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PREACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Peter, by inspiration, gives Noah a unique description. He calls Noah a *“preacher of righteousness”* in II Peter 2:5. The word *“preacher”* in this text means what we think it means. *“Preacher”* is from the Greek word meaning, “herald of divine truth” (Strong’s). Is this the usual picture we have in our minds when we think of Noah? If not, it should be! Noah is well-known as the man who *“found grace in the eyes of the Lord”* (Gen. 6:9). God instructed him to build an ark so that he might save his family from the coming Deluge (Gen. 6:14; Heb. 11:7). The Ark he constructed sometime in the years between his 500th and 600th birthday (Gen. 5:32, 7:11), served the purpose of saving land animals as well as the humans that chose to join him (Gen. 6:19-22, 7:2-3, 7-9; I Pet. 3:20). Again, when we think

about Noah, we might think “obedience,” or “shipwright” or “faithful,” or other worthy descriptions, but when was he ever a *“preacher of righteousness”*? Perhaps our confusion on this subject results from the fact that we’re not told about Noah until he was 500 years old (Gen. 5:32). What was he doing during the five centuries prior to the Ark? Was he following in the example of great-grandpa Enoch (Gen. 5:22-24; Heb. 11:5; Jude 14-15)? Was he warning people about their wickedness and sin? We are not told explicitly, but praise such as *“Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord”* (Gen. 6:9) does not come for no reason! Don’t forget that Noah built the Ark during his 500th and 600th year (Gen. 5:32, 7:11). Since folks hadn’t seen such a thing before (Heb. 11:7), if they came to Noah and asked

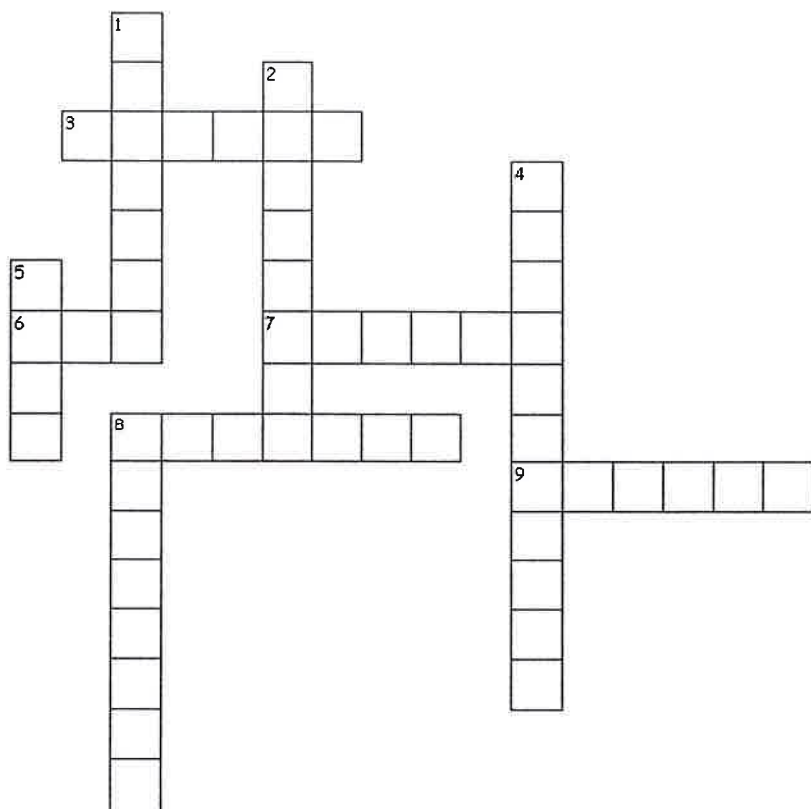
what he was doing, was this not an "open door" to preach and warn people about what was to come? I think he did a lot of preaching in those years! Lastly, once off of the Ark, what do we see Noah doing? The first thing he did was stop and worship God (Gen. 8:20). Wouldn't the preaching of Noah have to continue? He lived another 350 years after the Flood (Gen. 9:28-29)! Therefore, he had to tell future generations who had not been on the Ark about God's covenant (Gen. 9:8-11), the rainbow's connection (Gen. 9:12-17), not to murder (Gen. 9:6), not to eat blood (Gen. 9:4), God's plan for marriage (Gen. 2:18-25) and many other things. As patriarch, he would have had such a responsibility to warn and instruct. When thinking about Peter's description of Noah in this light, how could we not think of Noah as a preacher? He knew what God said, and he spoke it and lived it before the people. Noah's righteous example was recorded for us to follow (Rom. 15:4). We need to be preaching God's word as well (II Tim. 2:2). We need to speak it and live it daily. We have many to influence and bring to the Lord before the coming destruction – not by water, but by fire (II Thess. 1:6-

9)! Are you preaching like Noah? – Jacobs God's eternal purpose is bigger than me. God's eternal purpose in Christ stretches beyond the scope of physical reality. It reaches back into the depths of eternity. It also reaches forward into the everlasting. "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life*" (Jn. 3:16). God desires man to be reconciled to Him. In fact, "*God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself*" (2 Cor. 5:19). Our sins have separated us from God, but God didn't want that separation to last forever. A constant theme in Scripture (both Old and New Testaments) is "*I will be their God and they shall be my people*" (Ezek. 34:24, 37:27; Ex. 29:45; Jer. 32:38; Heb. 8:12). God wants to dwell among us. "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*" is the mystery of God that was hidden from the past ages but has now been made known to His saints (Col. 1:27). Jesus broke down the dividing barrier of hostility through the cross (Eph. 2:14-16). Gentiles are fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body of Christ. Jew and Gentile, slave and free can now be partakers of the promises and

blessings through the gospel (Eph. 3:6). Some of those blessings include confident access to God in prayer, citizenship in Heaven, and fellowship with the Godhead (2 Cor. 13:14; Heb. 4:16, 12:22-24). The unfathomable riches of Christ can now be known to all mankind (Eph. 3:8) so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places (Eph. 3:10). This was according to God's eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ (Eph. 3:11). There is much to be said here, beloved brethren. God's purpose was decided before the world began (Eph. 1:4). This purpose was wrought in Christ and His church (Eph. 1-3). If you are a member of the body of Christ, you are an integral part of God's eternal purpose. One sobering thought to consider is: God's purpose is bigger than just me. The world does not revolve around me. God's manifold wisdom is made known "*through the church*" to rulers in the heavenly places. I am not the church. I am a member of the church, His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. This ought to inspire humility, meekness, and zeal. This needs to make us fall down and say, "*but by the grace*

of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15:10). Friends and brethren let us keep the purposes of God on our minds constantly. Let us meditate on the law of God day and night (Ps. 1:2). Let us put aside trivial differences. Let us put aside words of anger, fits of rage, bitterness, slander, jealousy, and gossip (Col. 3:8-9). Let us not grieve the Holy Spirit of God through selfish and vengeful ways (Eph. 4:30-31). Let us put away this victim mindset that says everyone owes us something, and let's get busy (Eph. 5:16). Let us stop holding grudges against our brethren over trivial matters. Let us not look down our noses at the poor and less fortunate of our assembly (Jas. 2:1-7). Let us not treat someone differently because they have a different economic status or skin color. Let us put aside prejudice behavior, racism, and dishonesty. God's eternal purpose is too important to let trivial matters deter us from it. Also, let's be warned beloved brethren, only those who are faithful unto death will receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10). Those who depart have the wrath of God abiding on them (Col. 3:6; Rom. 1:18). Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly and seek to live out your purpose in Christ each day! – Jordan Lawson

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ACROSS

3. Husbands are to love their wives as their own ____ (Eph. 5:28).
6. In marriage, the two shall become ____ flesh (Eph. 5:31).
7. Wives are subject to their husbands as the church is to ____ (Eph. 5:24)
8. He who loves his wife loves ____ (Eph. 5:28).
9. The husband is head of the wife as Christ is head of the ____ (Eph. 5:23).

DOWN

1. Fathers, do not ____ your children to anger. (Eph. 6:4)
2. The wife must see that she ____ her husband. (Eph. 5:33)
4. Fathers are to bring children up in discipline and ____ of the Lord (Eph. 6:4)
5. Wives are subject to their husbands as to the ____ (Eph. 5:22).
8. ____ are to love their wives as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25).