

# The Righteousness of Noah

**Key Verse:** “Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.”  
—**Genesis 6:22**,  
*English Standard Version*

**Selected Scripture:**  
**Genesis 6:9-22**

OUR KEY VERSE, IN FEW words, identifies the one characteristic God found most desirable in Noah. Noah did all that God commanded him as an outworking of his faith. The Scriptures put a high value on following God’s commands. Consider Samuel’s statement to King Saul in this regard, “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.” (I Sam. 15:22, *ESV*) For the Christian, as well, John’s first epistle has these words of wisdom, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. ... And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.”—I John 5:2-4, *ESV*

Noah’s great faith is lauded in the favorable account of him in the Book of Hebrews. “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.” (Heb. 11:7, *ESV*) This may not seem remarkable on the surface, but probing

deeper, we perceive the great trust and reverence that Noah had toward God. Genesis 2:6 suggests that earth's climatic conditions were such that it was watered by mists that arose from the ground. Thus, apparently, up to the time of the flood, it had not yet rained. Imagine being in Noah's place as he heard of a great coming deluge—which had never been seen before—and being instructed to build an enormous ship in an apparently land-locked area.

Great ridicule must have been heaped upon Noah. As he laid down the first mighty beam of the ark's keel, the people likely howled with laughter, being heedless of their coming doom. It was a day of small beginnings, and Noah was determined to do all that God commanded. There is a lesson from this to be applied in our Christian lives. "Who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth." (Zech. 4:10) Let us not despise the small beginnings that lead to greater outcomes. The seemingly paltry newly laid foundation of the second temple, the insignificant first beam of the ark, and the improbable growth of a Christian from their first expression of faith in Christ, all lead to great victories of faith.

The Apostle Peter tells us that Noah actively engaged in public confession of his faith as a "preacher of righteousness," even as he was engaged in building the ark. (II Pet. 2:5) He likely told his wicked neighbors that mankind must seek to obey and please God. For a hundred and twenty years he persisted in this work. In so doing, he reminded the people of their duty to God, his laws, and to each other. He warned of the coming judgment and the flood of waters. Noah had no converts to show for his many years of witnessing. We ask ourselves, "Would I persevere for so long, with such ridicule and persecution, and no evident success?" By God's grace, we trust that we would, and be obedient to all that he has commanded. ■