



# PREPARING TO STAND

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“In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord.” SW 3-21-1905

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## “By Faith, Noah” by Jim Buller

Because of the many similarities between Noah’s time and the end-times, Jesus said, “As the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” Matthew 24:37. So we should be able to learn a lot from Noah. His experience is outlined in Hebrews 11:7 where it says, “By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.” Breaking this verse down, we find:

(1) “By faith.” Genesis chapter 6:9 says, “Noah walked with God.” This statement was made after the chapter describes how wicked the world had become; before anything was said about the ark. Thus, even though Noah lived in a corrupt world, he was regularly spending time with God. He knew from his own experience that God loved him and had what was best for him in mind. He knew that he could *trust* God. (He didn’t just believe there was a God, see James 2:19.)

(2) “Being divinely warned.” Because of his faith, when God told him about the flood, he believed that there would indeed *be* a flood.

(3) “Moved with godly fear, prepared an ark.” Noah’s actions worked together with his beliefs. Like it says in James 2:26, “Faith without works is dead.” So, when God told him to build an ark to prepare for the flood, Noah went to work. It’s important to note that Noah didn’t build the ark because *he* thought it would be a good way to deal with the flood. He built it because *God told* him to build it. In fact, if we take a close look at the sequence in Genesis 6, we find that God told him to build the ark *before* He told him there was going to be a flood.

(4) “Condemned the world.” Noah’s example of acting on his faith was in clear contrast with the rest of the world — *no one else* was building an ark. They thought he was crazy. Therefore it was obvious that the rest of the world did *not* believe God.

(5) “Became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.” “To put it very simply, “righteousness” is doing the right thing. Noah *did* the right thing *by* building the ark. The *reason* he did the right thing was because he *believed* what God had said, and was willing to *act* on it.

Going back now, to what Jesus said in Matthew 24:37, about our time being like Noah’s time, let’s go through this same outline and apply it to ourselves, and ask some serious questions:

(1) “By faith.” *The Great Controversy*, page 621 says, “The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger—a faith that will not faint though severely tried.” Do we have faith in God? Do we believe that what He has in mind for us is really what’s best? Now, *before* our Time of Trouble, are we “walking with Him?” Are we learning from our own experiences that we *can* trust Him?

(2) “Being divinely warned.” What has God warned *us* about? Amos 3:7 says, “Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.” From the Bible’s prophecies, and things taking place in the world around us, we know that we *are* living in the last days. But let’s be a little more specific and review some of these prophecies, particularly those referring to some of the things that will be happening in the coming Time of Trouble:

Matthew 24:15-16, 21, and 29-31, “When you see the abomination of desolation ... flee to the mountains.” “For then there will be great tribulation.” “Immediately after the tribulation of those days ... the Son of Man will appear in heaven.”

*Testimonies to the Church* Vol. 5, pages 454-455, God’s people will “leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains.”

*Country Living*, page 11, “But ere long there will be such strife and confusion in the cities, that those who wish to leave them will not be able.”

Revelation 13:11-17, “No one may buy or sell except one who has the mark.” And he will “cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.”

*Country Living*, pages 9-10, God’s people are to “take their families away from the cities, into the country, where they can raise their own provisions; for in the future the problem of buying and selling will be a very serious one.”

*The Great Controversy*, page 626, “The people of God will flee from the cities and villages and associate together in companies, dwelling in the most desolate and solitary places.”

*Early Writings*, pages 56-57, The saints are not to stockpile provisions for the final part of the Time of Trouble “for they will then have to flee before infuriated mobs.”

Revelation 12:6 and 14, “the woman [representing God’s people] fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God.” She fled “into the wilderness to her place where she is nourished.”

Isaiah 33:16, “His [the person who follows God] place of defense will be the fortress of the rocks; bread will be given him, his water will be sure”

From these prophecies we know there will be a Time of Trouble. At the beginning of this Time of Trouble God has told us, as His loyal people, to leave the cities for our own safety. Because we will not be able to buy or sell we will need to live out in the country where we can “raise our own provisions.” As the Time of Trouble gets more intense, we will need to “flee,” possibly “before infuriated mobs,” to “the most desolate and solitary places,” where, up among the rocks of the wilderness mountains, God has prepared a refuge for us. All this happens *before* Jesus comes. Do *we* believe these warnings? Do we believe all this will indeed happen —soon— to *us*?

(3) “Prepared an ark.” Are our actions working together with our beliefs? What are we *doing* because we believe the warnings God has given us in the prophecies? Are *we* preparing both spiritually *and* physically? Just like Noah needed to be walking with God *and* building the ark, we too need to be spending serious time with God *and* be preparing to live in the country and in the wilderness.

It is important to note here, that going into the wilderness is not just someone’s idea of a good way to respond to the events of the last-days. It is *Jesus* who told us to “flee to the mountains.” In fact, if we notice the sequence of Matthew 24:15-22, Jesus tells us to “flee to the mountains” *before* He tells us about the Time of Trouble.

Before we go on, let us consider a few things. First, did the ark save Noah and his family from the flood? *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 95 and 100 say, “All that man could do was done to render the work perfect, yet the ark could not of itself have withstood the storm which was to come upon the earth. *God alone* could preserve His servants upon the tempestuous waters.” “Angels that excel in strength were commissioned to preserve it.” (Emphasis supplied). Since, it was “*God alone*” who could actually save them from the flood, why did *they* have to spend so much of their time, effort, and resources building the ark? Couldn’t God have saved them from the flood without the ark? —of course He could have. But, the ark was a part of *God’s* plan. *He* told them to build it, and they obeyed. In the same way, will our flight to the country or to the wilderness save us? —No. Like Noah and his family, it will be “*God alone*” who will save us. So then, if it’s actually God who saves us, why, as some have asked, should we spend our time, effort, and resources preparing to go live in the country and wilderness? —we’ll do it because that is what *God* has told us to do!

Second, if Noah had expected God to save him from the flood without preparing the ark, it would have been presumption, not faith. Faith is acting in harmony with

God's Word, and trusting Him to take care of the rest. Presumption is "trusting" God to take care of us without acting in harmony with what He has said. An excellent example of this is when Satan tempted Jesus to jump off the pinnacle of the temple. It would have been presumptuous to expect God to save Him because *God* had *not* told Him to jump. (See Matthew 4:5 and *The Desire of Ages*, page 126.) Contrast this with the Israelites' experience at the Red Sea. They are trapped between the mountain, the sea, and Pharaoh's army. Then, *God* tells them to "Go forward," and as they start walking down to the water *He* opens a path for them. They went through the Red Sea by *faith*.

Genesis 6:22 says, "Noah did everything just as God commanded him." Noah was also acting in faith. Because he *did* obey and prepare the ark, "God alone" preserved him "upon the tempestuous waters." In the same way, wouldn't it be presumptuous for us to expect God to take care of us if we don't get ready when He has given us the opportunity to prepare? And during the flood itself, even though God took care of him, because Noah *had* prepared the ark, he was better off inside it than he would have been out in the water. In the same way, we too will be better off because we have prepared to "flee to the mountains" than if we don't, even though God has promised to take care of us.

Third, Genesis 6:11 describes conditions before the flood saying, "the earth was corrupt," and "full of violence." Since Noah was walking with God, he was undoubtedly a loving person. (See 1 John 4:7-8.) As he looked around, he must have noticed all the people that were being hurt by the corruption and violence, and he probably did what he could to help. He must also have been aware of their spiritual condition, and without doubt he encouraged them to turn to God.

But, what if he had been *so* concerned about ministering to *all* these hurting people in need of salvation, that he just couldn't justify spending time building the ark? What if he had thought that since God *has* promised to take care of us, and since it would be "*God alone*" that would save them from the coming flood anyway, why should he have to spend his time, energy and money building the ark? Wouldn't it be more important to minister to the glaring spiritual and physical needs of the people?

Or suppose he had thought that preaching about a flood coming to destroy the world was a message based on fear—and refused to give it—or act on it? If Noah had responded in any of these ways, how would the people have reacted? Would any more have been "saved?"—Probably not. And Noah himself probably wouldn't have been "saved" either.

But fortunately, although Noah undoubtedly *was* concerned about the people and did what he could to help them, he *also* build the ark. In spite of how crazy the people thought he was, they could not deny that his actions went along with his beliefs. He wasn't just *preaching*, he was *preparing*. Because his actions backed up his faith, he *was* the witness to the world that God needed at that time. Remember, "Every blow struck upon the ark was a witness to the people." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 95.

And, he didn't build the ark haphazardly either. Earlier we read "All that man could do was done to render the work *perfect*." (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 95, emphasis supplied). Noah followed the Biblical principle of, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might." Ecclesiastes 9:10. During those years before the flood,

Noah devoted his *whole life* to preparing the ark. "Noah did not hesitate to obey God. He urged no excuse, that the labor of building that ark was great and expensive. He believed God, and invested in the ark all that he possessed, while the wicked world scoffed and made themselves merry at the deluded old man." *The Signs of the Times*, 2-27-1879. So the question comes down to us, Are we going to do our best, and invest our all as we prepare?

(4) "Condemned the world." Since our faith will be shown by our actions, will what we are *doing* contrast with the rest of the world? Will our preparations make it obvious that *we* believe? What will be *our* example and witness to an unbelieving world? Even though they don't recognize the value of what we are doing any more than the people of Noah's time did, they need to see that our actions back up the beliefs we claim to have. They need to see that *we* believe in Jesus, and that *we* believe what He has warned us about.

(5) "Became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." Simply put, will we do the right thing because we believe, and are willing to act, on what God has told us?

Noah is an excellent example for us. He walked with God, obeyed God and built the ark. As a result, he was the witness that God needed in his time, and when the flood came, he was ready. We too would be wise to walk with God, letting Him work in us and through us to prepare us for what's ahead. In that way, we will be the witness that is needed for our time, and when the end comes, we too will be ready.

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*Steps to Christ*, page 123

In His Sermon on the Mount, Christ taught His disciples precious lessons in regard to the necessity of trusting in God. These lessons were designed to encourage the children of God through all ages, and they have come down to our time full of instruction and comfort. The Saviour pointed His followers to the birds of the air as they warbled their carols of praise, unencumbered with thoughts of care, for "they sow not, neither do they reap." And yet the great Father provides for their needs. The Saviour asks, "Are ye not much better than they?" Matthew 6:26. The great Provider for man and beast opens His hand and supplies all His creatures. The birds of the air are not beneath His notice. He does not drop the food into their bills, but He makes provision for their needs. They must gather the grains He has scattered for them. They must prepare the material for their little nests. They must feed their young. They go forth singing to their labor, for "your heavenly Father feedeth them." And "are ye not much better than they?" Are not you, as intelligent, spiritual worshipers, of more value than the birds of the air? Will not the Author of our being, the Preserver of our life, the One who formed us in His own divine image, provide for our necessities if we but trust in Him?