. There is a reference to Christ here
 - 2. He recognized the significance of an eventual reward and weighed that reward against the sacrifice

IV. The Challenge of Moses

- A. Faith that trusts God to work things out
 - 1. He was not always perfect in his regard—slaying the Egyptian
 - 2. It has been suggested that he may not have wrong in doing so—it may have been a sign to the people that they refused to recognize

- B. Faith that overcomes the pull of the world
1. The world is always there
 2. There are always rationalizations (I can make more money for the Lord's work, etc.)
 3. The commandment (principle) always makes the difference
 4. The only way we will stand is to weigh things as they really are
 5. If this life is all there is, then go ahead and do things your way

Conclusion

Faith hears what God says and believes it enough to act upon it. Not only in specific prohibitions of sin, but also in such issues as: “**But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**” (Matthew 6:33, ESV) and “**For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?**” (Mark 8:36, ESV)

Day 3 - Gideon and the Word of God

And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barack, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—Hebrews 11:32 (ESV).

Introduction

The last section of this chapter is a summary of many other heroes of the faith. It almost seems as if the author ran out of time. He lists several names and then lists a number of accomplishments (some were done by more than one person). Gideon stands out. Let's see why.

I. The Story of Gideon (Judges 6 & 7)

- A. Best known for two things
 - 1. The fleece
 - 2. The choice of men for an army by the way they drank
- B. Obviously much more to this story
 - 1. He lived at a time of Midianite oppression
 - 2. God called him to overthrow the Midianites
 - 3. Gideon recoils because of weakness
 - 4. God gives him assurance through the fleece
 - 5. Gideon calls for an army
 - 6. God tells him the army is too large (this is explained by the fact that God wanted them to know they did not win on their own)
 - 7. Gideon used the drinking process as a final test (those who scooped the water showed alertness)
 - 8. Gideon went against the Midianites who got confused and turned the battle against themselves (as a result of the approach that gave them the impression they were against a much larger force)

II. The Story Behind the Story

- A. God spoke to Gideon twelve times and said twelve things to him
 - 1. Seven in Judges 6, and all of these had to do with God preparing him for the task
 - a. Got his attention; **And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor." Judges 6:12 (ESV)**
 - b. Pointed out his weakness; **And the LORD turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?" Judges 6:14 (ESV)**
 - c. Showed him His strength; **And the LORD said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man." Judges 6:16 (ESV)**
 - d. Assured him of His patience; **Please do not depart from here until I come to you and bring out my present and set it before**

- you.” And he said, “I will stay till you return.” Judges 6:18 (ESV)
- e. Set him up for a miracle; **And the angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them.” And he did so. Judges 6:20 (ESV)**
 - f. Reassured him; **But the LORD said to him, “Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die.” Judges 6:23 (ESV)**
 - g. Got him started; **That night the LORD said to him, “Take your father's bull, and the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it. Judges 6:23 (ESV)**
2. Five in Judges 7, all of these things had to do with the actual task God had given him
- a. Tells him why to cut the army down; **The LORD said to Gideon, “The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’ Judges 7:2 (ESV)**
 - b. Still dissatisfied with the army; **And the LORD said to Gideon, “The people are still too many. Take them down to the water, and I will test them for you there, and anyone of whom I say to you, ‘This one shall go with you,’ shall go with you, and anyone of whom I say to you, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ shall not go.” Judges 7:4 (ESV)**
 - c. Gives the test of drinking; **So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, “Every one who laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set by himself. Likewise, every one who kneels down to drink.” Judges 7:5 (ESV)**
 - d. Assures him of victory; **And the LORD said to Gideon, “With the 300 men who lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand, and let all the others go every man to his home.” Judges 7:7 (ESV)**
 - e. Reassures him of His intention to give the victory; **That same night the LORD said to him, “Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hand. Judges 7:9 (ESV)**
- B. Faith is hearing what God has said and believing Him enough to act on what he has commanded. Gideon did so even in the face of what appeared to be suicide

III. The Lessons of Gideon

- A. The emphasis is on God’s communication with Gibeon
 1. God spoke to him repeatedly
 2. He has a tremendous amount of information from God
 3. He acted strictly on what he knew
- B. Notice the lessons from this passage

1. God starts with the preparation of the man before He moves to the accomplishment of the task He has for the man. This gives a new views of trials—He may be preparing you for a purpose
2. When a man is prepared, then the performance is relatively easy. Our problem is that we try to do too much without proper spiritual preparation. That is why the Christian life is so hard
3. The word of the Lord played a vital role in both his preparation and performance. If we are ever to accomplish great feats of faith (either believing or obedient faith), we must be people of the Word
 - a. If you are having trouble doing what you know you should do, spend time in the Word
 - b. If you are having trouble getting what you need from the Lord, spend time in the Word
4. In the Bible, we have a more sure word of prophecy than even Gideon

Conclusion

Gideon accomplished much by the word of the Lord. You are never going to accomplish much by faith until the Word of the Lord has more place, impact, and effect.

Day 4 - The Adventures of David

And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barack, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—Hebrews 11:32 (ESV).

Introduction

In interpreting Scripture, always try to determine what those who received the message would have heard (this will keep you from some extreme interpretations). In this case, it is not so easy because there is so much said about David. But there seems to be one area that is special.

I. Identifying the Aspects of David's Faith

- A. Many of the ten items listed in the following verses pertain to him
- B. One in particular is attached to him (**Who gives victory to kings, who rescues David his servant from the cruel sword! Psalm 144:10, ESV**); he is delivered “from the hurtful sword”—through faith

II. Exploring the Stories Involved

David escaped the edge of the sword on at least three occasions that are notable.

- A. Against Goliath who planned to behead him (see **1 Samuel 17:15-58**)
- B. In regard to Saul
 - 1. God took his hand off Saul and reject him
 - 2. David was chosen to be Saul's successor long before Saul was dead
 - 3. The victory over Goliath brought David into the prominence
 - 4. There was growing friction between them as Saul sensed that David was gaining prominence
 - 5. Saul made several specific tries on David's life
 - a. **⁹ And Saul eyed David from that day on. ¹⁰ The next day a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand. ¹¹ And Saul hurled the spear, for he thought, “I will pin David to the wall.” But David evaded him twice. 1 Samuel 18:9-11 (ESV)**
 - b. **¹And Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants, that they should kill David. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David. 1 Samuel 19:1 (ESV)**
 - 6. In every case, David escaped the edge of the sword
- C. In regard to the rebellion of Absalom (see **2 Samuel 15**)
 - 1. It was Absalom's devout purpose to kill David (**¹Moreover, Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Let me choose twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue David tonight. ² I will come upon him while he is weary and discouraged and throw him into a panic, and all the people who are with him will flee. I will strike down only the king, ³ and I will bring all the people back to you as a bride comes**

home to her husband. You seek the life of only one man, and all the people will be at peace.” 2 Samuel 17:1-3, ESV)

2. Through a variety of means, David escaped the edge of the sword

III. Examining the Stories Involved

- A. There is more than meets the eye in each case
 1. He escaped the edge of the sword
 2. The manner in which he did so is different
 3. It is more than God’s preservation
- B. Notice
 1. In the case of Goliath, David escaped the edge of the sword by triumphing over him
 - a. In spite of disparity
 - b. With completely inadequate resources
 2. In the case of Saul, David not only escaped the edge of the sword, but he was willing to wait on God’s purpose and timing (even to the point of sparing Saul on two occasions when could have killed him—see **1 Samuel 24 – 26**)
 3. In the case of Absalom, David not only escaped the edge of the sword, he triumphed over the situation to the point that he grieved over the death of the one who sought his own death

IV. Applying the Stories Involved

- A. Definition of faith—hearing God and believing Him enough to act on what He has said
- B. David had heard God, and we know when and where (¹² **And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he.”** ¹³ **Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah. 1 Samuel 16:12-13, ESV)**
- C. As a result of hearing God and believing Him enough to act on what He had said
 1. David tackled a task far too big for him and easily brought it off (God promised him the throne—there was nothing that could happen to him—David was invisible)
 2. David patiently waited for what had been promised and would not lift up his hand against Saul, allowing God to take care of the matter
 3. David did not seek vindication on Absalom—he knew he was also to blame—but waited on God to work vengeance on his enemies

Conclusion

There is so much to learn here. Courage—When God promises something, it will come to pass no matter what; and you can act on it and take on any Goliath in your life. Patience—When God has promised something, you can wait for it to happen, not forcing the issues that belong to Him. Compassion—When God has promised something, you can leave the righting of wrongs to Him in full confidence that He will care for what needs to be done.