

GLIMPSES FROM THE LIFE OF PROPHET NOAH

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Description: Events from the life of Prophet Noah.

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Objective:

- To examine several events and learn valuable lessons that are applicable today.

Arabic Terms:

- Nuh* – Arabic name for Prophet Noah.

The name Noah is familiar to all three monotheistic faiths prevalent in the world today, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In Islam the story of Prophet Noah and the flood is very similar to what is found in the Bible, however the Quran tends to go into greater detail. When this is combined with the stories told in the traditions of Prophet Muhammad we are able to build up a better picture of the life of Prophet Nuh and learn some very valuable lessons that are as relevant today as they were all those years ago.

Prophet Nuh lived in a time very similar to our own. Sin and lawlessness had seemingly overtaken the people. Righteous people seemed very few and those who adhered to the religion of their ancestor Adam were weak and often oppressed. It sounds a little bit like the world we live in today where those who profess belief in God are often ridiculed and belittled and committing sin is thought of as fun.

Nuh was a charismatic speaker and enthralled the people with stories of the creation and the mysteries of the universe, however when he tried to warn his people of a just yet terrible punishment they became angry and resentful. These were the first people who had deviated from the true religion yet when Nuh warned them of the punishment of Allah, his words fell on deaf ears. Despite ridicule and mockery Nuh continued, for a period of 950 years, to call his people back to the worship of the one true God.

Lesson 1

Do not ever give up.

Do not ever abandon or cut yourself off from family or friends because of their disbelief, because Allah only knows when your words or actions might flip the switch that leads them to the path of salvation.

We all know the story of the flood. It was told in almost every ancient civilisation and as mentioned already, forms part of the religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Allah instructed Nuh to build an ark and passed judgement on the disbelievers in the form of a flood. It is a story quite often thought of as a child's story, but this story has many layers of meaning and is relevant for adults. Allah, the Exalted, says:

“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.” (Quran 11:37)

When the water started to fall from the sky and gush from the earth, for this was no ordinary storm, Allah commanded Nuh to enter the ark with his family, the believers and a pair of every known animal, bird or insect. The disbelievers watched incredulously, still jeering and mocking, but the words stuck in their throats when the water began to rise, and rise, and rise.

Lesson 2

There is no power and strength except from Allah. He is the All-Powerful. If He decrees a thing, nothing can prevent it.

While worldly might, strength or respect might seem of consequence, the reality is that we are weak and needy; what little control we have over our world and our affairs pales in comparison to the might and majesty of Allah.

Nuh's wife did not join him on the ark, for she had never really believed in the message he had been preaching for so long. Neither did his eldest son, an idol worshiper who preferred to climb the highest mountain he could find, but the water kept rising and rising. Prophet Nuh could see his son being overtaken by the waves of water and cried out to him to embark the ark. But his son refused, and he drowned.

“And Nuh called out to his son, who had separated himself (apart), ‘O my son! Embark with us and be not with the disbelievers.’ The son replied, ‘I will betake myself to a mountain; it will save me from the water.’ Nuh said: ‘Today there is no refuge from Allah’s command, except for those on whom He has mercy.’ And a wave came in between them so he (the son) was among the drowned.” (Quran 11:42-43)

The examples of Nuh's interactions with his idolatrous son and non-believing wife confirm the previous lessons and add a third lesson.

Lesson 3

We choose what we want to believe and how we want to act.

Although we are undoubtedly born with an innate need to connect with Allah, our spiritual identity is not a forgone conclusion. We all reach an age when we can choose our faith, no matter what religion we were born into. Once chosen we then live with the consequences of that decision.

On his deathbed Nuh called his remaining sons to his side and counseled them.

‘Indeed I would give you far reaching advice. I charge you to believe that there is no true god but Allah and that if the seven heavens and the seven earths were put on one side of a scale and the words “there is no true god but Allah “ were put on the other, the latter would outweigh the former. I warn you against associating partners with God and against arrogance.”^[1]

The large majority of Nuh’s people rejected his message, but the message survives in the hearts and minds of Muslims to this day. The comforting words, and the hopes of salvation Noah conveyed to his sons while on his death bed, remain part of a Muslim’s belief and confirm his attitude towards Allah. Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, also told us that Allah undertakes a covenant with the believers: If we worship no god but Allah, then He will not refuse us paradise.^[2]

Footnotes:

[1] Saheeh Al-Bukhari

[2] Adapted from the closing paragraph of the Story of Noah, where you can also read his story in more depth. (<http://www.islamreligion.com/articles/1199/viewall/>)

The web address of this article:

<https://www.newmuslims.com/index.php/articles/162/glimpses-from-life-of-prophet-noah>

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