

People of Promise
Noah
606 words

An Undeserved Promise

Noah:
Surprised by the Spotlight

Genesis 7:1-4

There have been two extraordinary days of judgment in the history of the world. On the first day, God destroyed everyone except one man, Noah (and his family). On the second day, God did the opposite: He judged one Man, Jesus, as a representative sacrifice in the place of everyone else.

On the first judgment day, how would you have felt if you had been the one person chosen by God to be spared his judgment? That's what happened to Noah. God planned to bring a worldwide flood to erase the entire human race because of their sin--everyone, that is, except for Noah and his family. Noah was probably stunned! Who wouldn't have been? There is evidence in Genesis that Noah was included among the sinners on earth at that time (Gen. 8:21; 9:21), and yet he received a promise of deliverance from the flood. Why did God choose him? Hadn't God started the first human family with a completely sinless couple?

Adam and his wife were the only humans on earth in the beginning, and were blessed by God and told to be fruitful and fill the earth (Gen. 1:28). Just a few generations later, Noah was in the same position. He and his wife (plus their three sons and their wives) found themselves to be the only humans on earth and were treated the same way: They were blessed by God and told to, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth" (Gen. 9:1). What happened between Adam and Noah? The Lord looked out upon the generations following Adam and saw that their wickedness was great, that their hearts were constantly inclined toward evil. "The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth" (Gen. 6:6)—and that must have included Noah.

So why did God choose Noah and his family to be spared from the flood which destroyed the human race? Were we able to ask Noah that question, his answer would likely be, "I couldn't tell you. I was more surprised than anyone." And yet we know from Scripture that there was a reason: Noah was a righteous man. The author of Genesis says he was righteous (Gen. 6:9), as does Ezekiel (14:14, 20), the author of Hebrews (11:7), and the apostle Peter (2 Pet. 2:5). But most importantly, God said Noah was righteous (Gen. 7:1). That doesn't mean he was sinless, since we know that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). But it does mean that Noah was shown magnificent favor by God for his faithfulness--and it came in the form of a promise: You and your family will be saved.

Humble people are usually the most surprised when God blesses them with a promise. Think of the tax-collector who was humiliated by his own sinfulness--yet he received a promise of justification by God (Luke 18:13, 14). No one is made deserving of mercy because of humility, but it's interesting how often mercy shows up in the presence of humility. When you receive God's favor, and you don't know why, think of Noah:

- Have I forgotten that no one earns God's blessings by works of righteousness?
- Have I forgotten that God's mercy is precisely what the imperfect need?
- Should I not always rejoice in the good favor of God?

Noah's role was a lot like Adam's, but we are a lot like Noah himself:

Undeserving, surprised by mercy, and recipients of a promise of deliverance. Don't be paralyzed by God's merciful promises. Rather, like Noah, be fruitful and multiply God's mercy in your corner of the world.