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Sermon Transcript

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Five Steps in Noah's Walk with God

A question for you: Do you know what kind of wood Noah's ark was made from? What kind of wood was Noah's ark made from? Somebody had his hand up. If you said gopher wood, you might be well on the way as far as establishing yourself as a Bible trivia quiz star; but what if I asked you what was Noah made of? Could you answer that? What did he consist of? What was he composed of? We might ask ourselves, perhaps, the obvious question beyond that; and that is, which was more important: what the ark was made of or what Noah was made of? What was the saving factor? The gopher wood or Noah's character? Or is there even a greater factor that we need to ask ourselves about this afternoon?

Mr. Roybal already took you to, in a sense, scriptures regarding this; but come with me once again, please. On the Sabbath day, let's open our Bibles and let's turn to **Matthew 24, verse 37**, and notice some of the words regarding the man, Noah. Starting in **verse 36** of the Olivet prophecy, found in **Matthew 24:36**:

Matt. 24:36 - *But of that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.* And, so, the Church for all times has been given an admonition and a realization that we do not know the day or the hour. *But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.* So there is, at least, enough to consider. It says, *As the days of Noah were...something was happening back then, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be, for as in the days of Noah before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

Seemingly, as we allow scripture to speak for itself, life was going on in the minds of the people before the flood on a very ordinary basis. Now, there are different ways of looking at this. We could say, perhaps, how they were marrying or how they were eating; but I think the greater sense is that they just ignored the warning, repentant message of Noah, went on with the cares of life, giving and taking in marriage and eating and drinking; and it came upon them all of a sudden; and we know the rest of the story.

We may never be able to pinpoint exactly all of what occurred back then; but I think we can pinpoint how Noah lived his days out and how this biblical character actually survived two floods. Did you know that? Had you ever considered that, that Noah actually survived two floods? Is it biblical? I think so. He survived (1) the flood of human nature, which was rising to crisis proportion; and then, (2) through God's grace, he survived the great flood that we know as the Noachian flood.

Today what I'd like to do with you is explore what made this man tick, what composed this man. Noah, out of all the individuals in the Bible, inhabits a unique territory. He is literally the human bridge between the age that was and the age that is. He is a bridge. Not only that, but when you think about it, each and every one of us in this room is directly related to this individual. That should be of interest to us. We should think about it. What I would like to do today is to share not only the message of repentance and warning that he gave to that world then-and he did have a warning message of repentance-but I'd like to share with you the living message that he shares with you and me today in the 21st century Church of God. I'm probably going to center on that, first and foremost, and most in the course of the sermon.

This individual is mentioned with only a few others in the Bible in a very unique setting. Noah is mentioned as a man that literally, in that sense, walked, or figuratively, walked with God, walked with God. And with that thought in mind, I'd like to share with you this afternoon five distinct steps that Noah took in his walk with God that ultimately allowed him to walk through the flood of human nature, allowed him to walk onto the ark, and ultimately walk into the spiritual hall of fame of faith found in **Hebrews 11**.

Come with me. Let's begin the story over here in **Genesis 6** and notice a few things that are mentioned about these days of Noah, because it gives us some indicators of what those days were like, so that we can know ourselves when the time of the Son of Man does approach. We find in Genesis 6, **verse 1**:

Gen. 6:1-4 - *Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.*

Now let's understand a few of the backdrops of what is going on here in Genesis 6:1-4. We now re-enter a world that has many, many similarities to our day and our age. There is a breakdown in morality. There is a breakdown in religious regard of epic proportions, ever since the time of Eden, with humanity separated from God. If humanity is separated from God, they are going to be separated from one another. They are separated from the purpose of God; and we recognize that, most likely, up until the time of the flood, there was tremendous carnage; there was tremendous war; there was tremendous taking of

human life, because after the flood, one of the first things that God instructs Noah and He reminds Noah of is that man is made in God's image. It seems to have been forgotten; and it says that if a man takes the blood of another man, his life will be taken from him. Why? Because he's in the image of God. There seems to have been a lot of killing and a lot of carnage. Not only that, but we recognize there must have been a moral breakdown.

We notice here that it says that there were giants on the earth in those days. Giants, or if you go back into biblical terms, it says, "Nephilim," or another terminology might be "heroes." Mankind was now choosing its own set of heroes. The Hebrew word here implies not so much the thought of gigantic stature-I'm sorry, kids, in that sense, when we think of a Goliath of Gath or whatever-but the Hebrew implies the sense of an enormous drive, abandon, and a recklessness. It mentions people that are mighty. Go to **Genesis 10**, **Genesis 11**. We recognize the description of Nimrod was that he was a mighty man-in place of, in front of, apart from God. So humanity was picking its own heroes.

On the pre-flood *People Magazine*, you no longer saw Abel. You no longer saw Methuselah. You no longer saw Enoch, who walked with God; but humanity, it very much says here, was choosing its own heroes. And not only that, but in this scripture where it talks about the "sons of God saw the daughters of men," we recognize that there was a breakdown in spiritual integrity. It seems as if, ultimately, the righteous line-the line that came from Seth, in that sense, the line that tried to follow the way of God, tried to follow the way of Abel, that line, the

preachers of righteousness-ultimately, as the generations went along, began to infuse with the other line; and there was a meltdown in values, a meltdown in integrity. This is mentioned specifically for a reason maybe you've never understood before; and that is this, that these giants, these mighty men that are mentioned here, their was in their bodies. Their was for the moment. Their was not in their values, not in their hearts; and they did not have an eye for the future.

Now, we look here for a moment in the story; and we see that God says (**verse 3**), "...yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." God made a determination that the time of witness to humanity would be for 120 years. Something that we want to understand about this is that God has tremendous mercy, tremendous patience, the patience of God; and God today is showing, in a sense, that same mercy and that same patience. But we can be assured that the sand is going to run out just as much *{now}* as it ran out in this *{Noah's}* time and in this age. You and I cannot see the stopwatch of God's patience and God's mercy. We do not know when His time for us and this age is over. No man knows the day or the hour. "For as it was in the days of Noah, they were giving and taking in marriage, eating and drinking..." and then something happened. God is patient and God is merciful; but when the patience and when the mercy ends, then, in that sense, there is no bargaining for additional time, as we look at that world and understand our own world.

There was one man with an eye to the future: Noah. And we discover the first basic step that he took. I'd like you to go now just a few verses over to **verse 8**. God had determined that mankind only had so much time, and then we notice in verse 8:

Verse 8 - *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.*

One of the great verses of the Bible, one of the great words of the Bible. It's a very, very short word, and that word is "but," b-u-t *{spelled}*. It sticks out. We notice it with the example of Noah. In the New Testament we notice it with the example of Barnabas. Two distinct personalities. "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." When we notice the word "Noah" here mentioned...I'd like to share a thought with you. I'll try to conclude with it at the end of the sermon. The very word "Noah" means "rest." In that sense, he was at rest; and we'll talk about that a little bit later. But it says that he found grace in the eyes of the Lord. The first distinct step that I want to share with you about this pivotal individual in your Bible is this:

1) He was available.

"But Noah..." He was there. He was ready. He was different. He was willing. Those are all short phrases but have a powerful meaning for God to be able to use you and me today.

Availability is such a powerful tool in God's hands. Availability knows no bounds, no age, no race, no educational degree nor present pursuit. Sometimes I know we can come to a church and we can see this person do this, see that person do that, somebody come behind the microphone, somebody do this or that. The most important thing in how God can use us is not our I.Q. as humanity determines it. ("I.Q." means "intelligence quotient.") But God operates on a completely different base, if I can share with you. It's not intelligence quotient. It's "identity quotient." It's knowing who God is and knowing who you are. That is more important than any brain power. It is the ability and the revelation that God gives you to be a servant of His; and that is what God did with Noah. His availability was not just simply for a moment of time, as we look here in Genesis 6:8, "But Noah..." but it was a state of mind, a desire to serve God.

It's kind of interesting, when you are here in Genesis 6 and you look at what it says here...you might want to jot this down and look at it later. In **Genesis 6:3**, it says that humanity would have 120 years; in **Genesis 7:6**, (don't need to go there), it says that Noah was 600 years old. When you put this all down and you figure it out, simple math, *{you can see}* that when God was dealing with Noah and came to Noah about this situation and revealed what He was going to do, Noah was 480 years of age. Now, there have been a few mornings that I've woken in my lifetime and I've felt like 480 years of age, but I'm not, and neither are you; but it is very interesting.

I want to share the thought with you, that God came to this patriarch and revealed something; and He said, "I have a work to do through you." Noah could have said...you

know, some of our young people here, let's remember, Noah, in a sense, probably "grew up in the Church," if you want to use that phrase. He came from a whole line of ministers, if we want to use that parlance. His grandpappy, his great-grandpappy, his whatever, had all been preachers of righteousness. They had been there; they had done that. Enoch himself, a man that walked with God, had taken on Lamech, had taken on Tubalcain, had taken on some of the figures in the line of Cain, had gone against them, had done the work of God. Noah could have said, "It's all over. The best is in the past. God's done it. God's given the message. No more to do."

I think one of the great lessons of looking at Noah being 480 years of age is that God's work is never done. And, number two, God's work in you and in His body is never done. God has a work. There is no period at the end. There is no exclamation point.

I know one of the great calling cards when God began working with my family and as I began listening as a young boy, was to understand that God is in the process of a work, that God is a worker. Do you remember how you first came to that revelation and that understanding in scripture? I had gone to church. I had heard that God is love. I learned all the different stories and the wonderful stories about Jesus; but, at the same time, I had not, maybe you had not, come to the understanding that God is doing something, that God is about something; and I remember a minister, like I do today, going to **John 5:17** and quoting Jesus Christ, for Jesus said, "My Father works and so do I." That work is never over. God is always working loudly behind the scenes, even when we don't see what is happening; and He is never done with us. Like Yogi Berra said, "It's never over till it's over." One of the profound instructions of this is that God's work is in continuance. It's never done; and He's looking for people that understand that, that are available to that, and that are eager to carry that out.

Let's notice what it says here. Because Noah was available, it allowed something to happen. Come to **Amos 3, verse 7**. Because he was available, because he was ready, and because his mind was eager, God was able to use him in something very specific. One of the key promises of the Bible that we find over here in Amos 3, verse 7:

Amos 3:7 - *Surely the Lord God does nothing...God says He will surely do nothing unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.*

That's a promise. But to be able to do that, you have to be available. You have to be ready. You have to, in a sense, be spiritually eager. You have to have an identity that God understands and that you understand God. When I look at Amos 3:7, I look at this as being one of the great compasses and one of the great security rocks of my life. For nearly 38 years being in the Church of God, when I came to this understanding, I recognized that there was a Noah in the past, there was a Noah in the childhood of Robin Webber, and God will yet provide Noahs in the future that will guide and encourage and show the way, whether it be to this world or whether it be to the Church. Brethren, on this Sabbath day, in January, 2000, you need to embed that in your heart, take that as a matter of faith, and understand that. That is very, very important.

Again, it is interesting, what was occurring "as in the days of Noah." It says that they were giving, it says that they were eating, it says that they were drinking, and it says, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be....," yet. Come with me to **Daniel 12**, would you please. In Daniel 12, we pick up a little bit more of the understanding of what those days are going to be like. Now, like I said, seemingly, when you understand the full Genesis account, those were incredible times; and there really was no respect for human life. There must have been, obviously, tremendous wars and tremendous pillage.

Dan. 12:1 - *At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation...* This is a prophecy defining what the times are going to be like, that never in the course of human history is there a time as yet is to come. Now, you and I, brethren, some of us, have heard these scriptures ring in our ears for 15 or 25 or 30 years, but you know and I know we can just get caught up eating and drinking and giving and taking in marriage as if it's always going to go on and on and on. As it says in the book of **Peter**, there are going to be some that say, "Well, my Lord delays His coming." And yet, notice again one of the indicators here is found in **verse 4**:

Verse 4 - *But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.*

There is going to be just what we are seeing today with this information glut, with the technology, that knowledge is going to increase and people are going to be so caught up and so busy, whether they are going to or whether they are going fro. Now, today I don't know if you've come from fro or to or to or fro; but it states that (1) people are going to be so busy that they're not going to be able to understand the sign of the times, and (2) because of that, they're not going to be available, they're not going to hear God, and they're not going to be different.

Noah was available. Come back here to **Genesis 6**. I want to show you something that perhaps you've never noticed before in this account. It's a wonderful, wonderful sentence that I'd like to share with you here. **Verse 9**, where it says:

Gen. 6:9 - *...Noah was a just man, he was perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.*

It says that he was perfect. It says that he was just. I went to the commentary here, the *New King James Study Bible*, and the word "perfect" there has the idea of completeness or "that which is entirely in accord with truth and fact." Noah, like his godly ancestor Enoch, walked with God. He separated himself from wickedness of his contemporaries and followed God. He was a man that, to use common parlance, was true-blue. He was the real thing.

Let's go up a notch, back to **verse 8**:

Verse 8 - *But Noah...*in one of the great foundational scriptures regarding this subject, *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord*. Now this is very important to understand. Even a little bit with what Mr. Roybal was saying here. This is the first time (maybe you've never been aware of this) that grace is mentioned in the Bible; and it's mentioned coupled with Noah. Grace is not simply a subject of the New Testament, brethren. It is a biblical subject from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Let's understand what this means.

The word "grace" itself, it's root meaning, is, literally, "to bend" or "to stoop." Maybe you didn't realize that. Kind of interesting, when you think about it. It's to bend or to stoop, implying the condescending or unmerited favor of a superior person to an inferior one. Of course, we understand that grace comes from God. And so, we find here in the beginning that because of his availability, his keen desire of readiness, that Noah was, in that sense, in a state of grace and favor with God, that God was working with him. We're going to find out more about that as we go to **Hebrews 11** in the next step; and that is very, very important and reveals the next step.

2) Noah believed God.

Why was he able to experience God's grace? Point number 2, the second distinct step: Noah simply believed God. That's what separated him. Noah simply believed God. This grace-oriented state was based upon belief and not simply works. Noah did not receive grace because he was a good boat builder; but because he believed God and God gave him grace, he built the boat. Obedience was the reflex of belief, not vice versa.

Let's come to **Hebrews 11, verse 6**. Let's notice something here, Hebrews 11, where I told you earlier that Noah is logged. In Hebrews 11, we kind of understand a little bit more about Noah. Notice what it says here.

Heb. 11:6 - *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that he is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

He rewards those who diligently seek Him. What's incredible to think about...are you with me for a second? In this world that then was, only one man now at this time was diligently seeking God. Interesting. Only one man, and that was Noah. And notice what it says:

Verse 7 - *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 God {faith}.*

He condemned the world, brethren, ultimately not by what he said, not ultimately by what he knew, but by what he did-building a boat on dry land. His faith was displayed by his works, because God told him to and why. And he simply followed the instructions of God. What is incredible is he was the last man on earth to do so, which initiates an entire thought that we're going to conclude the sermon with, that here-maybe you've never

considered this-this is the beginning of a seam and a theme that runs through the Bible of God working with a remnant people. Not the many, but the few.

Many are called, but few are chosen. And it came down to this one man at that time. Can you imagine that he was, in that sense, condemned by humanity. Here he is, out in the middle of nowhere, building a boat; and there's not a drop of water around. What he must have gone through. You and I read the story. We know the story, but to have been a part of the story while it was happening was incredible. You can see the great drydock. You see the boat going up for 120 years, because Noah actually had two jobs: (1) He was a preacher of righteousness, and so he had that commission to preach to the world the message of repentance. (2) At the same time, he had to be a boat builder along with his family. And he did that as well. But the mocking and the insults. He must have had a thousand and a thousand and a thousand insults over 120 years, but he persevered. He was committed. He believed in God.

What about your belief in God? Is it like Noah's in the world, as in the days of Noah? I always remember that old Burt Bacharach song, you know, back from *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head." But there were no raindrops. Burt couldn't have written that song back then. There was no moisture, in that sense, on earth; and yet, Noah believed.

It reminds me of the story of the two men. There was one man that got down on his knees because he was in the middle of a drought. Probably here in southern California. He got down on his knees and said, "God! Look, God, we need rain. Please send the rain." He got up off of his knees. He grabbed his umbrella. He opened that door, flung it wide open, expecting to see it storm. He looked out. There wasn't a cloud in the sky. There was no storm. There was no rain. He looked at his umbrella. He looked out, saw nothing. He tossed his umbrella aside and he said, "What good did that do?"

Now, there was another man who lived next door; and he looked out and saw the same sky and he did the same thing. He got down on his knees, and he prayed. He said, "Father, we need rain." He got up off of his knees, and he opened that door. He was looking at the same sky as the other guy, and there wasn't a cloud in the sky. And yet, he took his umbrella with him. It was a man who believed. It was a man who knew that for God to do His part, he had to do his part.

It really brings faith down to an understanding that I think all of us can, perhaps, wrap our minds around-faith is knowing that it's going to rain even when you don't see the clouds. A person of faith is going to pray. A person of faith is going to rise from his prayers, and he's going to go out to meet his prayers. Is that how you pray? Is that how you are available? Is that your belief structure, that as you've gotten off your knees, as you have been in touch with the divine force of the universe, through the Son, Jesus Christ, you know that you've been heard. *{Do}* you get off your knees and go out and look for those answers? Have you done that this week? Are you going to do that this week? Is that what

your Christianity is about, because that's how Noah persevered for 120 years. Even when there wasn't a cloud in the sky, he and his sons kept on building the boat.

As Noah, we need to remember, in faith, that God has given each of us a task; and if He has given us a task, He's going to provide the tools. The greatest tool that He gives us is the gift of faith. The same faith, the literal faith, that Jesus Christ had, is in us.

A thought, coming back here to **Genesis 6**, let's go back here to the beginning again. Can you imagine how Noah felt as God began to reveal this to him, what he must have been going through as he heard that all of humanity was going to be destroyed, as it says up here in **Genesis 6:7**:

Gen. 6:7 - *So the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."*

That just must have made Noah numb to recognize the fate of humanity, to recognize God dealing with them as God announced divine judgment on this earth. I think a very important thing to understand is that it was God's judgment. We talk about Noah. We talk about the flood. We talk about the ark. We can draw animals going to and fro and in pairs going into the ark; but, brethren, we dare not leave God out of it because, ultimately, it was God who was responsible for the flood. It's a very important understanding in understanding the story of Noah, that God is the righteous judge. God is merciful, God is patient; but God also hates sin. He really does.

Now, today that is more and more a *{difficult}* concept for people in the 21st century to understand because today we don't use the word "sin" so much in our society. We talk about "misbehavior." We talk about "blemishes." We talk about "character flaws." We talk about "warts." We talk about the...anything to downgrade what God calls it. God says it's sin!

In **Proverbs 6:16**, God says, "There are six things that I hate, yes, seven are an abomination to Me." Now, an abomination is not a blemish. An abomination is not a character flaw. "Abomination" literally means "hatred of," "to detest," "is loathsome." And it comes to a point where God has got to really allow humanity to recognize the course of sin. That's what He did here in **Genesis 6**. Notice **verse 13**, and He lays claim to it. So the Lord says, "I will destroy man." God says, "I am going to do that." He is the giver and He is the taker of life. He is the ultimate judge. He didn't want to have any mistake made. He does not want you, He does not want me, four thousand years down the line, to think it was the water or the earthquake or even the springs underneath the earth that came up. Yes, those were extensions; but it came from the righteous judge. These were not just natural circumstances or coincidences that were occurring. God said, "I will do this."

Again, let's notice **verse 17**. It says:

Verse 17 - *And behold, I Myself am bringing flood waters...*so God claims to be the origin and the author of the destruction of that pre-Noahic world. That's hard sometimes for people to understand because we know that God is love. We know that God is merciful. But, brethren, I think it goes to show that God's work and God's creative forces are not in vain. God is not in the process of creating and establishing divine eternal problems. He is in the process of establishing and creating a divine family of children. There is a difference; and God wants that difference ultimately in us and in all of humanity; and, frankly, He's not going to settle for anything else. For every cause there is an effect, and God judges based upon that. But sometimes we or others can push that off.

Come with me for a second. Let me show you a story in **Exodus 8:19**, if we can just hop over here to Exodus for a second. In Exodus 8:19, what can happen sometimes is people say, "Oh, that's not really God's hand. No, that's not really God's displeasure. No, God wasn't really in that. There were other circumstances." Notice Exodus 8, and **verse 18**, this is in the midst of either the third or the fourth plague (I can't pick it up here in scripture), but:

Ex. 8:18-19 - *Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on man and beast. And then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." "This is God's finger. This is God's doing, Rambo...or Rameses. This is God!"* But, you know human nature. "No, the Nile got kind of red and got kind of polluted and then it kind of stank and then hatched some larvae and then we got the lice." The magicians and the wise men of the kingdom were behind him and they literally said, "This is God. You're dealing with God now. You're going big-time, Pharaoh. Wake up! Repent!" But notice what Pharaoh said: *But Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the Lord had said.* Man wants to diminish God's involvement. Not only that, but humanity wants to diminish, at times, what God did. Today there are many, many accounts and many, many books disregarding the flood of Noah. I want you to know that I believe that it was a universal flood. I do believe that all of humanity died, other than the immediate family of Noah.

Let me share some thoughts with you from the *New King James Study Bible*, from the bottom of page 21:

The reason why it was a universal flood is that God, the Master Educator, was making an object lesson, that sin brings death. The flood of waters is described as a global flood. Universal terms, "all flesh" and "everything" are used 30 times in describing this flood. The double superlatives, "every living thing of all flesh" and "all the high hills under the whole heavens" clearly indicate that the author intended to state his case unmistakably.

(God intended to describe this unmistakably because all scripture is God-breathed.)

*The Hebrew word "mabbuwl," meaning "deluge" describes only this flood, as does the New Testament Greek word, "katakluzo," with a "k," from which we know the word "cataclysm." That's found in **II Peter 3:3-7**. The depth of the flood and its duration of 371*

days indicates that it was not a mere local flood. The size of the ark, 95,700 square feet of deck space, and its gross tonnage indicate the magnitude of this flood. God's promise found in chapter 9, verse 11, that He would never again send such a flood upon the earth also confirms its uniqueness. Christ referred to both the historicity and the universality of this flood as an example of the worldwide judgment to accompany His second coming in Matthew 24, verse 37. The conclusion is inescapable. The universal flood is presented as a fact of history in the Bible.

One last interesting note in this section, focusing on 7:20, 15 cubits upward is mentioned.

The water level was 15 cubits, or about 22.5 feet higher than the highest mountain. Since water seeks its own level, certainly this was not a local flood.

Sin brings death, individually or collectively; and God is judge.

Let's notice **verse 18**. Let's come back to **Genesis 6:18** and notice a wonderful concept that is borne out here in the life of this individual, Noah. In Genesis 6 and verse 18, in the midst of all of this sadness and sin...and nobody rejoiced over that then as nobody rejoices over that today, because even in the book of **Ezekiel**, it says there are those who are going to sigh and cry for the sins of the people. This did not give Noah pleasure, in that sense, being singled out. It did give him responsibility. Notice, though, in verse 18:

Gen. 6:18 - *But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark-you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you.*

And, so, what we understand here is that God made a bond. He made a pact, a formal agreement, with Noah. An agreement, though, as we find that Noah was found in grace, that this was not just simply physical deliverance, but spiritual salvation, in that sense, for Noah.

Remember what I said earlier, that God never gives us a task without giving us the tools and direction. Notice **verse 15** here in **Genesis 6**. It is very interesting. Maybe you've never seen this phrase before. Interesting. To preamble this verse, today we live in a world where people don't want to be told what to do. They have their rights. People say, "What do you think, I'm dumb? You are kind of micro-managing me." God, in one sense, to a degree, is a micro-managing expert. I want to show you something here. Very interesting.

Gen. 6:15-16 - *And this is how you shall make it: the length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.*

Noah could have said, "But God, I'm only going to make one of these in my lifetime. Can't I just do it myself and add some of my own designer touches? Just a little bit?" God

said, "No, you're going to do it this way. This is exactly how it has to be done." See, what's interesting is that one of the reasons why God gives Christians the Old Testament is that God wants us to realize that He knows what is best. He is a God of detail. Noah had never experienced a flood. God knew exactly what it was going to take for Noah to get from one age to the next. Noah did not. God knew what it was. And this was, in a sense, a part of worship of Noah to God in this building. The Old Testament is given, in a sense, to allow us to understand that God is very specific, very specific in how we are to follow him, very specific in how we are to build, not only an ark, but to build a relationship. He's a little finicky, can I be honest with you in that? He is detailed. He knows, as the Master Educator and our Creator and our Heavenly Father, what is best. We either believe in that or we don't. It's very interesting when you look at it. Look at **verse 18**. Not only did He tell Noah exactly how to build, but notice, too, He gave him the exact passenger list.

Verse 18 - *But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark-you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you.*

Noah didn't ask about any stowaways. No. The passenger list was set by God; and Noah, in faith, accepted that, that it was coming down to a remnant. Understanding the concept of "remnant" in the Bible takes faith. It takes real faith. You know, we look around today. There are five billion people on earth. I remember back in the 60's as a young boy as we were first becoming acquainted with the way, and I remember Mr. Armstrong used to say, because there used to be a cigarette ad back then, "Can a million people be wrong?" I remember Mr. Armstrong saying, "Yes, a million people can be wrong." And there must have been at least a million people that were wrong here, and it all came down to one individual and his family. That's incredible to think about. God knew exactly what it was going to take to accomplish the trip. The test was on Noah, and that led to the third step.

3) Noah took the step of obedience.

The third distinct step was that Noah took the step of obedience. The step of obedience. I want you to notice what it says in **verse 22**, one of the great lines of the Bible. If you are daring enough and want to use your Bible as a workbook, I encourage you to maybe circle this. Notice what it says about Noah. After all of this...he is given all of the ifs, the ands, the buts, the inches, the yards, the cubits, he's given the passenger list, and then notice what it says:

Gen. 6:22 - *Thus Noah did; according to all that God commandment him...all, everything.* Now, there's a pretty heavy phrase in there. It's called "commanded." Today that's not a very popular word in the 21st century. Our words like "obedience" and "commandment"-too heavy for us today. We have to really ask ourselves...I think, frankly, brethren, individuals in the Church of God have got to be jolted with that reality and come back to basics as to whether or not God is really sovereign in their lives and whether or not the Bible has authority in their lives, to the inch, to the attitude, to the

value, to the reality of the fullness of Jesus Christ; and there is no wavering to the left and there is no wavering to the right.

Remember what I told you about the Old Testament? God ordained the Old Testament to allow us to realize that God wants to be worshiped not only by what we know, but by what we do; and *{God wants us}* to do it His way. Come with me to **Deuteronomy 12, verse 32**. Would you come with me, please. Notice what is stated here, and this is stated in the book of Deuteronomy.

Let's understand the purpose of the book of Deuteronomy, which is called the "second giving." What was happening is, Israel was no longer going to be a slave nation, no longer a nation of sojourning, wandering, going around in circles. They were now about to go over Jordan; and they were about to establish, in a sense, a type, a type of the Kingdom of God. They were going to be a nation, and God gave them something very specific here in Deuteronomy 12:32 to establish them as a nation, as a people.

Deut. 12:32 - *Whatsoever I command you, be careful to observe to do it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.*

God is very specific, friends, in how we are to build for Him, not simply an ark, but the temple of God that is in us. As God was very exacting with Noah and building material, so He is just as exacting with us as to show us how we can survive the flood of human nature today and cross over into another age. God does also give us what I might call "divine specs" or "divine specifications" of how to build, and sometimes they can almost seem like too much or too great or too big. Just like when people were watching Noah build the ark on this plain, they would say, "Noah, you're kind of going over the top here, aren't you, a little bit? I mean, isn't this thing kind of getting out of hand, kind of big? Why are you being so separated? You are such a sober-sides. You're no fun anymore. Why are you always spending time on this boat? Why are you doing this? Why are you doing that?" God was giving Noah, and He gives us, divine specifications.

Let me share a thought or two with you. God does not deal with us in cubits and decks, but He has given us some very specific things. I can just give you a brief list of what we are to be building as Christians, and linking it with the ark.

- The first thing that God tells us to do is that we must first throw out our blueprints and start from scratch and soak the new material in water first. "But I've got all of these plans. I know how to build an ark. I know how to build Your temple inside of me." God says, "Get rid of your ideas. I know what's going to work. I know what's going to take you from the kingdom of man into the Kingdom of God. And first of all, you've got to soak the material in water. It's called baptism."
- The foundation of Christ is essential, and you must measure up to His stature. That's not in cubits. That's not inches. That's in absolutes and that's in values.
- We are to build along the lines of the apostles and the prophets, again, found in **Ephesians 2, verse 20**, as far as foundational building material.

- We are to put on the armor of God, as we find in **Ephesians 6**. We are to put on that armor. There are things that we are to take off, and there are things that we are to put on.
- We must be pitched, not with tar like the ark of old; but we must be pitched with the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. You know, when you go back there...come with me a second to **Genesis 6**. I'll show you something.

Gen. 6:14 - *Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it, "kaphar" it...this is one of the first mentionings of covering, which gives us a great theme of the Bible, of our sins being covered by blood. Just as in the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament, the ark of the covenant was covered by the blood, there is a covering taking place here. And it says, cover it inside and outside with pitch. The pitch that is defined here, ultimately, in the great spiritual ark is the blood of Jesus Christ, for as that pitch held out, held and kept apart the sentence of divine judgment of the living inside of the ark and the divine judgment from the outside, so does, then, the blood of Jesus Christ seal us, keep us, from the ultimate divine punishment of God that of and by ourselves we would merit.*

We must be sealed by the Holy Spirit. This is terminology that we understand throughout the New Testament. We must be sealed by the Holy Spirit. **Ephesians 1, verse 13**. Because the royal law of God, as wonderful as it is, we can read it; but without the Holy Spirit, we cannot fully, properly apply it in mercy and in judgment and in justice and in love. And so, we need to have all of that. That's very important to understand.

Now, with all of that, I want to show you a verse that maybe, perhaps, you've never seen before. That's why we come to Church, hopefully, to learn new things or to be reminded of other things. Come back here to **Genesis 7, verse 4**, something that I think is important for us to understand. I think sometimes we have the concept, if I can share it for a moment, that all of a sudden, there began to be a plop, plop, plip, plop, plip, plop. Wouldn't you like to have that right now in southern California, a little rain? And, you know, Noah's kind of going in, kind of shaking his umbrella, trying to get it out. There was no rain. There was NO rain. Powerful verse here. Genesis 7:4, notice:

Gen. 7:4-7 - *For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made. And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him. Noah was six hundred years old...So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood.*

But they were in the ark, friends, for seven days before it began to rain. What does this mean to you, what does this mean to me, as Christians in the 21st century? I would suggest, for there may be many different ways of looking at this, that there was a solemn pause of seven days before judgment. Remember what I mentioned to you in the

beginning that I hope you will always remember, that God is patient and God leans toward mercy. His patience and His mercy we cannot even begin to grasp or understand. Even Jonah, to that degree, understood that, as we read in the book of **Jonah**. There were seven days *{when}* there was a solemn pause. This, I believe, in a sense, is a type of what we find over in **Revelation 8, verse 1**. Will you come with me, please, to the end of the Bible. In Revelation 8:1, we find something very similar to this, between the sixth and the seventh seal, between the heavenly signs and then the last seal. We find in Revelation 8, verse 1:

Rev. 8:1 - *When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.*

Now, God does not relish, friends, the death of any of His children. Again, as He stated to Noah, humanity is made after His image and after His likeness. And there was a pause. God knew, as a loving Father, sometimes you have to correct children. Even being a loving father or a loving mother, they always say, "It hurts me more than it hurts you." You never figure that out until you're a parent. But God was working with a plan, and He knew what He had to do. What is interesting is that, as it shows God's mercy, humanity takes advantage of that, don't we? As it says in **Ecclesiastes 8:11**, *Because sentence against an evil work is not carried out speedily, therefore the heart of sons of men, even compound that-they do more; but, nonetheless, it does occur.*

There is a typification, showing that there is a solemn pause back there in the book of Genesis. There's going to be a time in the future; and, brethren, you could be a part of that. Humanity is not going to know that there is that silence in heaven. Why? Because they are going to be giving and they are going to be taking in marriage. They are going to be eating. They are going to be drinking. They are going to do exactly what they want to do and kind of, "So what, God? So what, God?" And, then it is going to happen, just as it did in the days of Noah, which leads us, then, to number 4. The fourth distinct step that Noah took was Noah's patience.

4) Noah's patience.

Noah was always waiting on God. Always waiting on God. Can you imagine the dread and the frustration as he was in there for seven days? First of all, the frustration because he probably heard the laughter. "Ah, come out of there, you old phony! Come out of there, you lunatic!" Snickering and laughter and rocks being thrown, and probably, *{knocking sounds}*, "You didn't suffocate in there, did you? How do you like the elephants?" Being mocked, being ridiculed, as people of God always have been, down through the ages. But, then, that laughter turned into something else. They had been warned for 120 years. And then, rather than hearing the pounding of ridicule, *{Noah}* began hearing the scratching of desperation, hearing the laughter turning into the screams. Not, perhaps, hearing anything because nobody was around the ark because they were trying to get to the highest mountain. The highest place and safer

would be one step higher than the next person. Then there was silence. Noah and his family experienced all of that.

Noah was patient for 120 years. He was patient for 7 days in the ark *{before it began to rain}*. He was patient for 371 days in the ark, or even in **Genesis 8:15**, come with me for a second. Let's notice Genesis 8:15. We notice something here. So often we are familiar in the book of Genesis with the story of the raven or the dove that was sent out; but the raven didn't come and tell Noah, "Time to get out." The dove didn't come out and tell Noah, "Time to get out." He did not move until, notice what it says in verse 15:

Gen. 8:15-16 - *Then God spoke to Noah, saying, "Go out of the ark..."*

A distinct message, a living message, to you and to me, 4,000 years down the line, friends, from Noah, is to wait on God; and that's very, very hard to do humanly. Can you imagine that for 120 years as Noah and his family did, or seven days in the ark when nothing happened according to, maybe, his time frame. Built the ark, got all the animals in, got in Mrs. Noah, got in everybody else. What's happening? God made him wait. I think waiting is something that we have to learn about in the Church of God, friends, very much. Patience is not only a virtue. It is a . It's a spiritual power tool. We need to have the same patience that Noah did. Come with me to **Revelation 14, verse 12**. Notice one of the defining elements of the Church of God in the end times, in the end age, the age which is likened to Noah:

Rev. 14:12-13 - *Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Then I heard a voice from heaven saying, and this is one of the beatitudes of Revelation, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."* And one of the labors and one of the works that a Christian and a Spirit-led individual has got to have today, friends, is patience, the perseverance that even when the rain is not falling that we know that God's word is true and that He has called us for a purpose and to move on, to continue, to move forward and to recognize, as it says in the book of **James**, that patience brings forth a perfect work. That leads us, then, to the fifth point and the final point.

5) Noah was committed, and he finished his commitments.

Coming back here to **Genesis**, if you will come with me, notice in **Genesis 7, verse 6**, a key statement:

Gen. 7:6 - *Noah was six hundred years old when the flood waters came upon the earth.*

Can you imagine that? Six hundred years of age. What can we learn from this? No matter how long, how hard, how many or few, Noah followed through. He was there at the end. For Noah, relationships with God, the work that God gave him to do, and family were long-term. One hundred twenty years from the time that he had been 480 years of age.

That's longer than all of our lives, unless there's somebody here that's over 120 years of age. We, too, have a long-term project. Come with me to **Luke 9:62**. Brethren, we need to take our calling just as importantly as Noah did. Because there are so many parallels between a Christian and Noah, because there is that spiritual bond.

Luke 9:62 - *But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*

That is what you and I did at baptism. Baptism is voluntary; and as we walked down in that water, or perhaps before you walked into the water of the baptismal pool, the minister that was with us most likely went through the count-the-cost chapter in Luke 14 and might even have read Luke 9:62 and asked you, sincerely, saying, "Are you ready for this moment? We know you can't do it of and by yourself and that's why you need God's Holy Spirit, but will you be committed?" The first thing when you go into a baptismal pool, the minister looks at you and he asks a question, and that is, "Have you repented of all of your sins?" And you say, "Yes, sir." And then he says, "Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?" And you say, "Yes, sir." "Because you have repented of your sins, which is the breaking of God's holy and righteous law and because you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and King and High Priest, I'm going to baptize you, not into any church, sect, creed, or denomination, but into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." And that is a vow, brethren. That is a vow. We take two vows in this lifetime: baptismal and marriage. Other than that, a Christian doesn't vow. That is a commitment; and in that commitment, we have to be as committed as Noah was in building that ark, because we are in the process of building something that is going to be discovered in the world tomorrow.

You know, everybody's wondering where Noah's ark is today. Did you ever watch those things? "Where is it up there? It's up there somewhere. It's up in the mountain of Ararat somewhere." I know that. They haven't found it. You're going to read an article about that next time in *World News and Prophecy*. But what we can find, brethren, is not so much a hunk of relic or fossil, but what we are finding in the Bible by these five distinct steps that Noah took, is how we can move from one age to the next and be a part of something that everybody is going to see. Not everybody in this lifetime is going to see Noah's ark. I haven't seen it; but we can see the character, we can see the establishment of what God was building and molding and tooling, not in an ark, but in Noah. Noah is what we should be looking at, and *{we should}* understand what made him tick, because we have so many things in common.

Many of us, brethren, myself included, have trouble sticking to a project. In this age, with so much going on, we have problems sticking to projects, whether it be the Church, a mate, a job. Commitment is the key. So often, we get side-tracked because we start worrying, don't we? We start worrying about this, we start worrying about that. Noah was focused. See, God gave him a job. He said, "Noah, you build the ark." Now, stay with me a second. I'm going to paraphrase for sake of time. He said, "Noah, you build Me the ark." But, then, wonder if Noah started getting worried about how all the animals were going to

get to the ark? What if he had spent 120 years thinking about that? You see, Noah was given the job of building the ark. And God said, "Noah, you focus on that." God's responsibility was to bring the animals to the ark. He said, "I don't want you, Noah, to be the big, big hunter. I'll take care of that. I'll do that. You do this, and I'll do that." Sometimes, though, we get worried about God's part of the deal.

Brethren, something that we've got to grow in and to understand, is that worry is not a responsibility that God has given us. Are you with me on that one? Worry is not a responsibility that God has given us. But completing the task that He does give us is what He wants us to focus on.

I have a final thought for you on this. I want to answer the question that I raised in the beginning, because it is fundamental. So what was it that brought Noah through the flood? Was it the gopherwood? Is that what saved Him? Was it his character that saved him, that made the difference? The answer is found in **Genesis 7, verse 16**. Come with me, please. It is essential because it speaks so much of God's plan for all humanity. In Genesis 7:16, let's notice:

Gen. 7:16 - *So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in.*

Noah built the boat. God brought the animals. God literally sealed them-OK, are you with me-sealed them into, in a sense, a grave, that He would keep alive. God sealed them. God alone could do that.

Notice **verse 1, chapter 8**. So what saved Noah beyond the sealing? Was it his good navigation skills? Was it the latest compass that he had?

Gen. 8:1 - *Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark.*

Here's the point, brethren; and this is the understanding of the Bible. It was not the gopherwood that saved Noah. It was not his good boat building that saved Noah. It was not even his character that saved Noah. It was not even his faith that saved him. It was not even the works that were established by that faith that saved him. God alone rescued Noah. God remembered Noah. Are you with me? That's something that we've got to get into our human skull and heart. That it's not by our works, but it's by God's grace and rescue that each and every one of us is made ready for the next part and portion of what He wants us to do. He sealed Noah and his family, buried them, in that sense, into the ark, just as you and I, as Christians, are buried in the pool of baptism, buried within the life of Jesus Christ; and God says, "It is only in this that I will be able to rescue you. It is only here, and stay put. Don't move out of that. Don't open up the door until I tell you to. Don't wander out."

Brethren, there are people that have put their hand to the plow, put their hand to the job, and they have looked back. And God is a judge. God is merciful. God is patient; but He is judging us. You know and I know that, in one sense, we have heard God in our life if we are converted. If we are Spirit-led and we know that Spirit is in us, we therefore have a job, just like Noah did. There is responsibility. When God says to stay put in the framework and in the quality of existence and in the life and the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, this is what is going to take us from the age of death and humanity into the promised Kingdom of God. That is where we are to be; and when we go outside of that, we are in the danger zone.

I want to share a verse with you to conclude. Come with me to **Ezekiel 14**. God gives us an admonition; and, friends, we don't need to be afraid of that. It's serious. Christianity is meant to be serious; but there is hope. But there is something that we need to understand here. **Ezekiel 14:18-19**, actually it starts in **verse 12**.

Ezek. 14:12-14 - *The word of the Lord came again to me, saying, "Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness..."*

It's interesting because God repeats this to make a significant point.

Verse 19 - *"Or if I send a pestilence into the land and pour out My fury on it in blood, and cut off from it man and beast, even though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live," says the Lord, "they would not deliver son nor daughter..."*

We have been given a serious calling, friends. We have been given a serious job. We are not building an ark today. We have been commissioned to allow the temple of God to be built in us.

There is something I want to share with you in positivity. Come with me to **Revelation 4**. This will be my last verse because I want to wind up on a high note with my friends today here on the Sabbath day. I just want to share a personal thought with you. When I think of Noah...what was the sign that God would never again send a flood upon the earth? Can somebody just tell me, please? What? A little bit louder. {*Someone in the congregation answered "rainbow."*} We all know it. Good. But, you know, we cannot allow that rainbow to be lost on Noah. Come to **Revelation 4, verse 3**. I want to share something with you.

Rev. 4:1-3 - *After these things I looked and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this." Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and, notice (maybe you've*

never noticed this before), *and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.*

When I look at that verse, it gives me great hope. All of us approach God's throne in different ways; and I think of **Revelation 4** to kind of allow me, in a sense, to come before God and understand where I'm at. When I pray personally to God, I always think of the rainbow because the rainbow is a symbol of faithfulness. Oh, yes, there's the flood of human nature. Oh, yes, there are those times that are going to be like the days of Noah. Oh, yes, this is happening and that is happening. And God knows that we can't do it of and by ourselves; but Noah took five distinctive steps:

1. He was available.
2. He believed.
3. He was obedient.
4. He was patient.
5. He was committed.

Now, that might be more than the colors of the rainbow. I'm not sure. But match that with the rainbow and recognize, brethren, that God honors those who honor Him. If we give God our little, if we give God what we have, God takes that little and He makes it to the most of His purpose because He loves us. He wants us to be His tool. He wants us to be a part of His Kingdom. We need to respect what lies out in the future, but you and I don't need to be scared. You and I have an encouragement that there was a man who stood above the crowd, a man that had the word "but" in front of his name, a man that had been offered grace by God, a man that did all that God said to do, a man that we should take note of on this day, a man of rest, a man named Noah. Noah and a rainbow, both given by God.