

Genesis 6:5-8

Last time we covered Gen 6:1-4, one of the more difficult passages to translate in scripture. To review here is a summary of what we covered last time. And it is appropriate to read 1 Cor 13:12 before we start, *Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity.* ^[a] *All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely* (NLT). In other words, Gen 6:1-4 is a fuzzy passage!

When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, ²the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. ³Then the Lord said, "My Spirit will not contend with ^[a] humans forever, for they are mortal^[b]; their days will be a hundred and twenty years." ⁴The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

1. This ante-diluvial period is categorized by moral chaos and wickedness.
2. Into this time, fallen angels either took human form or possessed men and took for themselves human wives.
3. This action was out of the set boundary God had ordained for men and angels, even fallen ones.
4. This angelic intermarriage was a Satanic attempt to somehow corrupt the seed of Eve so the Messiah could not be born.
5. Nephilim is the categorical name for the offspring of these fallen angels and these human women.
6. These creatures were men, yet physically larger and stronger than your average man.
7. These Nephilim, were physically strong and militarily gifted (as they were large).
8. They were well known, men of notoriety.
9. These fallen angels, responsible for pursuing the strange flesh of women, were ultimately confined to a part of Sheol called Tartarus. There is some debate as to whether this confining event occurred pre or post flood. Sheol means the realm of the dead. It is the abode of all OT peoples when they die. The Bible speaks of various places within it. For humans there are two terms used; Torments for those who are unbelievers and Paradise for those who are of faith. For angelic beings two terms are also used; the Abyss which is mentioned in Rev 9:1-11 in which confined angels are released, and Tartarus, mentioned in 2 P2:4-5, in which these intermarrying angels are imprisoned.

Our text today is Gen 6:5-8, which marks God's response to this whole sordid affair. This small section has two parts, Gods judgement in verses 5-7 and God's grace in verse 8.

The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. ⁶The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. ⁷So the Lord said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them." ⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

Gods Judgement, verses 5-7.

Vs 5a, *The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth,*

Verse 5 starts with the phrase, *God saw*. In chapter 1, we read that *God saw* what he had made, whether it was light or darkness, the heavens or the earth, the land or the sea, the plants or the animals, the stars or the sun and moon, or man and the woman, and *God saw* it was all good.

Now in verse 6:5, *God saw* and what he saw was *how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth*. What God saw was 10 generations of progressive and increasing evil; all because of Adam and Eve's initial sin. And this observation is an appropriate one for our age; Left to his own devices, mankind does not morally or spiritually improve with time. This is the great lie of progressivism. The only way man improves is with the intervention of God's Spirit and the influence that brings through certain individuals or cultures. History is replete with people who adhered to Godly principles and changed the world. Paul and the early Church fathers influenced the Roman world and its tenants became the foundation of Western Civilization. God raised up William Wilberforce and England ended slavery. But it also replete with policies that when we abandon those principles we devolve into moral chaos. Note our own time. Just 30 years ago, in September 1996, then President Bill Clinton and Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act stating that marriage was between a man and a woman. Just 19 years later. In June 2015, the Supreme Court ruled in *Obergefell vs Hodges*, that the fourteenth amendment required all states to license marriages between two people of the same sex and to recognize such marriages performed in other states. Now we live in an age where boys are girls, girls are boys, men are women and women are men.

The word *wickedness* indicates outward acts. There is wickedness because people are wicked. It is another way of saying there is sin present because people are sinful. People do in accordance to who they are. So God saw how great were the outward acts of wickedness.

Vs 5b, *and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.*

Verse 5b gives us the reason for all these acts and it is because the *inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time*. The word inclination is an internal attitude or state of being.

I like the NLT as it says *He (God) saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil*. Imagine everything you thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil, then multiply that by however many people were on earth at that time. In other words, evil was pervasive, deeply rooted in each individual, and producing all kinds of acts contrary to God's will or desire.

Vs 6a, *So the Lord was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth.*

Verse 6 reveals God's response and the heavy heart he has concerning his creation. Other translations have repented, or regretted for the word sorry. Here it would be wise to step back and try to understand the language here. The same language is used in 1 Sam 15:11 when God says he regretted (or was sorry) he had made Saul king. Yet if we read on in 1 Sam 15: 29 it says, *He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a human being, that he should change his mind.*" So in 1 Sam 15:11 it says God was sorry or regretted making Saul King so it appears he changes his mind about

Saul and yet in 1 Sam 15:29 it says God does not change his mind. In our passage it seems as if God has changed his mind regarding the creation of man. So what is going on?

The answer lies in the perspective one takes in viewing the situation. The Bible says God does not change his mind. This is a given. Therefore it is only from our perspective that it appears that God does so. The thing to remember is, in his sovereignty, God conditions his attitude toward us according to our attitude towards Him. In other words, God responds one way toward us when we are obedient and another when we are not. It doesn't mean he loves us less. It is like parenting. If your child is disobedient you still love them, but your response and your actions towards that wayward child are far different than with one who is obedient and desirous of pleasing you. From the child's perspective you may have changed your mind as to how you are treating them, but in reality you are just exercising your will in a separate way with an obedient child than with a disobedient one. So it is here, God responds one way to obedience and another to disobedience. So from a human perspective, it appears God was "sorry" to have made man, but God is responding to man's disobedience.

Vs 6b, it broke his heart.

Verse 6b gives us a glimpse of God's desires and purposes for man. God had intended that man be his steward, he was to fill the earth and have dominion over it, and to walk with God as he did it (see Gen 1:28-30). Now all that is in man's heart are evil thoughts and imaginations. Jesus confirmed this of his own generation in Matt 15:19, *for out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander*. This is what is in man's heart, but what is in God's heart is sorrow and sadness over the brokenness of sin.

Vs 7, So the Lord said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them."

So the Lord said. In Gen 1 the *Lord said* and we had creation. Now in Gen 6:7 we have *the Lord said*, and a plan for destruction. God has not changed his mind, he is simply responding to ten successive generations of increasing and pervasive evil.

The word *wipe* (also translated destroy) means to blot out, erase, totally cleanse. It is a complete removal of one thing from another. Note God will erase everything save fish and marine life as the medium of destruction is water.

The phrase *for I regret I have made them*, we have already addressed. God has not changed his mind, he is simply responding to ten successive generations of increasing and pervasive evil.

God's Grace, vs 8.

Vs 8, But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

Though man is corrupt and every thought and imagination of mankind is evil, God finds one righteous man through whom he will work out the promise He gave to Eve in Gen 3:15. This is grace in the midst of judgement and it introduces two things I want to cover going forward.

The first is the idea of a remnant, and the second is how to spiritually survive a depraved culture.

The Remnant

The doctrine of the remnant is an important concept in terms of understanding God's plan. In brief, the idea is that within the world or more specifically as we move into the history of Israel. there are always some who believe in God and a majority who do not. The Remnant is the name for these believers. It is that small group, chosen by God, who are called to faith, and are the line of His promise. These people are theologically termed the "remnant." This population can be large or small but is never non-existent. (Today the remnant is not the church, but rather, a part of it, as it is only composed of Jewish believers. This is explained in Romans 9-11 and someday we may get to this important part of scripture).

Theological Significance

Theologically the idea of a remnant will become vital to the future story of Israel for two reasons: First, no matter how dark or bleak the times, God will always preserve a believing remnant as a sign to the nation that He will preserve them; and second, the remnant provides a picture and witness to every generation of Israel's future spiritual revival and renewal. Hence, the remnant provides both a physical sign of preservation and a spiritual sign of renewal.

Origin of the Remnant

1. The origin or the idea of a remnant starts with Abel in Gen 4:4 as by faith he brought a better sacrifice than Cain.
2. It then extends to Enoch who pleased and walked with God (Gen 5:23, Heb 11:5-6).
3. Then Noah in Gen 6:9.
4. Then Abraham as God sought this man out, brought him to faith and made covenant promises to Him (Gen 12-17).
5. The line extended to Isaac (and not Ishmael Gen 21:12).
6. Then to Jacob (and not Esau, Mal 1:2, Rm 9:13).
7. Then to Joseph (and not his brothers, Gen 45:7).
8. Israel was chosen as a nation at Sinai (Ex 19:5) and a remnant was preserved after the sin with the golden calf (Ex 32).
9. Caleb and Joshua were chosen to enter the promised land while the rest were left to die in the wilderness (Num 14:38).
10. We see the principle in Judges 6 and God's dealing with Gideon.
11. Elijah was told he had 7000 companions who did not bow to Baal (I K 19).
12. Isaiah 1:9 tells us when the Assyrians came and invaded the Northern Kingdom, God preserved a remnant, *Unless the LORD Almighty had left us some survivors, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.*
13. During the Babylonian captivity, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, were all a part of this believing contingent.
14. Zechariah speaks of the returning exiles from Judah who were chosen (Zech 8:5-6).
15. Mordecai and Esther in the book of Esther.
16. John the Baptist distinguished between those born Jewish and those of the remnant, Mt 3:9.
17. Simeon and Anna, are also examples.
18. God chose a remnant to believe in the Messiah, Rms 11:5, *So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace.*

19. After the destruction of the temple, and throughout the remainder of Israel's history, God has preserved a remnant until today. He will also preserve one through the tribulation (Rev 7:4).

Because the remnant is associated with the nation of Israel and the Jewish people, today it is only composed of Jewish believers. The remnant is not the church, but rather, a part of it, as explained in Romans 9-11, which someday we may get to!

Spiritually Thriving in a decaying Culture

Gen 4 and Gen 6 gives us some characteristics of the culture of that time.

1. It is violent, Cain kills Abel, Lamech killed a man who had attacked him (4:8, 4:23).
2. It is rebellious, Cain was told to wander, yet he settled down and built a city (4:16-17).
3. It is sexually immoral, Lamech had 2 wives, angels and women intermarried (4:19, 6:2).
4. It is prideful. Lamech boasts (4:23-24).
5. It is technologically advancing, a society that trusts in tech rather than God, (4:20-22).
6. It is obsessed with wrong doing (6:5).
7. As a result, evil is ubiquitous and pervasive (6:5).
8. 6:11 summarizes things, Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight.

So, the question is how to spiritually thrive in such an environment?

1. Know the Lord sees you (Gen 6:8, *but Noah found favor with the Lord*) (Prov 5:21, *For your ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all your paths.* 2 Chron 16:9, *For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him,* (see also Heb 4:13).
2. Anchor yourself in God's Word (Ps 119:105, *Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.* Jn 6:68, Simon Peter answered him, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life).*
3. Count on God's Faithfulness and Sovereignty even though things are disintegrating around you, (note Caleb and Joshua Num 13, SMA Dan 3:17-18, Jehosaphat 2 Chron 20, Hezekiah 2 K 18:13-2 K 19:37, Jeremiah Lam 3:1-24).
4. Connect with your Spiritual family (Gen 4:26, Seth and Enosh called on the name of the Lord, Noah, and his fam Gen 8:18-20).
5. Embrace Separation (Abraham and Lot, Gen 14, 18, 2 P 3:7-8).
6. Live today; not yesterday, and not tomorrow (Mt 5:25-34).
7. Know you are salt and light, people are tasting and watching (Mt 5:13-15, Enoch Gen 5:21-24).