

Text: Genesis 6:1-22

Title: The Lead-up to the Flood

Truth: God prepares to judge the world for its evil.

Date/Location: October 2, 2022 at FBC (rev. from November 27, 2005)

Introduction

This chapter introduces Noah's genealogy (see 6:9 and through 9:29) and lays out the background for the universal flood judgment that God poured out on the planet and its inhabitants.

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

A. Controversy. The identification of the sons of God has been a problem.

1. A popular position is that these "sons of God" were actually angels that are also mentioned 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 unusual nature of the giants who resulted from these unions. Although some Christian pastors and scholars of note hold the above view, it has some serious problems:
 - a) Angels do not marry (Matt. 22:30). Someone might object that they are not *supposed* to marry, but maybe they rebelled and did so anyway.
 - b) Angels and men are of different "kinds" and reproduction only occurs within a kind (Gen. 1:20-25)/
 - c) If the fathers are angels, then is a sin nature passed on to their children? What about Adamic guilt (imputed sin?) A reply might come that these angels were sinners, so had a sin nature—but they had no human nature.
 - d) Finally, verse 3 records God saying, "My Spirit shall not strive with MAN..." (not angels).
2. Some say these were demon-possessed men. This view alleviates the problem of angels and women being of distinct

kinds and unable to produce offspring. It seems in this view that they should be called sons of Satan instead of sons of God.

3. Others believe that these were the godly descendants of Seth. This is 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. Some say this is a problem because how do men who profess to follow God get mixed up with beautiful women? To ask the question with any knowledge of human nature is to answer it, my friends. People get tripped up all the time when they walk in disobedience in the area of sexual attraction.
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. There are men who became famous, but that is only a small number of the entire population.
5. Finally, the sons of God may refer to men in general since they are creations of God, some of whom began to call on the Lord. This avoids the difficulty of trying to prove that these sons of God were angels.

I take a combination of #3 and #5 above.¹ 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.

- B. With that out of the way, we may clear our minds and re-focus to understand that nominally godly men took wives for themselves. They saw that they were beautiful and married them. Because of the evaluation of God on the society in verse 3, it seems that these marriages were not pleasing to Him, and they were part of the downgrade of the culture. God’s people are never far from such temptation of the flesh, especially when young and they have not cultivated very well their self-control filter.

¹ <https://www.fbcaa.org/MattPostiffBlog/2014/04/Sons-of-God>

Using what you see as the main metric for whom to marry is a huge mistake. The attitude, “She is beautiful, I want her” has led to no end of problems in this world, like it did for Samson (Judges 14:3). Follow this template instead: “She is a woman of excellent character; she is a genuine Christian; she desires to serve the Lord; she is faithful and is committed to marriage for life.” “He is a man who wants to be like Christ; he is hard-working, has skills, and will support a family well; he is of good character; and he is committed to marriage until death parts us.” Although beauty or good looks are a real quality in the eyes of every beholder, it is not lasting. Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord will be praised—so says Proverbs 31:31.

- C. These marital unions resulted in giants and otherwise famous men. That there were giants should not surprise us. See the Appendix at the end of these notes about a modern giant afflicted with a condition in which he never stopped growing. 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 7 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 (some maybe inflated) of skeletons in the Israel and even United States from 8 to 12 feet in height.
- D. As we have explained before, these things do not prove the Bible. We know the Bible is true regardless of what archaeological evidence supports it or purports to deny it.
- E. 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.
- F. 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. The genealogy of chapter 11 puts that idea to rest because all of the

generations down to Jacob lived *more* than 120 years. I understand the passage to teach that in 120 years, God will judge the earth. That is, God will deal with *mankind* in 120 years, not that *men* will live to at most 120 years old. This gave Noah plenty of time to build the ark.

II. God's Sorrow at the Wickedness of Creation, vv. 5-7

- A. 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).
- B. We read then 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 not surprised that this occurred but seeing it in actual operation was as grievous as could be.

It is difficult to wrap our minds around the idea that God knew this would happen but created the world anyway. He has a greater and more sophisticated plan than we can process.

- C. Coming out of this evaluation is God's resolve to judge the wickedness of mankind along with the rest of the earth.

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

- A. 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. This sounds like Enoch (5:22-24). I wonder if everyone else on earth were walking astray from God, would I do the same? Or would I walk with God, filled by God's grace and truth? You?
- B. Noah 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).

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

A. The text confirms the earlier evaluation of the sinfulness of humanity. The earth was corrupt and filled with violence. Note the universality of the sin and the corresponding universal extent of the judgment. The Lord speaks of “the end of all flesh” and “I will destroy them.” A “local flood” understanding of Genesis falls woefully short of faithfulness to the text of Scripture. The extent of the judgment must be the same as the extent of the sin, and the sin was worldwide.

Today evil abounds worldwide as well. But God has promised not to judge the earth with another flood. The next time, it will be with a Tribulation and then with a fiery conclusion to the earth and beyond.

Meanwhile, we ought to be thankful for every expression of God’s goodness that we experience, and the restraints on sin that we enjoy in our society, as imperfect as they are.

B. Despite the impending judgment, God makes a way to deliver Noah and his family.

V. The Instructions to Build an Ark, vv. 14-16

A. The general plans for the ark included the building materials (gopher wood, a hard wood), rooms, and “double-sided” pitch (tar for a sealant on both inside and outside).

The dimensions of the ark were 300L x 50W x 30H in cubits, or 450 feet long by 75 feet wide by 45 feet high. Some believe the cubit was actually a bit more than 18 inches (a royal cubit?) and so the Ark was nearer to 500 feet long. Regardless of this detail, it was a very large boat.

B. To give you an idea about this size, consider that this is taller than a typical 4-story building. Since verse 16 tells us that it had 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.

- C. The ark was as large as the largest ocean-going vessels up to the 1800s. Some believe its size is at the upper limit of wooden vessels. By comparison, the modern Nimitz-class aircraft carriers displace 102,000 tons and have a top deck about 1092 feet long and 257 feet wide. The USS Gerald R. Ford is slightly larger at 1106 feet and a displacement of 112,000 tons.
- D. The Ark was an instrument of rescue, a place of safety for Noah's family. It would save them and the animals from destruction. All other air-breathing creatures would perish.

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

- A. 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 three sons, and their three wives, along with a representative collection of animals. Every kind was to be brought into the ark, but 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.
- B. It would require quite a bit of work to gather all of these animals. The text indicates that God provided supernatural help: they "will come to you to keep them alive."

Conclusion

Noah did according to what God commanded him. What a breath of fresh air that is!

This is no fanciful tale, no myth nor legend. It is actual history. Also note God's evaluation of the earth throughout the chapter (v. 3, 5-7, 11-13). It is 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.

MAP

Appendix: The Tallest Man (see 6:4)

From <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/records/hall-of-fame/robert-wadlow-tallest-man-ever>. The following is quoted from an earlier edition of the article, accessed November 2005.

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 1 lb) [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.