

# “Obedient and Faithful Noah”

by Jim Bray

Noah’s name means “comfort” or “rest”. It is quite a distinction that he was the only righteous man in the entire earth (other than his 3 sons), and according to Gen 5:32, when beginning to build the ark, was now 500 years old, so he had proven for 5 centuries that he was righteous! Also, he proved he was a man of great faith (as stated in Heb 11:7) by building a huge ship in the middle of dry land before it had ever rained on the earth! Gen. 6:9 says that he was “just” and “perfect in his generations” (or compared with others over the generations in which he lived). The Hebrew word for “perfect” (“taw-meem”) is often translated “upright” or “without blemish”. While Noah wasn’t literally “perfect” or sinless (since Rom. 3:23 teaches all men have sinned), verse 10 greatly compliments him by stating that he “walked with God” (the very same words used to describe Enoch)! Also, II Pet 2:5 describes him as a “preacher of righteousness”, so he undoubtedly preached to the people on earth during the 100 years it took him to build the ark, from the time he was 500 years old, until he turned 600, when it first began to rain (Gen 7:11). Unfortunately, during that 100 years of building and preaching, he didn’t have even one convert (other than his own family)! Therefore, Noah is an excellent example to help us remember the important principle that:

**GOD BLESSES AND REWARDS US SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF OBEDIENCE AND FAITHFULNESS, AND NOT ON THE BASIS OF OUTWARD VISIBLE RESULTS FROM OUR WORK AND MINISTRY!**

OBEDIENCE AND FAITHFULNESS are OUR RESPONSIBILITY, and OUTWARD VISIBLE RESULTS are GOD’S RESPONSIBILITY. In I Cor 3:6-7, Paul states, “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.” Two missionaries go to the mission field at the same time, one to Mexico, and one to India. The people in Mexico have been hungering for the gospel for years, and the missionary is free to preach and try to win people there to the Lord. However, in India, it’s much harder since it’s against the law for the missionary there to try to convert the people there to Christianity! After 10 years, the missionary to India has had less than 50 converts, but during that same time, the missionary to Mexico has had over 500 converts! Assuming both were equally obedient and faithful to God, which missionary will be more blessed and rewarded by God for his work? The answer is neither, because they were both equally obedient and faithful! One didn’t have as fertile a ground to sow in as did the other, but the seed needed to be sown anyway! Note that in Matt 25:14-23, in the parable of the talents, one servant received only 2 talents, but doubled it for his lord, whereas the other servant received over twice the amount (5 talents), and he also doubled it for his lord. However, though one started out having more to work with than the other, both were equally obedient and faithful in investing their talents and doubling them for the master. Therefore, the lord gave the very same reward to both servants when he said the exact same thing to each of them, saying (in verses 21 and 23), “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.” While we work and hope to see some outward visible results in our work for the Lord (and at times we will), and while we should at least always take stock of ourselves to make sure we’re being obedient and faithful (especially if we don’t see any visible results), we should also always remember that our true success in God’s eyes is not measured by our visible results, but by our obedience and faithfulness! So, don’t get discouraged or quit when you don’t see the results you think you should be seeing, but just keep praying and asking God to help you keep faithfully doing your best for Him! No doubt, if Noah lived in our time today and preached for 100 years without a single convert (as happened in his day), many would misjudge him and his ministry as a “failure” (as did Job’s accusers) and falsely accuse him of being without the power and blessing of God, but we know for certain that he’d be a great success in God’s eyes, and after all, that’s all that really matters! So, don’t get discouraged or give up, but keep up the good work, keep on keeping on, and continue to “fight the good fight of faith”! As stated in the chorus of one of the songs I’ve written,

“Not fame, not size, but in His eyes, successful I will be,  
If I obey, and faithful stay, He’ll say, “Well done” to me!”

Remember Gal 6:9 and I Cor 15:58, which say, “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not”, and “...know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (I Cor 15:58)!