

Peace be with you, listening friends. We greet you in the name of God, the Lord of peace, who wants everyone to understand and submit to the way of righteousness that He has established, and have true peace with Him forever. We are happy to be able to return today to present your program *The Way of Righteousness*.

In our reflections in the Holy Scriptures, we have already seen that, in the beginning, when God created the world, everything was **good**. However, when our ancestor Adam disobeyed God, **evil** entered the world through him and spread to all men. Truly, as the African proverb says, "an epidemic is not confined to the one from whom it originates!"

In our last program, we learned about the two lines, which descended from Adam, the descendants of Cain and the descendants of Seth. The descendants of Cain **did not believe God**. However, among the descendants of Seth, there were those who **believed God's Word**, and, as a result, God forgave them of their sins. One who came from Seth, was named Enoch. Although most who lived in the time of Enoch followed Satan in lives of impurity, Enoch walked with God in holiness.

Today we will begin to learn about another man who walked with God in a crooked and depraved era. This person is **the prophet Noah** or *Noh* in Arabic, the great grandson of Enoch. We have already learned that, in early times, people lived to be older than we do today. Do you know who lived to be the oldest man in the world? It was Methuselah, the son of Enoch. He lived until he was 969 years old. Methuselah was the father of Lamech who was the father of Noah. This Lamech, Noah's father, is a different man from Lamech, the descendant of Cain about whom we learned last time. Noah, belonged to the tenth generation after Adam. When Noah was five hundred years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth.

What we plan to study concerning Noah will be of great value to us, because the days of Noah were similar to the times in which we live today. In the time of Noah, the world was filled to the brim with sin. The Scriptures say that *"the wickedness of man was great on the*

earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time." The hearts of the children of Adam were filled with evil thoughts, greed, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, strife, fighting, adultery, theft, murder, and folly (based on Mark 7:21,22). Men were ruining the world, which God had created for them. Many had religion, but it was merely for show. Sinful pleasure was their god, and their sins just kept piling up! Listen to what the Scripture says in the Torah, the book of Genesis, chapter six:

Then the Lord said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years." The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the Lord said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air, for I am grieved that I have made them."

Thus we see how God purposed to wipe out the descendants of Adam from the earth because of their wickedness. However, we also see how God, in His mercy, intended to be patient with sinners for another 120 years to give them **time to repent**, so that they might not perish. However, when that limit was reached, God would judge everyone who refused to repent and accept His way of righteousness.

There is something we can learn about the character of God, from that limit of 120 years. It is this: **God is very patient, but His patience has a limit!** He will speak and strive with man so that he might repent, but not forever. That is why in the time of Noah, God said, *"My Spirit will not contend with man forever. His days will be a hundred and twenty years."* Thus we see how God planned to be patient with sinners for a time and then judge them if they refused to repent. In this, we can observe two characteristics of God: **His patience** and **His wrath**. God is good and can be very patient; but He is also righteous and can get very angry!

Some think of God as one who hovers over them with a big stick, as though God is quick to anger and takes pleasure in hitting and hurting people. But God is not like that. **Others think** that God is never angry and will merely forgive and forget the sins of people. "God is good! God is good!" This is all they know. But God is not like that either.

The Holy Scriptures tell us the truth concerning the character of God. God is good **and** righteous! He can be patient **and** angry. His goodness and His mercy are the reasons why He is patient with sinners, but His righteousness and His holiness are the reasons why He is also angry with their sins. God is a Saviour and a Judge. The prophets wrote a great deal about the **patience and wrath of God**. Let us listen to some of their words.

The Scriptures say:

*"But do not forget this one thing: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is **patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.**" **"The Lord will judge his people. It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.... See to it [therefore] that you do not refuse Him who speaks...for our God is a consuming fire!"***

In the Psalms we read: *"**God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day [toward the sinner who] does not relent.**"*

In the Gospel it is written:

*"**The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness ...[God will judge them and His] judgment...is based on truth. You then ...do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? But because of***

your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God will give to each person according to what he has done."

The wrath of God is not like the wrath of man. Man can become very angry, but his anger will diminish little by little until he may even forget what made him angry in the first place. The anger of God is not like that! The passing of time does not cause God's anger to diminish. God is a righteous Judge and He does not forget anything! **His anger does not diminish** toward those who refuse to repent; instead, **it increases!** This is what we just finished reading in the Scriptures: *"Because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath."*

The people of Noah's time were *"storing up"* for themselves the wrath of God! However, there remained one man at that time who loved God with all his heart, and believed God's word. That man was **Noah**. Thus the Scriptures say: *"But Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God."*

Why did God show Noah His grace? Did Noah merit the grace of God? No! Grace which is merited is no longer grace. Grace means "unmerited favour." Why did God extend His grace to Noah and not to the others? What does the Scripture say about that? It tells us that **Noah believed God**, while the others did not believe Him. **Noah believed the word of God**. He believed what God promised concerning the Redeemer who was to come into the world to save sinners. Like all of Adam's descendants, Noah had sin in him, but God counted Noah as a righteous person because he believed God and offered Him the blood of a sacrifice for his sin, as God had commanded. Thus, the Scriptures say *"Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time."*

One day God said to Noah:

*"I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. **So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be 150 meters long, 25 meters wide and 15 meters high. Make a roof for it...Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark, you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you... You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."***

Thus God told Noah how he planned to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy everyone who refused to repent and believe the truth. God told Noah to build a large boat and called it an ark to escape the flood. The length of the ark had to be 150 meters; the length of one and a half soccer fields. It would be a refuge for Noah and his family and many animals and anyone else who would believe God's Word. God ordered Noah to make **many rooms** on the inside of the ark, but only **one door** on the outside of the ark. Thus, God's message for the people of Noah's time was this: **Anyone who wishes to escape the judgment of the flood must pass through the one door of the ark.** Every person who passes through the door will be **saved**. Those who do not pass through the door will **perish!**

So Noah started to build the ark. It was a huge task. Noah and his three sons had to chop down hundreds and hundreds of large trees, cut them into planks, shape and nail them, and coat them with tar inside and out. Noah's wife and his son's wives also helped them in that hard work. For one hundred years, day after day, Noah and his family worked on building the ark. But Noah did not limit his activity to merely building. He also preached to

the people of his day. Perhaps he said something like this: "Listen! The Lord has told me to warn you of His wrath! God's anger boils because of your sin! He has decided to bring a flood on the earth to destroy everyone who refuses to repent. However, I make known to you good news! God, in His mercy, has ordered me to build an ark to be a refuge for anyone who repents of their sin and believes the word of God!" Thus Noah warned the people with many words, and urged them to turn from the evil ways of their corrupt generation.

What do you think? Did the people of Noah's era believe the word which God announced to them through His prophet? We cannot reply now, because our time is gone. Next time, however, in the will of the Lord, we will continue with the story of the prophet Noah and see how God preserved everyone who believed His word, and how He judged those who did not believe His word, letting them drown in the waters of a great flood.

Thank you for listening....God bless you as you think about what we read today in the Scriptures:

"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But [the day of God's judgment] will come like a thief."

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