

Mankind was Wicked Before the World Wide Flood

Genesis 6:1-12

Genesis 6:1-12 - *"Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, ² that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.*

³ And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." ⁴ There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

⁵ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

⁷ So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. ⁹ This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. ¹⁰ And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. ¹¹ The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on all the earth."

Background Notes

Our two-year-old granddaughter, Ingrid, has three favorite videos: Cinderella, Peter Rabbit, and Noah & the Ark. The story of Noah is a fascinating story for all ages - and the best thing about it is that it's **true**! Peter Rabbit and Cinderella are fairy tales - but the account of Noah and the Ark is **true and accurate history**! Even though many liberal critics of the Bible say that Noah and the Flood is only a Jewish legend, we know it is true - it's an historical account given to us in the pages of Scripture.

As we begin our study of this true account, probably the first big question that comes to us in verse 2: Who and what are the 'sons of God'? *"...the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose."* Who were they? Christians have held three views or interpretations of verses 1-2: One view is that the "sons of God" were of the godly line of Seth, and the "daughters of men" represent the ungodly line of Cain. A second view is that the sons of God were kings or dynastic rulers of the ancient world. A third view, which I hold - and it's the truth of course! [laughter] - is that the "sons of God" in Genesis 6 were fallen angels. I believe this is the correct view for several reasons. Briefly, here are three of the reasons:

a. The term “sons of God” is used in the Old Testament for angels - even fallen angels. Job 1:6 - *“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.”* Job 2:1 - *“Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.”*

b. Jude 6-7 seems to be describing the events of Genesis 6: *“And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”*

Notice that the specific sin of the fallen angels mentioned in Jude was sexual sin, as in the gross sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, where men crossed the sexual barriers that God has set up. These fallen angels wrongly stepped out of their God-given sphere and went after *“strange flesh.”* This was a major sin, and as a result, these fallen angels are bound even now, awaiting the final judgment. A similar passage to Jude is found in 2 Peter 2:4-5 - *“For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; ⁵and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly;”*

Exactly how these fallen angels cohabited with certain women in that day is difficult to understand. We don’t know whether they took possession of the bodies of men, or took on the material form of men. In any case, the offspring was unusual. Genesis 6:4 says that they were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. This description, in the context, is not a commendation - these were the **notorious** strong men and **tyrants** of pre-Flood days. They were the sinful world’s negative “heroes.”

c. The position that the sons of God were fallen angels helps to explain God’s judgment of the world with a **global, worldwide Flood**. If indeed the offspring from the union of these fallen angels and humans was not fully human, then we can see why God destroyed all living beings of the pre-Flood world. This preserved the true human race in Noah and his family. By the way, this is not a “Dave Reid interpretation.” This view goes way back to ancient rabbinic commentaries – they all held this view.

From what God said in Genesis 3:15, Satan knew that he would be defeated, and his head would be crushed by the Seed of the woman. This statement revealed that the Redeemer of mankind would be *human*. *“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”* Satan thought that if he could corrupt the human race so that it was no longer “true 100% human,” he could then thwart God’s plans and purposes for the redemption of mankind. But God foiled Satan’s evil schemes by sending a worldwide Flood that wiped out the all that was living on the earth in that day. God preserved the *true* uncorrupted human race - and the line of the Redeemer - through Noah and his descendants.

Doctrinal Points

1. The heart of God is grieved when people sin against Him.

Verses 5-6: *“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.”*

God not only knows when people sin against Him - He is *grieved* when people sin against Him. God's heart was filled with sorrow because of mankind's sin. ***Man's sin is God's sorrow.*** The heart of God is grieved when unbelievers sin, and the heart of God is grieved when believers sin. Ephesians 4:30 (addressed to Christians) says: *“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”*

Is it possible that you're grieving the Holy Spirit of God right now? Ephesians 4:30-31 says: *“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God... Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.”* Instead, we are to *“be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”* Is it possible that you are bitter about something? Is it possible that you are not willing to forgive someone? If so, you're grieving the Spirit of God! The heart of God is grieved when we sin.

Genesis 6:3 reveals that there is a limit to God's tolerance of sin: *“And the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”* Most likely the 120 years mentioned here was the time that remained before the judgment of the Flood. For 120 years the earth was filled with violence. *“The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth” (v11-12).*

Sounds a lot like today, doesn't it? No wonder our Lord said: *“As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man” (Matthew 24:37).* God's tolerance had reached its limit (v7). God is long suffering, but He must judge sin. God not only hates sin, but it grieves Him. The heart of God is grieved when people sin against Him.

2. The heart of God is pleased when people walk with Him.

Verses 8-9: *“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.”*

In the midst of all the corruption and violence, Noah lived an upright life. Noah walked with God and he found grace, or favor, in the eyes of the Lord. (By the way, this is the very first mention of “**grace**” in the Bible.) Noah was not sinless, but his life was characterized by walking with God. The word “walk” implies step-by-step following and fellowship.

Do you walk with God? The heart of God is pleased when people walk with him. Other Scriptures tell us that all during this time before the Flood, Noah was preaching to his contemporaries. 2 Peter 2:5 says that Noah was a *preacher of righteousness*.

For 120 years, Noah preached to the skeptics and mockers, warning them that God was going to destroy the world with a flood - but no one believed his message. Humanly speaking, it was not a “successful ministry,” but **God was pleased!** Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He walked with God. The heart of God is pleased when people walk with Him.

Practical Application

Who are your heroes?

This is a good question for all of us. The “heroes” of the pre-Flood world were not godly leaders, but rather the mighty tyrants of that day, the strong men of that time (v4). These notorious characters were the heroes of the world that God judged with a Flood. Where are those heroes now?

Who are your heroes? Young people - are your heroes the movie stars, sports stars, music stars, and other “stars” that **this world** labels as “successful”? 1 John 2:17 says, “*And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*” This world is passing away - but the person who does the will of God abides forever! Noah was not a hero in his day - he was mocked! People laughed at him and his message! But Noah was a hero in **God’s** eyes! Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He walked with God. Who are your heroes?