

FAITHFUL IN AN UNGODLY WORLD—NOAH

By Keith Greer

"Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart." (Genesis 6:5,6) Very soon after God put man on earth, he had corrupted it. God was grieved, and He determined to begin again.

"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." (Genesis 6:8) Yes, even in a world gone astray, there was one man, Noah, who did not follow the crowd. He even raised three sons who also lived righteously. In all the earth, there were only eight souls who were pleasing to God. How could they possibly resist all the wickedness that surrounded them? Some would say that it was impossible—but it did happen.

"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) The Hebrew writer presents a clear picture of how Noah was able to remain faithful—he trusted God! Noah's faith in God caused him to undertake the 120-year-long task of building an ark in preparation for rain, something he had never seen, simply because God told him to. Have you ever wondered whether the other people in the world mocked Noah because he was building an "ark" for protection from rain, when there was no rain. Surely, they must have ridiculed and laughed at him. But he just kept building. When the door was shut, and the rain began to fall, I believe the laughing stopped. Many probably beat on the door, begging Noah to let them in, but it was useless. They failed to make use of the opportunities God gave them during the 120 years it took Noah to build the ark. "And did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly." (2 Peter 2:5) Noah's warnings fell on deaf ears.

Noah's example is proof of many things. I would like you to consider two of them.

We don't have to go along with the majority. If others forsake God's ways, do their own thing, and practice all types of ungodliness, we don't have to follow. We have a choice. God lets us choose which path to take. In Noah's day, the world had a choice—the majority made the wrong choice.

It is possible for children who are raised in an ungodly world to be faithful to God. I've often heard it said, even by my own brethren, that it is impossible to raise godly children in this ungodly world. Noah's children stand as proof that this is untrue. In the entire earth, there were only eight righteous souls, and they were all in the same family!

If we follow God's ways, they will work, no matter what may be going on around us. Noah found grace in God's eyes because he was faithful in an ungodly world. If we want to find grace, we too must be faithful in an ungodly world. Are you willing to try?

We will examine positive examples of Old Testament characters, looking briefly at their lives and the lessons we can learn from them. Long ago, Solomon said "there is nothing new under the sun." Satan will always use every available avenue to try to discourage and lead us astray. Satan and sin are the enemies of our souls. Let us constantly remember that they cannot win the battle unless we surrender. I hope that these examples from the past will encourage us, not only to fight the good fight, but also to win it.