

The prophets of Allah often had a tough time getting their people to listen to them, and Prophet Nuh (Alayhis Salam) was no exception. His people had been going very far astray, they worshipped idols, and many of them were so involved with their material well being that they forgot about their souls. Therefore Allah sent Prophet Nuh (Alayhis Salam) to his people with a message.

Prophet Nuh's Message

The prophet Nuh's (Alayhis Salam) message was a simple one. He said that they should worship Allah and serve none but Allah. If they wouldn't change their ways, he feared that Allah would send down a terrible punishment on them. He reminded them of all the beauty and bounty that Allah had provided for them.

There were some people who did believe and they tried very hard to live as Allah had commanded. But most of the people would find reasons for not listening to Prophet Nuh's (Alayhis Salam) message. Often the leaders would say that Prophet Nuh (Alayhis Salam) was crazy. At other times the leaders of those who didn't believe would say, "You are just a man, no different from us, no angel, so how can you carry a message from Allah?"

And Prophet Nuh (Alayhis Salam) would remind them that he had never claimed to be anything other than a man, he had never claimed to know anything more than what he knew, and he had never tried to get anything from them in return for what he had to tell them. But he repeatedly told them that he had a message from Allah, which it was his duty to deliver, whether or not they chose to listen to him.

Many of the people who believed in Prophet Nuh (Alayhis Salam) were not very high in social status, so the leaders of the people looked down on the followers of Prophet Nuh (Alayhis Salam). But he said that no one could save him from Allah's anger if he drove away any of those who believed, no matter how poor or uneducated they were. Finally the leaders of the people would say in exasperation, "You've argued and argued with us for a long time, so bring on this punishment now that you've been threatening us with."

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Prophet Nuh's (Alayhis Salam) answer was, "Allah will bring it on you if He so wills, and then you will not be able to stop it."

These discussions went on for a long time. Prophet Nuh (Alayhis Salam) lived for 950 years among his people (Sura 29,Ayat 14). He became very discouraged when not many people

would listen to him. He then received a message from Allah, "None of your people will believe except those who have believed already: So don't worry about the wrongdoers any more. Build a ship under our guidance. Those who are in sin will soon be destroyed."

Prophet Nuh and the building of the Ship

Prophet Nuh (Alayhis Salam) and his followers built the ship out of broad planks and caulked it with palm-fibre. As they worked the non believers ridiculed them. Sometime after the ship had been completed, water started gushing out of the earth. Allah commanded Prophet Nuh (Alayhis Salam) to get into the ship, and to take with him a male and a female of each kind of living thing, and also to take the members of his family who believed and the small number of other believers from the community.

This was Prophet Nuh's (Alayhis Salam) prayer before the flood. "O my Lord! Leave not a single one of the unbelievers on earth. For if any are left, they will only mislead those who worship you, and they will only produce wicked, ungrateful offspring. O my Lord! Forgive me, my parents, all who enter my house in faith, and all believing men and women. And to the wrongdoers grant no increase except in eternal damnation."

The waters started to rise as water poured out of the earth and rain poured down upon the earth, and the waves were very high, like mountains. But the ship floated safely on the waves. Nuh (Alayhis Salam) saw one of his sons still on the shore and called to him to join them. The son was not a believer and called back that he would be safe on some mountain top. At that moment a wave came along and swept the son away, and he was seen no more.

Now Nuh (Alayhis Salam) was concerned about his son who had been washed away by the waves, because a father never stops being a father, even if the son is not a worthy man. So Nuh (Alayhis Salam) asked Allah, "O my Lord, surely my son is one of my family. And you promised that my family would be safe."

Allah replied, "He is not a member of your family, for his conduct is not righteous. So don't ask me for things about which you have no knowledge." Then Nuh (Alayhis Salam) realized that he had gone too far. He begged Allah to forgive him for asking for something about which he had no knowledge. Only Allah knew why the son had been separated from the others.

When all the earth was flooded, Allah commanded, "O earth, swallow up your water and O sky, withhold your rain!" Slowly the waters receded and the ship came to rest on top of Mount Judi. The only surviving people were in that ship. Thus did Allah do away with those who did wrong.

Then Allah said, "O Nuh! Come down from your ship with peace from us, and blessings on you and on some of the peoples who will spring from those with you. But there will be other people who will lead a life of pleasure for a time, only in the end to be punished by us."

You can read about Nuh (Alayhis Salam) in the Qur'an, Sura 7, Ayat 59-64; Sura 11, Ayat 25-49; Sura 26, Ayat 105-122; Sura 54, Ayat 9-15; and Sura 71, Ayat 1-28.