

Introduction

This chapter completes Adam's "generations" and starts the account of Noah and gives the reason for the universal flood.

A. The Sons of God and Daughters of Men, vv. 1-4

The identification of the sons of God has been problematic for some folks.

1. A popular position is that these "sons of God" were actually angels that are spoken about in Jude 6-7 and 2 Peter 2:4-9. This view arises because a) angels are called sons of God in Job 38:7; b) the "as" clause in Jude 6-7; c) the progression of examples in Peter can be construed to follow Gen 6, 8, and 19 (2 Peter 2:4, 5, 6-8, respectively); d) the giants who resulted from these unions. Problems with this view include a) angels do not marry (Matt. 22:30); b) angels and men are of different "kinds" at best, and reproduction only occurs within a kind (Gen. 1:20-25); c) If the fathers are angels, then is the sin nature passed on to their children? What about Adamic guilt (imputed sin?)
2. Some say these were demon-possessed men. It would seem that they should be called sons of Satan in that case instead of sons of God.
3. Others that these were the godly descendants of Seth. This is much better, since it deals with the positive name "sons of God" and ties that back to 4:26 where after Enosh was born to Seth and men began to call on the Lord.
4. Other suggest that these were dynastic leaders. This is primarily because of verse 4 in which there were giants, and men who were mighty, men of renown. But it seems that the passage is saying something more general about the earth's population (see v. 5 particularly), and presumably there are not *that many* dynastic leaders.
5. Finally, the sons of God may refer to men in general. This avoids the difficulty of trying to prove that these sons of God were angels!

I take a combination of #3 and #5 above. These men are not called sons of Seth, but sons of God, so they need not be from Seth's line. Men from other than Seth's family could have turned to the Lord.

With that out of the way, we may move on to see that at least nominally godly men took wives for themselves. Because of the evaluation of God on the society in verse 3, it seems that these marriages were not pleasing to Him, and they assisted in the downgrade of the culture.

These unions resulted in giants and otherwise famous men. That there were giants should not surprise us. Two examples are notable in the Bible: Deut. 3:11 regarding Og, king of Bashan. His bed was 9 cubits by 4 cubits, or 13.5 feet long by 6 feet wide. Note that a standard king-size mattress is 76" by 80", or just over 6 feet wide by a little under 8 feet long (for two people!) 1 Sam. 17:4 tells us about the Philistine strong-man Goliath, who was 6+ cubits tall (over 9 feet). In modern times there have been men of over 8 feet in height. From archaeological excavations, there is some evidence (maybe inflated) of skeletons in the Israel and even United States from 8 to 12 feet in height.

As is always the case, these things don't prove the Bible—we know the Bible is true regardless of what archaeological evidence may not have been found to support it.

It is also important to observe verse 3. The Spirit of God was "striving" or "ruling" in man during this time, which we call the Age of Conscience.

What does the phrase "his days shall be one hundred and twenty years" mean? Some have suggested this is an age limit on man, namely, that though men lived for hundreds of years up to this point, they would now be limited to no more than 120 years. I understand the passage to teach that in 120 years, judgment will come. This gave Noah plenty of time to build the ark.

B. The Sorrow of God at the Wickedness of Creation, vv. 5-7

What a turn-around from Gen. 1:31! Man's wickedness was *great* and *every* intent of his heart was *only* evil *continually* (emphasis mine).

From this evaluation, we see that God was *sorry* and *grieved* about the creation of man on the earth. This emotional language is most easily explained as an anthropomorphism (or more precisely, anthropopathism) to convey the extent of God's hatred and grief over sin. That sin would cause him to grieve the very creation of mankind demonstrates how bad sin is in God's eyes. God was certainly not surprised that this occurred.

Flowing out of this is God's resolve to judge the wickedness of mankind and the animal kingdom.

C. The Bright Spot of Noah, vv. 8-10

However, not quite everything on the earth was going totally wrong. There was one man who was righteous and followed God. The Bible says Noah found grace, was just, was perfect, and walked with God.

He had three sons, Shem (broadly speaking, the father of the Semitic peoples), Ham (father of Middle Eastern and African peoples), and Japheth (father of the Europeans and North Asians).

D. The Declaration of Judgment, vv. 11-13

The earlier evaluation of the sinfulness of humanity is confirmed here. The earth was *corrupt* and *filled with violence*. Note the **universality** of the sin, and the corresponding **universal** extent of the judgment—the *end of all flesh* and *I will destroy them*.

In spite of this impending judgment, God provides a way for Noah and his family to be delivered. The next section gives some details.

E. The Instructions to Build the Ark, vv. 14-16

The general instructions for the ark included the building materials (gopher wood, a hard wood), and pitch (tar for a sealant).

The dimensions of the ark were 300L x 50W x 30H, or 450 feet long by 75 feet wide by 45 feet high.

To give you an idea about this size, consider that this is taller than a typical 4-story building. Since verse 16 does tell us that it had only three levels, it would have had floors about 13-14 feet in height. It is significantly longer than a football field. It would displace about 22,000 tons. It would have had a volume of 1.518 million cubic feet, about 569 modern railroad stock cars worth – a train of 5.5 miles in length.

The ark was as large as the largest ocean-going vessels up to the 1800s. By comparison, the modern Nimitz-class aircraft carriers displace 97,000 tons and have a top deck about 1092 feet long and 257 feet wide.

F. The Instructions to Save Land Animals, vv. 17-22

God promises in verse 18 that, though he will destroy all air-breathing animals and all people (v. 17), he will save Noah, his wife, their 3 sons, and their three wives, along with a representative collection of animals. Every *kind* was to be brought into the ark, not every variation of every kind. This would make it easily feasible that the ark could contain the world's animals and enough food for them.

It would require quite a bit of work to gather all of these animals. The text indicates that supernatural help was provided: they "will come to you to keep them alive."

Conclusion

Note for one thing that this is no fanciful tale, no myth or legend. It is actual history! Note also God's evaluation of the earth throughout the chapter (v. 3, 5-7, 11-13). It is pretty bleak. Actually the situation is not much better today (Eccl. 7:29). Let us be like Noah – just, perfect, walking with God, and doing what God commands.

Tallest Man – From

http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/content_pages/record.asp?recordid=48409&Reg=1

The tallest man in medical history for whom there is irrefutable evidence is Robert Pershing Wadlow. He was born at Alton, Illinois, USA, on February 22, 1918, and when he was last measured on June 27, 1940, was found to be 2.72 m (8 ft 11.1 in) tall.

Wadlow died at 1:30 a.m. on July 15, 1940, in a hotel in Manistee, Michigan, as a result of a septic blister on his right ankle caused by a brace, which had been poorly fitted only a week earlier. He was buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Alton, in a coffin measuring 3.28 m (10 ft 9 in) long, 81 cm (32 in) wide and 76 cm (30 in) deep.

Wadlow's greatest recorded weight was 222.71 kg (35 st **1b**) [**491 lb**] on his 21st birthday and he weighed 199 kg (31 st 5 lb) at the time of his death. His shoe size was 37AA (47 cm, 18½ in long) and his hands measured 32.4 cm (12¾ in) from the wrist to the tip of the middle finger. He wore a size 25 ring. His arm span was 2.88 m (9 ft 5¾ in) and his peak daily food consumption was 8000 calories.

At the age of nine, he was able to carry his father Harold F. Wadlow, later Mayor of Alton, who stood 1.8 m (5 ft 11 in) and weighed 77 kg (170 lb), up the stairs of the family home.

See also http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/kidszone/activities/special/tallest_man.pdf