

LESSONS FROM THE FLOOD: GOD SAVES MAN BY WATER (4 OF 4)

David Halbrook

Peter draws many modern lessons from the life of Noah. In 1 Peter 3:20, he tells of the occasion when the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. God, grace, and faith saved Noah, and the Spirit includes water in that list. Water saved Noah because water kept the ark afloat.

Next Peter says, *There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism...* Another word for antitype is “counterpart,” connecting the two occasions of God saving man through water. Today, God uses water at baptism to save man. This is what Jesus told Peter to teach (“He who believes and is baptized will be saved” Mark 16:16). Along with repentance, this is what Peter taught sinners who had faith to do *for the remission of sins* (Acts 2:38). It is at this time that Jesus’ blood washes us (Hebrews 10:22) which makes us part of the saved (the church).

No one escaped the Flood by faith alone or a sinner’s prayer—neither will you escape sin in these ways. Through grace, faith, and water, God wants to save you today!

-- *Editor’s Note:* Parents (grandparents, uncles, etc.)-- please notice how many mature lessons can be learned by people who already know about Noah. Yes, the old law can still bring us to Christ, especially when we have known those words from our youth. Do you plan to read the Bible with your children this week? Please do--and, find the lost around you and use this article in the *Arkansas Weekly* to teach them too.

Church of Christ—Quail Valley
4104 E. Harrison St.
Batesville, AR 72501
Office- (870) 793-6700

Evangelists:
David Halbrook 569-4491
Lenoard Westbrook 612-8409

The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

October 16, 2011

WWW.QVCOC.COM

I COULD HAVE BEEN A BETTER ATHLETE

David Halbrook

By the age of 13, I had made the Little League All-Star team several years in a row and both hoped and expected to be able to continue doing that. But, my experiences in sports were not quite as successful in the following years which disappointed me. At that phase of my life, sports were very important to me—not more important than being a Christian but still pretty important. As I have looked back, I have wondered why my early success didn’t continue. Most likely, I was an early bloomer who was soon surpassed by more talented athletes. But I believe there’s another contributing factor, and as is en vogue today, in part I blame my parents. Why?

1. If my parents had spent more time honing my athletic skills, I could have been a better athlete. Do not misunderstand—my parents took me to practices and games and gave me individual attention. They showed an interest in my areas of interest without pressure, while making the final decision for the activities of each member of their house (Josh. 24:15). But, they could have spent *more* time in the early mornings and evenings honing my skills.

Of course, that would have meant less time to read the Bible and pray together (2 Tim. 3:15). And, since there were three of us children, it might have meant less time with or encouraging my brother or sister in their interests—but after all, am I my sibling’s keeper (Gen. 4:9)? It would have meant fewer opportunities to visit gospel meetings in the area, where I could meet other Christians, young and old, who over time I came to recognize when they would come to our meetings or who would coincidentally be visiting the same gospel meeting we were visiting. But, after all, they weren’t members of the same local church I was, so I didn’t have real responsibility toward them (1 Pet. 2:17). And, in order to stir up my teammates and maintain my commitment to my team, I would have had to miss some nights of gospel meetings and Sunday or Wednesday assemblies and classes (Heb. 10:24-25). It would have meant even less time was available to be with other Christians my age

(outside of the church's assembly) who were not on my athletic teams (Isn't it odd how some parents want to find a local church "with young people," but then they make little effort for their children to be with other young people outside of the assembly?). But, those things are a small price to pay for the joy of athletic success, right? Yep, my parents are to blame.

2. If my parents had spent more money, I could have been a better athlete.

Again, be sure you understand—my parents spent money which allowed me to participate in the sports they allowed me to play. But, if they had spent *more*, I might have been better. I recently heard a mother call a financial advice call-in radio show. She asked whether it was fair to ask her fiancée to share the \$500/week (\$25,000/year) costs of figure skating lessons for her daughter (she said that she made \$80,000 per year). Maybe if my parents had spent just \$100/week on improving my athletic skills, then I could have kept up with the competition.

Of course, doing so might have required that they contribute a smaller portion of their income to the Lord's local work (1 Cor. 16:1-2)—but not necessarily. My mom could have done some extra work on the side, selling her delicious cinnamon rolls. After all, the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 was probably making and selling garments so that her children could have the luxuries of life (Prov. 31:24). Maybe she would not have been able to participate in Bible studies with other women but, after all, are those commanded anyway (Ti. 2:3-5)? Maybe she would have had less time to develop close spiritual relationships with other Christians, take food to the sick or bereaved or do other good works (1 Tim. 5:10)—but she would still be giving her son (who already had health, friends, school work, video games, books, etc.) things he hoped for like any "good mother" would do, right? Or, she would not have had to make any of those sacrifices—Dad could! (Need I list all Dad could have given up?).

Instead, only my Dad's work resulted in regular income. From that, my parents chose to regularly give to the Lord, as He allowed them to prosper (1 Cor. 16:2). They had money to give to someone whom they knew was in need (Eph. 4:28). They lived within their means and taught us to do the same. They avoided the debt which adds pressure to the husband who works, the wife who shops, and the regular financial discussions and decisions-- all of which takes a mental, emotional, and often a spiritual toll on each individual and the family as a whole. But, after all, everyone has their crosses to bear and anything is worth the smile on a child's face, for whom hundreds of dollars are annually spent on athletics, right?

3. Your Child Can Be A Better Athlete Too! Have You Counted The Cost?

Parents, I hope you show an interest in the interests of your children and, without

pressure, help them choose wholesome areas of interest. In those areas, your child could probably be a *better* athlete, musician, vocal performer, etc. than they currently are, but it will cost you something. Have you counted that cost?

Someday, your children are going to need the skills of earning an income with thanksgiving (Eph. 4:28), wisely handling money with contentment (1 Tim. 6:6), preparing food (maybe even raising their own food), keeping house (Ti. 2:5), understanding the milk and meat of the word (Heb. 5:13-14), personally teaching others the gospel (Mt. 7:12), teaching Bible classes and generally filling their roles in the local church (Eph. 4:16), etc. When they grow up and see where they excelled and where they did not excel--what reasons will they remember for their successes and failures? When they are mature enough to look back on their childhood, will their fondest memories be the countless days and dollars spent on them in athletics? Or will those memories, though fond, pale in comparison to the sacrifices they remember their parents taught them to make for the God who loves them?

I could have been a better athlete during my teen years, but, in my opinion, it would have had a negative spiritual impact. Today, I can thank God and my parents that these are some of the reasons why I was not a better athlete. Parents, help your children find healthy interests and spend time with them doing those things. But emphasize, focus on, sacrifice for, and hone your children's skills in learning about and serving God and His people. Do your best to maximize their potential as God's children by bringing *them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord* (Eph. 6:4).

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU DECIDE

Jarrod Jacobs (in The Way of Truth and Life; 9-2-11; from the Church of Christ in St. Leon, IN)

Sometimes Christians have a hard time deciding what to do in specific situations that call for a clear decision. Below you will read some questions to ask yourself that will hopefully help your decision-making.

1. Can you ask God to bless your decision? (Prov. 10:22)?
2. Can you thank God for it (Col. 3:17)?
3. Are you doing this to the glory of God? (I Cor. 10:31)?
4. Will your decision be a stumbling block to others? (I Cor. 8:13)?
5. Are you doing this to please God rather than people (Col. 3:23; Gal. 1:10)?
6. Have you thought ahead about the consequences of your decision (Gal. 6:7)?
7. Would you want to be doing whatever you decide when Christ returns (Matt. 24:44)?