

A WORLD RIPE FOR JUDGMENT

Genesis 6:1-8

Read Gen. 6 & Pray:

Already, sin had splattered its ugly stains across God's perfect canvas: Gen. 3, Adam & Eve...

Gen. 4, Cain kills Abel... and chp ends with Lamech, the first polygamist, boasting in killing a boy who hit him...

Gen. 5, "death reigns": "...And he died, and he died" (8x)...

But now, in chp. 6, man's sin & rebellion begins to accelerate at an awful pace. – From the normal 120 kms. lifestyle, which eventually 'leads to death'; it's now 200-300 kms., which leads to much quicker death.

The gross amts. of evil & the rapid spread of sin require God to act with urgency and severity. –

This is a chp. that should actually make us sick to our stomachs if we understand how diseased & degenerate the world had become. –

But it shouldn't be too hard for us to imagine if we just look around us today at where our world is ONCE AGAIN headed...

BUT understanding this grim portion of Gen. should also give us HOPE. – How?! –

By helping us to see how God responds to a wicked world, to know how God views our society today, and what God CAN & WILL do about it!...

No matter how corrupt society seems to get, God will NOT forever tolerate those who rebel against Him. –

Man cannot forever overstep God's boundaries. – Man does have unlimited time to keep rejecting the Creator. – There are absolutes.

~ As we heard yesterday, 'Sure, man is free and God is free. But when man's freedom runs into God's freedom, God wins, everytime.' (R.C. Sproul)

ALL evil will be brought to a halt one day. – God will intervene! Just as we'll see in 1 Cor. 15 next week. – God rules, Christ will win, Satan will lose, death will be defeated, God will regain His rule on this earth and glorify Himself as supreme forever.

This is the heart of the Christian hope, the climax of the Christian story, the direction that the whole plotline of the Bible moves toward! –

And Gen. 6 foreshadows and give us a glimpse of this....

Title...

****THREE TRUTHS about how God treats a world ripe for judgment:***

1. vv. 1-4, God *puts* a LIMIT on human depravity.

v. 1a – First warning sign: more people = more sinners, and more sinners = more sin.

+ Why are cities always known for the greatest amounts of evil & crime? (who actually *chooses* to live in a big city, with lots of traffic, and little community, etc.; perhaps a few who love noise & night life & lots of culture, but a minority I think) –

NOT ultimately b/c of poverty or family breakdown, etc., but b/c cities = a greater concentration of SIN than in more rural areas...

v. 1b - “Daughters were born to them” – As they say, here’s where the trouble begins for fathers! – Can I get an ‘Amen’ from any Dads out there? ☺...

Let’s see how these fathers did at raising & protecting their daughters the way God intends...

v. 2 – The thorniest verse in all of Genesis, if not the entire OT. – In fact, there are at least FOUR major interpretive issues/debates here in these 8 vss. – A veritable minefield!...

It’s also an exercise for us in how to interpret Scripture and how to handle thorny issues in our Bibles (seems to be a theme for today, with tonight’s tough one in Eccl. 7!). – And in how to not only interpret them, but *apply* them to our lives....

+BTW: Did you notice with James White in his debates? – Opponents of the gospel go straight for these tough texts. – But Dr. White’s ability to handle these texts briefly and skilfully, allowed him to not get stuck there, or lose credibility; but instead, to move back to the main issue of the gospel.

He is truly an example for me & for us all of 2 Tim. 2:15...

→That’s not just for preaching & Bible Study; that verse also applies to our evangelism & apologetics & witnessing...

So then, *WHO ARE THE “SONS OF GOD”*?...

At first glance, you might think they are humans, probably from Seth’s line. – And at first, it seems to fit nicely in the context:

Gen. 6 showing the breakdown/intermarriage/corruption of the previous separation between ungodly Cainites (chp. 4) & godly Sethites (chp. 5)...

BUT THEN you start to do your homework. – Let me give you *SIX reasons why I believe the “sons of God” are angelic/demonic beings who intermarried with women*:

a. “Sons of God” (*bene’ Elohim*) in all 3 of the other exact cross-refs. = angels, Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7...

b. The “sons of God” in Gen. 6 are not portrayed as “godly, Sethite choirboys” but as “a lusty, powerful lot, striving for fame and fertility.” (Hughes; Ross)

c. NT Gospels also portray demons as craving for bodies:

Mk. 5, with the pigs...

Lk. 11:24ff, Jesus said, "When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'" – speaking of the possessed person...

d. Three different NT passages (God's inspired commentary on the OT) seem to refer to these "sons of God" during Noah's time –

ALL three of these passages suggest that these sons of God = angelic beings, demons, that intermarried with women...

1 Pet. 3:19-20 most likely refers to disobedient spirits *during* the days of Noah, i.e., Gen. 6:1-4...

2 Pet. 2:4, esp. in light of 1 Pet., also seems to refer to Noah's time (and to Sodom & Gomorrah?)...

Jude 6-7, angelic beings who "left their domain" and were then punished by God...

e. The main argument posed against this view is not irrefutable:
*Mk. 12/Mat. 22, "angels never marry or are given in marriage"; cf. Gen. 1, the very created order, God-ordained limitations, "according to their kind"...

BUT: Since we know that angels can take on human bodies temporarily (e.g., Gen. 18, etc.), why could they not possess male bodies and procreate (i.e., demon-possessed sex-maniacs)?

Plus, Jesus could be saying that only the angels "in heaven" do not marry, without referring to the fallen angels on earth (who perhaps can procreate).

f. This also happens to be the oldest view, held by most of the ancient Jewish interpreters, the LXX, the church fathers b/f Augustine, and the majority view by most modern commentators.

Well, that's my take at least on this tough text. – Next time your daughter brings home a guy who looks demon-possessed, hey, he might be?! (And you might have giants for grandchildren who become stars in the WWF?!)...

...But these were serious, awful times in human history.

+ Seem like a story hard to believe? – That's because we underestimate the horrific potential of human depravity & demonic evil. – Hard to believe? – Yet look at the depths of wickedness in our world today? (as we heard yesterday):

Mothers who would murder their own child in the womb?

Parents who would encourage their 5 yr. old to rethink his gender?

Gunmen storming into public places and killing hundreds in cold blood?...

California public schools now offering transgender option for toilets?!...

A world that actually says marriage can be between two men or two women?

As J. White said: he wrote a book on the Same-Sex Controversy 12 yrs ago, knowing what was coming; yet had no idea how fast it would come, like a freight train!...

+ They've just published the QJV, the Queen James Version, the 'Gay Christian Bible', revising all the relevant texts...

It's a culture of death, a culture in love with its own destruction. – So we cannot expect it to love anything that brings life, but only what ruins. – Gay marriage cannot reproduce, it is inherently self-defeating and non-reproducing....

Our Rom. 1 world... (~ Where Bishop Tutu can say, 'If heaven isn't for gays & lesbians, I don't want to go there, I'd rather be in the other place'!)

So look at how God responds...

v. 3 – God the Creator says, 'Enough!'

NB, God's Spirit had been active. – He created the world. – He convicted the world, esp. through Enoch exposing ungodliness (cf. Jude) & Noah, a "preacher of righteousness"...

→A comfort today, God's Spirit at work through us, "contending", or "remaining" (in either case), seeking God's elect (Acts 18 at Corinth, they are there!; Titus 1, "for the faith of God's elect"), targeting human consciences, calling people to repentance, drawing people to Christ! – Cf. Jn. 14-16!...

→Maybe that's you today? – Don't delay! – God's Spirit may cease contending with you and give up one day. – Respond now b/f it's too late, b/f the door of God's ark closes and the floodwaters rush in!...

v. 3c – 120 yrs?? – Could go either way: EITHER 120 yrs. of God's patience until flood,

OR man's age will *gradually* decline to about 120 yr. maximum (after the time of Jacob, only Aaron ever exceeded this, at 123 yrs.;

~ "So much, then for man's attempt at super-humanity. He not only fell short of immortality – his mortality shrank!" (K. Hughes) –

Same basic point either way: life shortened, debauched human race not allowed to continue; God sets boundaries!...

+ YET did anyone see last week's TIME mag cover: "Can Google Solve Death?": CEO Larry Page is known for 'shooting for the moon' with his wealth & his ambitious new ventures. – But his latest tops them all: He's planning to launch Calico, a new company that will focus on health and aging in particular, hoping they can cheat death??...

Isn't it ironic: People in West are living bit longer than before, yet new technologies are also increasing stress & shortening life span for others – rising rates of depression &

suicide, and of stress-related illnesses....

v. 4 – “Nephilim” = lit., “fallen ones” – Probably offspring of the demonised marriages. – “Perhaps they were giants (products of demonised eugenic breeding, ‘we breed horses; why not people’); perhaps they were not (Hughes).” –

~ Boice writes: *Since we have no information about the results of an angel/human union, except what is found here, it is impossible to argue how such a union might produce giants. It is enough to say that it is conceivable that this could happen and that this is the probable meaning of v.4. [Cf. Num. 13:33, nephilim clearly = giants, though obviously not linked genetically w/pre-Flood people who perished...]*

What would be more natural than that this union would produce the “mighty men” of antiquity?

Since this verse specifically refers to the “heroes of old,” what would be more probably than that this is the origin of those stories of half-human-half-divine figures present in virtually all ancient mythologies?

The stories of Homer & other writers would be embellished, of course, but they probably reflect memories of these ancient outstanding figures of the pre-flood period.

NB, v.4, in the eyes of the world, they were “heroes, renown”. – BUT, in God’s eyes they were “fallen ones,” sinners, ripe for judgment.

→Isn’t that so often the case w/the heroes of our day?!...

E.G.: WWF wrestling; violent video games; gruesome movies; reality TV that gets grosser every year b/c crudeness sells!;

DVD rentals of animals tearing humans apart, all while you eat popcorn! – What a feast for demons! – Nephilim are behind all this, Eph. 6:12...

~ Ross: *The offspring of these marriages may have been famous and powerful but, contrary to popular thinking, were not god-kings. They were “flesh,” as the text states; they would die, in due course, like all members of the human race.*

When God judged the world...no giant, no alleged deity, and no pagan ideology would have power against him. God simply allotted the days and announced the end.

NB, what Satan might have been up to here in Gen. 6:

Satan tries to eliminate Cain & Abel, makes one a murderer and the other gets murdered; but God (“in His unruffled way”) raises up Seth, a godly line. –

So now, Satan tries to corrupt entire human race, since the Saviour could never be born of a half-demon mother. – I.e., “Meanwhile, back at the ranch the villain is still hatching his plots.”

And so Satan continues today, w/ever increasing wisdom from experience. – But praise God, the Bible shows that Heaven RULES.

God destroys the contaminated race & saves uncontaminated Noah & his family. – God binds these fallen demons in Hades until the final judgment.

~ *The portrait Moses gives of pre-flood culture is that of a thoroughly demonised civilisation.* – Thankfully, that wicked world was wiped out in the Flood.

HOWEVER, since then there have been many successors to that civilisation, many recurrences of that wicked world in subsequent history. –

E.g., the infamy of Canaanite Baal worship & violence, offering infants to Molech, etc; Herodians during Christ's lifetime, a cesspool of sensuality and violence; Nero's & Caligula's notorious courts; the depravity of the Third Reich; Shaka Zulu's debauchery; much of western secularism today, w/abortion, crime, wars, Muslim hatred & terrorism, HIV/AIDS, eugenics, etc...

[~ H. Morris: *The demonic combination of the materialism and ungodliness of the Cainite civilisation in general, with this irruption of the Serpent's seed directly into large numbers of the human race and then the thrusting forth of hordes of the monstrous offspring of these unlawful unions, all led to conditions in the world which were finally intolerable even to a God of compassion and longsuffering.*]

2. vv. 5-7, God plans to DESTROY.

v. 5 – Contra. Gen. 1, "it is good" (vv. 9,18,21,24), and "very good", v. 31! –

There is hardly a stronger statement in the Bible about human depravity – one of the clearest statements in all Bible of man's true potential, man's shocking ability at deprovement...

NB, v.5, such comprehensive terms: "every, only, all"! – I.e., says one writer, man's depravity & sinfulness is "internal, pervasive, and continuous"...

JUST speaking of the extra-wicked folk in pre-Flood times? – Cf. 8:21 re: even righteous Noah, after the flood...

Sound like too harsh of language, too pessimistic, maybe just unique to Noah's time? –

YET: The rest of Scripture is unmistakably clear about man's inherent, total depravity e.g., Ps. 51:5; 58:3; Mk. 7; Rom. 3, etc...

→Sin starts in the "inclinations", the intentions/motives of the heart & mind, no matter how clean you look on the outside!

We know how terribly sin affects us and our society. – But how did it affect God Himself?...

v. 6 – **God's pain:** The Hbr. word here ("heart filled with pain") = "a mixture of rage and bitter anguish" – same word used in 1 Sam. when Jonathan learned of Saul's plan to kill his best friend, David (20:34; cf. 2 Sam. 19:2).

Like the bitter rage of seeing your spouse or best friend or child badly wronged & mistreated!...

Q: But what about 1 Sam. 15:29, God “will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret, repent, change His mind”?

True: Nothing can disturb God’s sovereign happiness and eternal joy in Himself; Ps. 115:3! – Gen. 6:6a does NOT = surprised, or caught off guard.

YET, God is not a “disinterested observer of the human scene.” – He has true personality, which also = emotions/feeling. – So God’s heart can be filled with pain.

NB, in that same chp., 1 Sam. 15, vv. 11, 35, we read that God was “grieved, regretted” that he made Saul king. –

Answer: God’s eternal plan/decreed did not change, but His desires/reactions can change and His response to man can change, based on man’s actions, which is ultimately but a further part of His eternal plan. –

+ Isn’t this exactly what happens when you get saved! – God’s plan & His character are unchanged/immutable, but His STANCE toward you changes radically the moment you repent!...

→Neither is God detached from our world today, though still absolutely sovereign! – How God’s heart must be pained today at the world around us! –

Cf. Eph. 4:30; “man’s sin is God’s sorrow”...

v. 7 – **God’s plan**: to completely ERASE man & all accompanying creatures off the planet. –

WHY all the creatures too? – B/c they are bound up with man’s existence & man’s calling of dominion over them. – Cf. Rom. 8, the creatures are also fallen and they groan. –

Man’s sin was so severe it had tainted everything around him!
(NB, the Muslim on Fri. PM asking about God’s violence in OT....)

Is this God’s final word? Is it all over for humanity? – This could easily have been the end of the human race? – It should have been! – It would have been totally *fair* for a holy God to wipe out *all of* humanity –

Not for one moment did He *need* us, nor did we *deserve* anything but death and Hell for our sin of rejecting our Maker.

BUT, again, this holy **God is** also a merciful God. – Out of the mass of wicked humanity, God elected one man to swim upstream, to go against the flow and stand against the tide:

3. v. 8, God provides GRACE!

v. 8 – The very last verse of this death-filled section! – TWO words that make all the difference, like “But God” elsewhere in Bible (cf. Eph.2!): “But Noah”...! –

When the dark thunderclouds of man’s sin & God’s wrath look most threatening, “a small crack appears: Grace shines through, and the promise of a new day dawns” (Boice).

v.8, God's grace ("favour," NIV)! – First time this precious word appears in Bible!

NB, Noah didn't earn grace; he "found grace", he received grace, he contributed nothing. – Noah was born in sin like the rest. NOT saved by his own righteousness, but by grace alone!

Only b/c of God's sovereign, electing GRACE will Noah becomes so moral/righteous, vv. 9ff...

NO ONE escapes God's judgment apart from GRACE!

Eph. 2:8-9...! (Cf. Tit. 2:11ff; 3:1ff...!)

~ "Though Satan had managed to corrupt the whole world, the one man whom he wanted most of all to destroy, was under the invulnerable protecting shield of the grace of God." (H. Morris)

+ During last week's Muslim debates – two overwhelming impressions left on me: (1) What a Satanic lie, that has lasted so long, and now captured some 1.6 billion today, nearly ¼ of world's pop.!...

(2) What makes me differ? – Why were my eyes opened to the truth?!...

Gen. 6:8, 'But [Tim, you, etc.] found grace in the eyes of the LORD'...

RESULT of God's grace to Noah?: v. 9...

NB, not perfect or sinless: but "doing right," (law-keeping) and "above reproach"...

~ *[Look at this] solitary saint. Noah stands alone 'in his generations' like some single tree, green and erect, in a forest of blasted and fallen pines. ...Noah stood uninfected by the universal contagion; and...the evil around [him only] drove him to a more rigid abstinence from it. ...Flowers grow on a dung hill, and the very reeking rotteness may make the bloom finer.*

→Young people, I dare you to be a Noah!

It is so easy to go with the flow, to follow the 'in crowd' and do what everyone else is doing – It's not hard to be another cow just following the herd ("the "broad road") –

BUT, it takes godly courage to stand up and be different, to be a Daniel in Babylon, to be a Noah! – But the same God that enabled Noah to live differently is our God today! – Rom. 12:2...

v. 9b, "he walked with God" – Instead of 'walking in the way of the wicked' who surrounded him, he "walked with God"! – He was alone, but not lonely. – 'One man with God is always in the majority!'

I.e. When you were with Noah, it always seemed that Someone else was there, influencing all that he said and did....

“He walked with God” – Like his great grandfather Enoch, and probably his grandpa Methusaleh, and his father Lamech who gave him his godly name of faith...

→It is amazing what a difference it makes when a child grows up in an environment of faith!... How I praise God for that!...

→May God raise up many Noahs from this very room, people young & old, who will walk closely with God and whose lives will stand out like a full moon against the dark sky.

CONCL. – Repeat 3 points...

Rest of Noah story in chps. 6-9? – Essentially about two things: *(1) A God of terrible judgment but also tremendous grace!;* *(2) If WE want to be saved from God’s wrath, we must trust & obey God at all costs!*

PRAY