

## I Believe in Walking with God

Barry O'Dell

**T**he book of Genesis tells us of two individuals who “walked with God.” Moses wrote of Enoch, “After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters...and Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him” (Gen. 5:22-24). Of Noah he wrote, “Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God” (Gen. 6:9). It is clear that these passages are speaking metaphorically. Enoch and Noah were not literally walking around with God. Rather, this is a description of their lifestyle.

The early chapters of Genesis are full of accounts of rebellion against God. Adam and Eve willingly violated a very clear command of God when they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:15-17; 3:6). Cain murdered his brother out of envy (Gen. 4:8). In time, the whole earth was “filled with violence” (Gen. 6:13). Yet, in the midst of those accounts, we read of two men who made the conscious decision to “walk with God.” There are other passages in the Old Testament that help us understand what it means to do what Enoch and Noah did.

When Solomon prayed to God for wisdom as he was to lead the nation of Israel he was told, “And if thou wilt walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days” (1 Kg. 3:14). As he became king of Israel, God told Jeroboam, “And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in My ways, and do that is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as David My servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee” (1 Kg. 11:38). As God through the prophet Jeremiah was instructing Judah to amend her ways He said, “But this thing I commanded them, saying, Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you” (Jer. 7:23).

Now, back to the cases of Enoch and Noah. The New Testament expounds upon the concept of them walking with God. Of Enoch the author of Hebrews wrote, “By faith Enoch was translated (taken away) that he should not see death; and was not found, because God translated him: for before his translation

he had this testimony, that he pleased God” (Heb. 11:5). Of Noah he wrote, “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Heb. 11:7). With the above passage considered, here’s what we know about walking with God...

- It means to keep God’s commandments.
- It means to do what is right in God’s eyes.
- It means to please God.
- It means to heed the warnings of God.

Here are some conclusions that can be logically reached with what we have learned...

- To walk with God is not dependent upon my feelings about what it means to walk with God.
- To walk with God we must know what His word commands.
- To walk with God means that my aim is not to please self.

For many people, the concept of being accepted by God, that is, being in fellowship with

Him, is not to be found in an absolute, objective truth or standard. We live in a postmodern world and, sadly, this philosophy has invaded the minds of some of God’s people. Postmodernism denies the existence of absolutes and attempts to operate outside of the realm of reason. A postmodernist is more concerned with his or her “lived experience.” You will often hear them speak of “my truth” or “your truth.” This method of thinking (and living) is wholly unreasonable and untenable.

The Bible speaks to us in terms of truth and error (1 Jn. 4:1-6). Jesus said that the truth can be known (Jn. 8:31-32). Scripture can be read and understood (Eph. 3:1-4). Pleasing God is not a matter that is subject to my or your opinions. We are told that the sum of God’s word is truth (Ps. 119:160). There is a “form of doctrine” to be obeyed that can only be found in the pages of the New Covenant of Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:17-18).

The apostle John wrote, “But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn. 1:7). John rejoiced that Gaius was walking in the truth (3 Jn. 3-4). It is possible to please God. It is possible to “walk with God.” It is done by obeying His revealed will.

“...we read of two men who made the conscious decision to walk with God.”

**T**itanic was 882 feet 9 inches (269.06 m) long with a maximum breadth of 92 feet 6 inches (28.19 m). Her total height, measured from the base of the keel to the top of the bridge, was 104 feet (32 m). She measured 46,328 gross register tons and with a draught of 34 feet 7 inches (10.54 m), she displaced 52,310 tons. The Titanic took two years and two months to build. (Source: <https://rmstitanic456.wordpress.com/dimensions-and-layout/>). The Titanic was given the nickname, "the unsinkable ship." The ship had sixteen watertight compartments built into the hull. The designers believed that in case of a catastrophe that the flooding might be contained in one or two compartments thus keeping the ship afloat. But, as it turned out, this design lent itself to the surprisingly fast sinking of "the unsinkable ship." Another factor believed to be a cause in the ship sinking in only three hours is that substandard steel and rivets were used in construction. On her maiden voyage the Titanic struck an iceberg that damaged six of the sixteen watertight compartments in the bow. Since the water could not disperse to the rest of the ship it pulled the bow down allowing more water to rush in. 1,635 people died because "the unsinkable ship" sunk. These 1,635 people were inside the ship when it struck the iceberg. Captain Edward J. Smith had stated that he could not "imagine any condition which would cause a ship to founder. Modern shipbuilding has gone beyond that." (Source: <https://rmstitanic456.wordpress.com/maiden-voyage/departure-and-westbound-journey/>).

In Genesis 6:14-16 God presented Noah with a design for a wooden ship. This ark was 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 50 feet tall. God instructed Noah to use gopher wood. It was to have rooms in the ark. Noah was also told to cover it with pitch inside and out. God's design included a window a cubit from above and a door in its side. The occasion for building the ark was because catastrophe, destruction, and death were coming to the world (Gen. 6:5-7). God's longsuffering was spent; His mercy was stretched to its breaking point. Now His wrath was coming in the form of a flood that would wipe away the defilement and mankind. God had explained to Noah that man's heart was evil (Gen. 6:5). Simply put, man did not obey God's word. Mankind was seeking after its own plans and pleasures while ignoring and rejecting God's instructions.

If mankind in Noah's day was like others of a similar heart, they were arrogant, selfish, conceited. But they saw themselves as being the wisest, most educated and certainly the most sophisticated. Genesis 19 and Romans 1:18-32 gives some insight into the depths of depravity that mankind will sink when he leaves God's word for his own wisdom. But did they think themselves depraved? Nay. On the contrary, they believed themselves to be the apex of life and had no need of God. They had deceived themselves (1 Jn. 1:8). They could not imagine any condition that would cause their lives to founder. Their life-building expertise had

gone beyond that.

God had explained to Noah that it was because mankind had rejected His instructions for life that mankind was being destroyed (Gen. 6:13). Knowing this, would he have decided that God's specific instructions for the ark were just a bit *overboard*? Salvation or destruction; life or death were in the balance. Could Noah improve on God's design of a ship that would withstand the destruction of this storm? Could He select better materials? Would it have been okay for Noah to have used balsa wood instead of gopher wood? Balsa is light, it floats and is easy to work with. But balsa is easily broken. Would it have been wise to make the ark narrower, or wider, or shorter or taller than God's instructions? Instead of pitch (tar) would it have been okay for Noah to use clay? Would it have been wise for Noah and his family to have remained on the outside of the ark during the flood?

The name "Jesus" means "he will save." The church is described as the body, the bride, the family and the house of God. Metaphorically it can also be described as a vessel. It was designed by God (Eph. 3:9-10). It was built by His Son (Matt. 16:18). It is occupied by the saved (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:25). It is "unsinkable" in that the gates of hades shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18). She will never founder but will pass through the storms unscathed (Dan. 2:44). This vessel will be delivered to God after the judgment (1 Cor. 15:24). Would it be acceptable for man to employ a different designer for this vessel—the church? Is God's design lacking in some way? Can it be improved upon through man's ingenuity? May we employ another builder for the church? Someone who will build to *our* specifications? Perhaps we would like a different captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10). Or maybe there is a different course we would like to sail on this journey (Jn. 14:6; Matt. 7:13, 14).

The stark contrast between Noah's ark and the Titanic is obvious. In God's ark there was safety and salvation for all inside. For those inside the Titanic there was nothing but danger and death. For those inside the church of Christ there is safety and salvation (Matt. 16:18). For all outside the church there is coming a flood, a lake of fire of eternal destruction (Matt. 25:46).

As in the days of Noah, man today has come to believe himself to be the apex of wisdom and sophistication. Man seeks to build his own vessels of salvation and put his trust in his own ingenuity. But like the Titanic, it is doomed to founder. Man's trust in himself has led him to alter God's specifications of the church, the plan of salvation, the prescribed worship and even for the church itself. Noah built the ark precisely as God had instructed him to do (Gen. 6:22; 7:5). Jesus built the church perfectly, just as God had designed. And, just as the ark was the only place of safety and salvation in Noah's day (1 Pet. 3:20), the church is the only place of safety and salvation for mankind today (Eph. 5:25). The church of Christ is truly unsinkable.

**T**he flood of Genesis chapters 6-8 stands as the greatest demonstration of the wrath of God in all of Scripture. Regarding the state of moral failure in the world that brought on this judgment from God, Moses wrote, “*And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.*” (Gen. 6:5-6).

In the face of such rampant immorality, one man stood out. “*But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD...Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God*” (Gen. 6:8-9). Scripture further describes the character of Noah, declaring him to be an example and herald of righteousness (Eze. 14:14; 2 Pet. 2:5), faith (Heb. 11:7), and obedience before God (Gen. 6:22; 7:5). In stark contrast to those who pridefully resisted God and lived as they pleased to the day they perished (Matt. 24:38), the humble Noah came to know and enjoy the grace of God (Jam. 4:6). Consider the truths revealed about the grace of God from the things “*written aforetime*” regarding the life of Noah (Rom. 15:4).

**God’s grace warns of danger.** “*And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth*” (Gen. 6:13). While God has promised He will never again flood the entire earth with water (Gen. 8:21-22), He has also declared that another form of calamity is coming: a great conflagration that will destroy the earth once and for all (2 Pet. 3:10). Such dire warnings may appear to be anything but gracious, but imagine where mankind would be not knowing that God’s judgment is coming. Such warnings are certainly a grace from God, and they compel us to consider our ways before the Lord (2 Pet. 3:11-12).

**God’s grace instructs.** “*Make thee an ark of gopher wood... and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons’ wives with thee*” (Gen. 6:14, 18). Although the justice of God demands that His wrath be revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18), God’s grace also provides the necessary instruction to escape His wrath. For Noah, he was told how to build an ark “*to the saving of his house*” (Heb. 11:7). To our generation, the New Testament teaches us both how to be saved and how to continue to live faithfully before God. The apostle Paul spoke of the graciousness of God as follows: “*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*” (Titus 2:11-12). Like Noah, let us respond to God’s gracious

instructions with faith and obedience (Gen. 6:22).

**God’s grace is longsuffering.** Even after sentencing mankind to destruction, “*the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah*” to extend a final opportunity to repent through the preaching of Noah (1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:5). God has never desired that any soul should perish, so He graciously extends to man the grace of His longsuffering in hopes that we will use that time to come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). Sadly, those who perished in the flood spurned His goodness and longsuffering, and instead chose to treasure up for themselves “*wrath against the day of wrath*” (Rom. 2:4-5). God has also extended the grace of His longsuffering to us. As the Father desired repentance from man in the days of Noah, God seeks (and commands) the same from us today (Acts 17:30). And just as there came a day when God’s wrath and judgment was poured out upon the world of Genesis 6, let us not forget that He has also appointed another day in which He will judge the world one final time in righteousness (Acts 17:31).

**God’s grace offers salvation by means of water.** The world in which Noah lived was plagued by sin and needed cleansing. What instrument, then, did God use to purge and cleanse the world of its sinful

**“God has also extended the grace of His longsuffering to us.”**

inhabitants? The answer: water. The apostle Peter would later draw on this imagery to say that the cleansing of the world in Noah’s day by water is the “*like*

*figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us*” (1 Pet. 3:21). God’s grace provided a physical cleansing of the world from sin in the days of Noah by means of water, and in the same fashion, the grace and mercy of God spiritually cleanses the souls of men today through the waters of baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

**God’s grace provides one place of safety.** “*And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation*” (Gen. 7:1). As the rain began to descend, and as the fountains of the deep began to burst forth with water, there was one place where the salvation of God’s grace could be enjoyed: inside of the ark designated by God. Only those within the ark were saved, and all those outside of the ark perished. God’s gracious plan for our eternal salvation today centers around one place of safety, too. The apostle Paul wrote, “*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*” (Rom. 8:1). Just as salvation was once found only in Noah’s ark, salvation today may only be found in Christ Jesus. How does one enter into Christ? The answer, yet again, is through the waters of baptism. It is in baptism that one enters into Christ and puts on Christ (Gal. 3:27). And by so doing, the Lord graciously adds that newly saved soul to the church (Acts 2:47), which is His body (Eph. 1:22-23).

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Mammoth Spring	\$600.00
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Lowell (Springdale, AR)	\$300.00
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### The Churches of Christ

- Bible only (2 Pet. 1:3)
- Name of Christ (Rom. 16:16)
- Began in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3; Acts 2:1-4)
- Established by Jesus (Matt. 16:18)
- Purchased with Jesus' blood (Acts 20:28)
- Married to Christ (Rom. 7:4)
- Established in the 1st century (Acts 2:47)
- Jesus the Head of the One Body (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23)
- Added to the church by God (Acts 2:41, 47)

#### Salvation

- Saved by grace, though faith (Eph. 2:8-9)
- Not by faith alone (Jas. 2:14-26)
- Not by grace alone (Matt. 7:21)
- Belief and baptism (Mk. 16:16)
- Repentance and baptism (Acts 2:37-38)
- Belief, confession, and baptism (Acts 8:37-38)
- Hear, belief, baptism (Acts 18:8)
- Faith and baptism (Gal. 3:26-27)
- Baptism does save us (1 Pet. 3:21)

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