

THE STORY OF NOAH (PART 2 OF 3): NOAH BUILDS THE ARK

Rating: 4.6

Description: Noah's people reject his call, and a commandment to build an Ark.

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Noah continued to appeal to his people and they became divided into two groups. His words spoke to the heart of the weak, poor, and oppressed, but the wealthy influential people distrusted those words and could think only of the possible erosion of their power and status. A war of words began between Noah and the disbelievers. They accused Noah of being nothing but any other human, of being nothing special. Noah agreed with this observation and said that, indeed, he was only a human being, but one who brought a clear warning. And God, the Almighty told us:

“Indeed We sent Noah to his people (he said): ‘I have come to you as a plain Warner that you worship none but God, surely, I fear for you the torment of a painful Day.’ The chiefs of the disbelievers among his people said: ‘We see you but a man like ourselves, nor do we see any follow you but the meanest among us and they too followed you without thinking. And we do not see in you any merit above us in fact we think you are liars.’” (Quran 11:25-27)

Noah explained to his rebellious people that they would receive benefits by turning to God and begging His forgiveness. He (God) would bestow rain on them, as well as children and wealth, He would grant them bounteous gardens and flowing rivers. However, the disbelievers rebuffed his words; they felt secure in their arrogance and pride.

The Conflict Intensified

Those against Noah and his call began to bargain with him. They told him, that these two diverse groups, the meek and poor and the rich and powerful, could not exist together in the same faith. Although continuously taunted and bullied by the disbelievers, Noah reacted in a kind gentle manner. He explained that he would never turn away the humble and weak believers who had heeded his call. These people, he would inform them, were the guests of God. Noah appealed to his people. He tried to reason with them and make them see the reality of their situation. Without personal gain and with a humble but heavy heart Noah refuted their arguments.

“O my people! I ask of you no wealth for it; my reward is from none but God. I am not going to drive away those who have believed. Surely, they are going to meet their Lord, but I see that you are a people that are ignorant. O my people! Who will help me against God if I drove them away? Will you not then give a thought? And I do not say to you that the Treasures of God are (only) with me or that I know the unseen, nor do I say I am an angel; and I do not say that God will not bestow any good on those whom your eyes look down upon. God knows what is in their inner selves (in regard to Belief). In that case, I would indeed be among the unjust.” (Quran 11:29-31)

The disagreements continued until the disbelievers had run out of arguments. They mocked Noah and the believers, but Noah continued to deliver his message. Finally, he could bear no more and turned to God with heartfelt supplication. Noah did not run out of patience; he remained a patient, kind and gentle man. But he had come to realise that the disbelievers would do nothing but spread corruption and disbelief throughout the land. They would mislead and corrupt the believers and deliver a legacy of disbelief to their children. Noah prayed to God. He said:

“My Lord! Leave not one of the disbelievers on the earth. If you leave them, they will mislead Your slaves and they will beget none but wicked disbelievers.” (Quran 71:27)

So God accepted Noah’s prayer.

The Ark

God instructed Noah to build the ark and passed judgement on the disbelievers in the form of a flood.

“And construct the ship under Our Eyes and with Our Inspiration and address Me not on behalf of those who did wrong; they are surely to be drowned.” (Quran11:37)

Noah chose a place outside the city and far away from the sea to build his ark. The disbelievers mocked and laughed, making comments about the ship’s location, far from any water source. The disbelievers had no comprehension of the power and magnificence of God, so they could not understand why Noah would build a ship, on the top of a hill, far away from the ocean. They called him crazy and laughed out loud. The ship began to take shape and when it was finished, Noah patiently waited for the command from God.

“Until when Our Command came and the lowlands gushed forth, overflowing, We said: ‘Load it with two of each kind of animal (male and female), and embark your family, except against whom the Word has already gone forth, and those who believe.’ And none believed him except a few.” (Quran 11:40)

When the water started to gush from the earth and fall from the sky, God instructed Noah to enter the ark with his family and the believers. God also commanded Noah to take a pair (male and female) of every animal, bird and insect with him. The disbelievers watched him incredulously, asking what he intended to do with all the animals.

Noah's wife did not join him, for she had never believed in the message that Noah had been preaching; nor did his oldest son, who preferred to flee to a high mountain. The scholars of Islam hold different opinions about the number of people on the ark, but the highest estimate is 80. As the believers and animals entered the ark, the water gushed from every crack in the earth, and the rain fell from the sky in quantities never seen before. Hour after hour the water levels rose, and the seas and rivers invaded the land.

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