

Noah: the righteous, the blameless, a man who walked with God

Message for the first part of Parasha Noach , Triennial Cycle

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Calgary L'chaim Bible Fellowship at POH, 359 Queensland Dr. SE, Calgary, AB

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The Readings for this Sabbath are from Parasha Noach:

Torah: Genesis 6:9-7:24

Prophetic: Isaiah 54:9-10

Apostolic: 1 Peter 3:13-22

Noah: the righteous, the blameless, the man who walked with God

“Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time. Noah walked with God.” Genesis 6:9

What does it mean to walk with God? The Torah describes Noah as a righteous man, a Tzadik. It describes him as a blameless man in his time. It describes him as one who walked with God.

These three descriptions are closely related. I would put it this way: the Torah considers Noah a righteous man because he was blameless. And he was blameless in his time because he walked with God.

Our today's message will center on these three aspects:

- Noah being a righteous man
- Noah a blameless man
- Noah, the one who walked with God

1. Noah the righteous man

In Noah's day, humanity was broken/corrupted. The human species had gone **insane**. The earth was filled with murder and violence, corruption and deceit, and immorality. The behaviour of the people deteriorated... The Torah says that God regretted having made humanity, not because we were so offensive to him, but because of what we do to each other. It grieves God's heart (**Genesis 6:6**).

But then there was Noah. The **only righteous man, in his time, who found favour on God's eyes**. Noah walked with God, and through him the future of humankind (and all land-based life) were saved. Life continues on the merit of one man who walked with God. The grace of God is overflowing as God extended the saving act not only to Noah but for his whole household.

Today, we are living in the days of Noah. As we look around us, we can see Paul's prophecy coming to life when he said in **2 Tim 3:1-5** *“People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God”*. Also, our Messiah Yeshua tells us that *the days of the Son of Man will be as the days of Noah* in **Matthew 24:37**. Noah's righteousness is a proof that it is possible to be righteous even if we are surrounded with corrupt generation (at least to aspire to being one as a result of our FAITH, as for we know that no one is righteous).

The only question is: *are we part of the insane human race or are we like Noah, who walked with God?*

Moving further, let's take a quick glimpse to our main thought by asking: **What does it mean to walk with God?**

Two-weeks-ago's Torah portion, we learned that before the "sin", Adam and Eve walked with God in Eden in the cool of the day. We also met Noah's great grandfather Enoch, of whom the Torah said Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him **Genesis 5:24**. And in the next Torah portions we will know that Hashem appears to Abraham and says to him I am God almighty walk before me and be blameless **Genesis 17:1**.

But before we dig deeper on the idea of walking with God, let us see the second point of the main idea and that is the concept of **Noah being the blameless man**.

2. Noah, a blameless man.

How was a person supposed to go about being blameless? Was being blameless the same as being sinless? No, I think it doesn't mean sinless. The Hebrew word translated here as **blameless** is **Tamim**. The same word we use to describe an **animal fit for sacrifice as unblemished**. It doesn't mean sinless as the apostles tell us **all have sinned** and fallen short **Romans 3:23**, and if anyone says he's without sin the truth is not in him **1 John 1:8**. Instead, I think we could translate **Tamim as WHOLENESS**.

Noah was a whole man. Nothing was missing from his person and his being. Nothing was false in him. The sages believe that Noah's DNA is purely maintained and kept unaltered from the line of Adam. Also, they suggest that during the days of Noah, people are involved with interspecies cohabitation (i.e. man having sexual relations with animals, presently known as bestiality). And to support this, in **Genesis 6**, we have covered the cohabitation between the Sons of God and daughters of men, and the rise of a different species – the *Nephelim*, an alteration of the human race.

Aside from Noah's physical purity, he also possess spiritual purity by being whole in the sense that he is fulfilling his soul's mission. It means Noah was living up to his godly potential. He wasn't perfect. He was as human as you or I. But he was doing his job as a person. Fulfilling his mission of representing **Hashem** (Hebrew meaning God) within the created order made in the image of God. That's who we are supposed to be, aren't we? Being whole is to be a person consistent with the inner person we feel we should be in God's eyes. This is a person filled with the *fruit of God's spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness & self-control* **Galatians 5:22-23**

Another word to describe a **Tamim person is CONTENTMENT**. This is a person contented in God. As Paul says to Timothy “*But godliness is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.*” **1Timothy 6:6-8.**

But instead, we are carried along by the insanity of being human and the constant need to fill the appetites and satisfy the ego. In small and big ways, we are swept along with what Paul calls (**in Galatians 5**) the deeds of the flesh: *immorality, impurity, sensuality, enmity, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, things like these.* It's insanity!

We long to be Tamim. And we long to be in relationship with people who are Tamim. People who are natural and at ease in their skin because they have nothing to hide and no ego to protect. Such a person is rare because the self obstructs the vision. We are blemished and incomplete when we think of ourselves outside of God, when we forget God, and conduct ourselves according to the concerns of the ego. But a **Tamim person is what could be called a godly person.** A person that seems so natural and **unconcerned with the self** because he or she is so full of God's presence which makes the person **contented.**

3. Noah, the man who walked with God

As our model, knowing that Noah is righteous and blameless, in our modern times, how can you and I learn to walk with God? This question concerns me, on a very practical level and as an elder and one of the ministry leaders here in L'chaim. I want our community, our family, our households to be composed of people who walk with God.

So how do we walk with God? In the biblical idiom, one's walk refers to the course of one's conduct in life. It's the basis of the legal term halachah which a word which literally means walk and figuratively refers to how one walks out God's commandments. As Moses enjoins us “to walk in his ways and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments” Deuteronomy 30:16. Therefore you might be forgiven for supposing that to walk with God simply means to keep his commandments, statutes, and judgments. It certainly does entail that. But that's just not it. I think it would be possible to be religiously Torah observant and far from God as proven by Yeshua himself when he called out the ways of the Pharisees.

The Torah commands us to love God, to fear him, to cleave to him, and to walk in his ways. Those are commandments too. But even the sages made a **distinction between walking in the ways of God and keeping the commandments.** The sages explained that to **walk in God's ways means to imitate him in the practice of godliness.**

We can take as an example of walking in the ways of God from the previous Torah portion. Remember how Adam and Eve realized they were naked after eating from the fruit of the tree of knowledge and they felt ashamed. What did they do? They tried unsuccessfully to cover themselves. What did God do? He made garments of skin to clothe them. Just as God clothed Adam and Eve so they would not be naked. Likewise, we should be concerned for those who are in need of basic human necessities. We should clothe the naked. That's an example of walking in the ways of God.

The Talmud offers several more examples just as God visited Abraham when he was convalescing (after the circumcision, Genesis 17:26) so too we should visit the sick to encourage them. Just as God fed the children of Israel in the wilderness, so too we should feed the hungry. Just as God attended to the body of Moses and buried him, so too we should attend to the dead.

The sages understood walking in God's ways to refer to following God's example. If God is merciful, we too should be merciful. If God is just, we too should be fair and just. If God is compassionate, we too should be compassionate. The **imitation of GOD encompasses the commandments of the Torah and transcends the commandments, it goes beyond the letter of the law or any rote observance to reach the spirit of the Torah, the intention behind the commandments which is to bring godliness into this world.** That's how the sages understood the concept of walking in the ways of God and it describes our Master, Yeshua's mode of life for he said that: **Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.** John 5:19

So then is the imitation of God what it means to walk with God? We are getting closer, but that's not yet quite it. That's an aspect of it for sure, just as observing the Torah's commandments is an aspect of walking with God. But these things are the results of walking with God, not the means to it.

To explain this, let's build two scenarios:

Scenario 1: Imagine there was a commoner who desired to walk with the king. What did he do? He studied everything he could learn about the king, about aristocratic formalities and customs, the royal household and all of its ways. He did his best to conduct himself as if he were a member of the court and he observed all of the King's laws. Was he walking with the king? NO, he does not.

Scenario 2: Now imagine there was a commoner who actually walked with the king. What did he do? **Out of fear for the king and love for the king,** he did the same as the other man not in order to walk with the king but because he was walking with the king (**literally**). That's the difference.

The **Torah pairs walking in God's ways with the obligation to fear God, to love God, and cleave God.** As it was said on the following Scriptures:

Deuteronomy 8:6 says “to walk in his ways and to fear him”

Deuteronomy 10:12 says “to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways and love him and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul” and

Deuteronomy 11:22 says “to love the Lord your God to walk in all his ways and cleave to him”.

From this we derive that to walk in God's ways and to walk with God involves the love of God, the fear of God, and clinging to God or cleaving to God.

Let's consider each just briefly.

To love God with all your heart, soul, and strength is the greatest to the commandments on which all the other commandments are hanging. But what does it mean to love God? To love God means **to serve him**, not out of obligation but **out of pure desire**. To love God is to **give back** to him his love for us. To **desire to know him more and more**; and to **draw ever closer** to him in thought, speech, and deed, with our minds, with our lives and with our resources.

To fear God is to know that He exists. That he is watching and ever-present; that He sees even our innermost thoughts and that He punishes sin and rewards righteousness. One who fears God keeps God in mind constantly, never imagining that God is not present with him.

To cleave to God is to cling to his presence. The sages say that we do this through cleaving to the godly, by clinging to the Tzadik (Hebrew meaning righteous). For example, in our Torah portion, the three sons of Noah are saved not on the merit of their own virtue but because they cling to godly Noah.

For us as disciples of Yeshua, to cleave to God means to cleave to our Master Yeshua through whom God has been revealed to us. Gluing ourselves to him by making him the most important thing in our lives. The only thing that matters. The centre of our being. And since He is in the Father and the Father in him, if we are cleaving to Yeshua, through him we cleave to God.

In conclusion, to walk with God involves the constant exercise of these three things the love of God, the fear of God, and cleaving to God. Together, we could call it Godliness.

Shabbat Shalom!

L'chaim Bible Fellowship is a Messianic Bible Community in Calgary, AB. We are in Fellowship with the Asia Pacific Messianic Fellowship (APMF) and United Messianic Jewish Assemble (UMJA). We believe that Yeshua is our Messiah and the Torah is our way of life as practiced by Yeshua himself. For full Statement of Faith, please check our website at www.lechaimbiblefellowship