

17-18 Bible Study #21

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Genesis 6



1 st	Adam	
2 nd	Cain	Seth
3 rd	Enoch	Enosh
4 th	Irada	Kenan
5 th	Mehujael	Mahalalel
6 th	Methushael	Jared
7 th	Lamech	Enoch
8 th	Jabal and Jubal, and Tubalcain	Methuselah
9 th		Lamech
10 th		Noah
11 th	Shem, Ham, and Japheth	



Genesis 6

- **Genesis 6:1-2**

- There are all sorts of explanations for what “sons of God” meant when read outside of the “literary context”
 - The Jehovah’s Witness believe that they must be angels having relations with human women
 - Others think that they are aliens
- Many read the text as if nothing was said before this passage
- Yet, the author had just spent a massive amount of time explaining that at this point there were two lines of humanity:
 - A wicked line of **Lamech**
 - A righteous line of Enoch (in perfect covenantal relationship with God)

Genesis 6 (Cont)

- **Genesis 5:31** just told us that *Lamech*, the father of *Noah*, lived a total of 777 years (covenant language)
- So we will now see how these two genealogical lines came together
- This means that the sons of *Adam* through *Cain and Lamech* were multiplying and the daughters born to them began to marry the “sons of God” (men from the line of *Seth*)
- This is how some of the “*Fathers of the Church*” understood this passage (St. *Ephrem* the Syrian)
- This indicates that the line of *Seth* was intermarrying with the line of *Cain*

Genesis 6 (Cont)

- This again implies that they were **polygamists**
- Contrary to how this seems for us today, this was not a genetic problem but a problem of faith
- The problem was that the people of God who were the people of the covenant were going to intermarry with the line of the wicked
- They would no longer be in a covenant with God
- They would become polygamist, polytheist and pagans*

Genesis 6 (Cont)

- **Genesis 6:3**

- Some understand this to be a rule that God made to indicate that no man can live beyond 120 years
- But that is not what the text means
- The “*Fathers of the Church*” understood this to be a prophecy in which God was saying how long it would be before the arrival of the “flood”
- This was to give the sinful people of the land 120 years to repent or face a flood that would wipe them out
- The reference cannot be the maximum length of a man’s life for the Book of Genesis contains many who lived well beyond 120 years

Genesis 6 (Cont)

- Instead, the author is talking about the time left until the chastisement will come
- We see statements like this throughout the Old Testament
- Often the prophets spoke of God promising a chastisement in order to bring about repentance
- It was prophets like *Elijah* who prophesied about the wickedness of his time and like *Enoch* who was taken up so he would not see death
- We see it again in **Jude 14-16**

Genesis 6 (Cont)

- **Genesis 6:4**

- *Nephilim* might have been a race of giants or it can simply mean “the fallen one”
- Most scholars see this to mean those who had fallen
- This was debated among the “*Fathers of the Church*”
- Some see it as a reference to what was happening before the flood and some see it after the flood
- These can be seen as the fallen ones who died in the flood or the author may be saying that the **descendants** of these fallen ones died in the flood

Genesis 6 (Cont)

- It could also refer to the fall of man in general
- We have just seen that the righteous line intermarried with the wicked line and this explains what happened to their descendants who like *Lamech* became (polygamists and murderers)*

Genesis 6 (Cont)

- **Genesis 6:5**

- At this point there is no longer a good line and a bad line, all that remained was one big messed up line!
- Everyone had intermarried and they were all basically wicked
- The righteous had become wicked*

Genesis 6 (Cont)

- **Genesis 6:6-7**

- God cannot be “sorry” because He is **immutable** (never changing)
- If we look closely at the story we can see that it was man who changed
- Man had gone from a righteous relationship with God, (the relationship of life), to a wrong relationship with God (a relationship of death)
- It followed that from this all were going to die*

Genesis 6 (Cont)

- **Genesis 6:8-10**

- *Noah*, like *Enoch*, was going to be preserved alive while everyone else died
- *Noah* “walked with God”, meaning that he was righteous
- We heard in **Genesis 5:12** that *Noah* had three sons
- By repeating this at this point in the text the author was concluding a **framing device** (**Genesis 5:32** to **Genesis 6:9**)
- Framing devices and chiasm’s allowed the storyteller to know where a story began and ended*

Genesis 6 (Cont)

- **Genesis 6:11-21**

- *Noah* and his family were going to live, and the rest of mankind was going to die
- This was sealed by a covenant between God and *Noah*
- God gave *Noah* the dimensions for building the ark
 - *1 cubit= approx. 1.5 feet*
 - *The floor of the ark totaled 95,700 square feet or 20 basketball courts**
- Many believe that the remnants of the Ark have been found in Turkey near Mount *Ararat*

Genesis 6 (Cont)

- A life-size replica of *Noah's* are can be found in:
 - Dordrecht, Netherlands opened in December 2012
 - Grant County, Kentucky in July 26, 2017

Genesis 6 (Cont)

- **Genesis 6:22**

- Look at this image of *Noah*
- He was the righteous one like *Enoch* or like *Adam* before the fall
- He walked with God and God made a covenant with him because he was righteous
- God told *Noah* to do something, and he did it
- There was no debate, he just did what God asked him to do
- He was perfectly righteous and this was how he was seen as the image of a new *Adam*

Genesis 7

Genesis 7

- **Genesis 7:1-4**

- Here we need some more clarification
- Some commentators see two different stories being woven together (“every animal” and elsewhere it says “seven pairs”)
- God is telling *Noah* to bring a pair of each animal to make sure that animal life will continue on earth after the flood
- This is for the same reason that He selected *Noah*, his wife and sons with their wives

Genesis 7 (Cont)

- This was to insure the continuation of life of both man and the animals
- But God also wanted to provide additional clean animals, those that man used for food, in agriculture and **for sacrifice** so he told *Noah* to select 7 pairs of the clean animals
- Also, look at the use of the number 7 throughout the text (**Gn 7:2,3,4**) as a reference to God's covenant of life*

Genesis 7 (Cont)

- **Genesis 7:5-10**

- We hear the phrase “did all that the Lord commanded him” over and over
- It is all completed
- But this is a complete reversal of the creation story in **Genesis 1**
 - The land was covered by water
 - There was darkness over the land
 - This is an image of a massive storm
- But here there was land with both animal and human life

Genesis 7 (Cont)

- But now the waters were going to come back upon the land and darkness will return to cover the abyss snuffing out all life
- This is basically the end of and a restart of creation*

Genesis 7 (Cont)

- **Genesis 7: 11-16**

- At the end of this story God will preserve the life of *Noah* and his family
- God told *Noah* to build an ark
- Then he told them to get in the ark, and **God shut the door**
- This is a convental protection of *Noah* and his family *

Genesis 7 (Cont)

- **Genesis 7:17-24**

- Again, we see a chiasm within the story
- This is a complete reversal of **Genesis 1**
- Water will again end up being over the face of the earth except in this story, life (via *Noah* and those with him in the ark) will remain
- Everything outside the ark will be wiped out
- From this we learn that it was the covenant relationship with God that gave and preserved life

Genesis 8

Genesis 8

- **Genesis 8:1a**

- “Remember” in the Old Testament and especially in the Book of **Genesis** means “**to keep the covenant**”
- It does not mean that God was about to forget something
- It means that God maintained (the covenant)
- It is like a father telling his son that when he goes outside he should remember to walk the dog

Genesis 8 (Cont)

- In the Bible God always “remembers”, but it is man who forgets to keep the covenant
- Thus, God remembered Noah because He made a covenant with him in Genesis 7
- Since God always keeps His covenant, he keeps Noah alive *

Genesis 8 (Cont)

- **Genesis 8:1b**

- Here we see a repeat of **Genesis 1** where the water was covering the earth until the dry land appeared
- Hovering over the waters was a spirit (the *ruach*)
- This is the Hebrew word for “wind” or “spirit”
- *St. Ambrose* tells us that the waters did not recede by an ordinary wind but by the power of the “spirit of God”
- The Jewish commentators and the “*Fathers of the Church*” saw a relationship between the creation story in **Genesis 1** and the flood story

Genesis 8 (Cont)

- We will see this relationship again in the crossing of the Red Sea story where the waters parted by the power of the Spirit
- Here it tells us that the sun came out, the light appeared, the waters parted and the dry land appeared, and the ark rested on the dry land *

Genesis 8 (Cont)

- **Genesis 8:2-7**

- Again, look at the covenantal link to the number “7”
- *Noah* sent out a raven to see if the land was safe for life
- After flying around, the raven returned to the Ark *

Genesis 8 (Cont)

- **Genesis 8:8-11**

- At that point there were no trees on the land and therefore, no place for the bird to land
- Next, Noah sent out a dove who came back with an olive branch
- This indicated that the dove was collecting branches in order to build a nest for her offspring

Genesis 8 (Cont)

- This was all about “signs of life”
- In the ancient *Mediterranean* world the olive branch was a symbol for peace and life
- The olive branch indicated that life had returned to the earth because there was once again peace between God and man *

Genesis 8 (Cont)

- **Genesis 8:12-19**

- At this point (in **Genesis 1**) there were plenty of trees
- The mountains appeared, the trees appeared, the plants came forth from the ground and the birds were able to build nests
- This was the sign that the birds of the air and fish of the sea had returned
- Next, God told the animals to once again to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth *

Genesis 8 (Cont)

- **Genesis 8: 20**

- Again, to avoid the possibility of some animals becoming extinct, Noah had been ordered to bring 7 pairs (Covenantal language) of the clean animals *

Genesis 8 (Cont)

- **Genesis 8: 21-22**

- “A pleasing order” come from the same *Hebrew* root as the name “Noah”
- It means a “restful or peaceful odor”
- Look again at the parallels between this text and **Genesis 1-3**
- We find this cycle or pattern throughout the entire Genesis story
- The next creation story will follow the same pattern

Genesis 8 (Cont)

- Then, unfortunately, there was a problem
- This parallelism in **Genesis** is from the “Oral Tradition”
- Not only do we have “chiasms”, but the stories themselves are told in parallel over and over
- Basically, it is as if we are hearing the same story over and over again
- This was part of the oral way of telling a story
- It was a memory device which we will see again and again in the text
- We will see parallels in **Exodus 7 and 8** to **Genesis 1**