

God's Grace in the Story of Noah

In Genesis 6:5–7, we read of God's displeasure with the world and its overwhelming wickedness. As God pronounces judgment upon the world and prepares to destroy the earth with a flood, we find one of the most encouraging statements in scripture: *"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."* (Genesis 6:8)

Noah found favor in God's sight, and the result of that favor was the salvation of him and his family from the coming destruction. This raises some important questions:

Why Noah?

Why did Noah find grace in the eyes of the Lord?

How does this apply to us today?

Some have concluded that God arbitrarily chose Noah to be saved and chose everyone else to perish. When we examine Scripture more closely, we see a different picture.

Why Did Noah Find Grace?

Genesis 6:9 gives us valuable insight. The text says Noah was "a just man." Some translations say, *"a righteous man."* In contrast to the wicked world around him, Noah lived differently. The text also says he was *"perfect in his generations,"* which many translations render as *"blameless."* This does not mean Noah was sinless, but rather that he was a man of moral integrity. He was upright and without glaring faults. He stood out among the corruption of his day. Genesis 6:9 further says, *"Noah walked with God."* This was the true demonstration of Noah's righteousness. He was like his great-grandfather Enoch who *"walked with God"* (Genesis 5:24). After God gave Noah the instructions for building the ark, we read: *"Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did."* (Genesis 6:22) And again: *"And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him."* (Genesis 7:5). His obedience was prompted by faith: *"By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark, for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith."* (Hebrews 11:7) Noah not only lived righteously, but he also preached righteousness. Noah is described as *"a preacher of righteousness."* (2 Peter 2:5). Based on Genesis 6:3, he had 120 years to proclaim God's warning while the ark was being prepared. God's grace was available to all, but only Noah and his family were willing to heed the message.

How Does This Apply to Us Today?

Just as Noah found grace, so can we. When we turn from sin and turn toward God, we discover the very same blessing: *"grace in the eyes of the Lord."* Peter draws a powerful comparison between Noah's salvation and ours: *"who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 3:20-21)

Just as God used water to save Noah from a sinful world, today through God's grace, He uses the waters of baptism to bring us into a new life through the blood of Jesus! Noah's story is one of grace offered, faith displayed, and obedience rewarded. The same God who saved Noah is still offering grace to all who will listen, believe, and obey.

- by Josh McCord

Elders: A Great Blessing — but there is a warning

God, in His infinite wisdom, established a clear and beautiful plan for the organization of His church. Each congregation is to be autonomous — self-governing under Christ — with qualified men serving as elders (also called bishops, overseers, or pastors) to guide the local flock (Acts

14:23; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1–3). This arrangement, when carried out according to God's design, provides strength, stability, and spiritual leadership for the people of God. Faithful elders are indeed a great blessing — men who “*watch for your souls*” (Hebrews 13:17), who love the truth, and who labor diligently to lead others in it.

Yet, while God's plan is perfect, men are not. Even among those who serve as elders, there is potential for weakness, error, and sin. The apostle Paul recognized this danger when he met with the elders of the church at Ephesus. In his solemn farewell message, he warned: “*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*” (Acts 20:28–30)

Think of that! Paul, speaking to faithful men who were already serving as elders, warned that some among them could become a source of strife and division within the Lord's church. Sadly, history has shown how true his words were. Time and again, congregations have been torn apart because certain elders ceased to “*take heed unto themselves.*” They allowed pride, personal agendas, or a lust for control to replace humble service.

This should cause every congregation to take great care in the appointment of elders. The qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 are not mere suggestions — they are divine safeguards. Men who serve as elders must first prove themselves in character, faith, and judgment. They must demonstrate soundness in doctrine, patience in dealing with others, and genuine love for the souls they lead.

Let us thank God for good elders who serve faithfully and well. And let us also recognize the grave responsibility we bear in selecting them. Choosing the wrong men for this vital office can bring untold harm to the Lord's people. But when qualified men serve with humility and steadfast devotion to God's word, the church will be blessed, united, and strong — just as the Lord intended.

- by Greg Gwin