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Exhortation

"By faith..."

4. Noah (Heb. 11:7)

Norman Yuile

WHEN WE consider the faith of Noah, what is the first thing that comes to mind? Is it the Ark that he built? Perhaps we marvel at his 120-year preaching campaign while he was building the Ark. However, when we look closely at each phrase in Hebrews 11:7 there is a wealth of exhortation for us.

Being warned of God. Noah listened to God.

God has never done anything relating to mankind without first giving him the choice of life or death. We too have the choice to listen to what God is telling us about the coming judgements and the way to be saved from them. God told Noah to build an Ark; what does He tell us to do?

Of things not seen as yet. Noah accepted that something new (the Flood) would happen to destroy the wicked, but we do not know how much he understood. Although we have never experienced a world without sin, we know that God will destroy wickedness and death.

Moved with [godly] fear. When we read God's Word we have a choice whether to accept it or not. If we accept it and are moved by it, as Noah was, we will do something about it.

Prepared an ark. Noah trusted that the work he was doing was worthwhile. However, perhaps, like us, he experienced times when he was worn down by the lack of interest or ridicule of his neighbours. The work we do in preparing our hearts and preaching the Word can seem fruitless, but faithful preparation will not have been wasted when God's judgements are poured out upon the earth.

To the saving of his house. The love of Christ was seen in what he was willing to do to save others. He died to save his house. What if Noah had decided it would be easier to build a smaller Ark? What if Christ had taken the easy option in Gethsemane? When considered in this light, the easy options we encounter daily should lose their attraction.

By the which he condemned the world. Noah preached God's truth. He understood "the goodness and severity of God" (Rom. 11:22), and the scoffers were condemned by the truth he taught. We too have a responsibility to preach God's truth in the hope that some of the world will turn to give glory to God. We know that many will be condemned, but we must not be discouraged. God is still calling out a people for His Name.

And became heir of the righteousness. None of us can achieve righteousness, but if our faith has an effect on our lives and is seen in what we are and what we do, then it will be counted as righteousness. It is by the grace of God that an inheritance in the Kingdom will be granted.

Which is by faith. We may appear to do all the right things, but is it mechanical? Is it because of the way we have been taught by our parents or friends, and is there little personal commitment and thinking participation? Such, surely, will lead to death, because there is no such thing as second-hand faith. The Scriptures are there to reveal God to man. By faith we believe that "[God] is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6). How diligent are we in our personal involvement?

God revealed part of His mind to Noah by telling him what He would be thinking about whenever He set the rainbow in the sky: "and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature" (Gen. 9:15,16). We too have the mind of God revealed to us, in His Word. By faith we must strive to develop the mind of Christ in ourselves now if we want to be at one with God in His Kingdom.