

Perseverance (yet another excerpt from "Lessons From The Ark," by Joe Dorn)

What a tragedy it would have been if Noah had decided to give up. Leaving the half-built ark to collect dust first, and then water, as he drowned in the rain of God's judgment with the rest of the world. Thankfully he didn't quit. Noah "...moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household..." (Hebrews 11:7). That means that with reverence towards God, Noah proceeded with God's instructions. He did what Paul describes in Philippians 3:14, "I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

Obviously, Noah didn't know about Jesus, but I'll guarantee he understood the gift of salvation that faith in Christ brings. That gift was his prize. The goal? The completion of the ark in obedience to the calling of God! Noah didn't get tired of doing what he was doing despite the pressure from his neighbors. "But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good." (2 Thessalonians 3:13.) Persevere. Stick to it. Hang in there. No matter how you say it, it means the same each time - keep at your present calling at any cost. Good things come to those who wait on the Lord. Not waiting as in kickin' back with a cool one while everything goes on around you. But *waiting*, as in "How may I serve you?" Noah served (waited on) the Lord, and even though the task was difficult, he hung in there. "You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." (2 Timothy 2:3).

God is teaching us perseverance from day one. The names and faces always change, but the story stays the same. 5000 years ago it was an old man and a boat, 2000 years ago it was a Jew converted on the road to Damascus (Paul's letters are a prolific study in the art of "sticking to your guns"!) The end result of their perseverance was the same - salvation and eternal life. "For our light affliction (*building an ark and braving the storm*), which is but for a moment (*however long it took to build the ark and the 375 days out on the waters*), is working for us (*and Noah*) a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (*salvation*), while we do not look at the things which are seen (*the fact that it had never rained before*), but at the things which are not seen (*God's promise*). For the things which are seen are temporary (*the earth*), but the things which are not seen (*salvation*) are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:17 & 18 *italics mine*).

Paul sums up the whole point best in Hebrews 6:11 - 12 (*italics mine*), "And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence (*perseverance*) to the full assurance of hope (*promise*) until the end, that you not become sluggish (*lazy, weary*), but imitate those, who through faith and patience, inherit the promises." Imitate those like Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Peter, Paul, John, and James. *Imitate Christ*. You will never see an example of any of those men throwing in the towel, Christ especially! Strive to live like Christ and you *won't* fail.

Don't give up; no matter what you're dealing with, you've only got a little more to endure. And be extremely thankful when God *does* fulfill His promise, because very few of the faith ever really get to see theirs fulfilled, but they press on anyway (Hebrews 11:39). It *will* be worth it in the end.