

Wickedness of Men ▪ Genesis 6:1–8

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There is a true story of a Christian couple who were looking for a church in the town they had just moved to.

They visited one that seemed to fit: worship had substance, people warm and friendly, preacher was a good expositor, going verse by verse through a book.

Then one Sunday as the preacher stepped up to the pulpit, he said: “We are going to skip over this chapter since it’s just too confusing for me.” That was the last Sunday for them.

- If there were any chapter in Genesis that I would be tempted to say, “skip because it’s too challenging”, it would be the one in front of us.

It’s not that I have a fear that a visiting couple of people will leave the church.

The greatest fear would be that we miss something crucial God wants us to hear.

- This is just a lesson in Bible study and discipleship: *Don’t skip the hard stuff.*

People fall generally into two personality types: problem identifiers, and problem solvers.

Main Point: God is the greatest problem identifier and solver when it comes to the ultimate problem of wickedness.

We will look at 5 main subjects in 8 verses.

And on the way, we will get some answers.

—Who are sons of God, Nephilim and does God have any regrets?

Sons of God

- Who are they?
- Various Views: All are orthodox.

“No view escapes troubling criticism. The mysterious identity of the ‘sons of God’ continues to humble the expositor” (Kenneth Matthews)

- These are members of Seth’s descendants that intermarry with Cain’s
- Powerful tyrants, who continued to grow in pride and violence, accumulating many wives
- Fallen Angel view (view I hold)

Reasons:

—Sons of God in OT always refer to angels

(Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7)

Job 1:6 ESV

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

--The contrast in the text: sons of God/daughters of man

--This is not the first time a cosmic boundary is transgressed by a rebellious supernatural being (cf. Gen. 3)

--It appears to be how the NT interpreted - main Jewish interpretation in the early church

NT links fallen angles to rebellion and the flood

1 Peter 3:19–20 ESV

in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.

2 Peter 2:4–5 ESV

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; if he did not spare the ancient

world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

Jude 6 ESV

And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—

- Possibly it looked more like demon possession — using the bodies of actual men
- NT show demons seeking embodiment (Lk. 8:31-33; 11:24-26)

Takeaway: God has power and control over all rebellion, including the cosmic and supernatural rebellion of powerful forces.

Nephilim

- They could either be the children of the sons of God/daughters or they could be contemporaries who lived during the same time.
- Their name literally means “fallen ones”.

In a limited way—they show up again after the flood (Num. 13:33)

- They have a reputation of being feared and revered.

You could say they were the ancient celebrities.

But Genesis sets things straight: They are mortal and will die in judgment.

It's almost a bit humorous that they were so famous, and we have no idea who they were...no names.

Evil has not gotten the upper hand over God!

This reminds us of the truth of Ps. 94.

Psalm 94:1–2 (ESV)

O LORD, God of vengeance,

Rise up, O judge of the earth;

LORD, God of vengeance, Judge of the earth (you don't hear that on the Christian radio station....or in many pulpits).

Mankind

- I'm not really good at math; but I can do theological math.

“When sinners multiply, so does sin”

- (v5) This supports the doctrine of total depravity—radical corruption.

It does not mean that each person is the worst version of themselves, but does mean that no one can help themselves...and we don't usually know how bad our heart really is.

Jeremiah 17:9 ESV

The heart is deceitful above all things,
and desperately sick;
who can understand it?

Humanity is self-deceived about the condition of their heart.

Let's get very practical. What makes an action evil? Is it only when someone gets hurt, or something stolen?

It goes much, much deeper.

- 4 Marks of Evil (actions, thoughts, desires)

1) Breaks God's Law 2) Not done in faith 3) Not aim at love 4) Not for God's glory

When doing self-examination on our own thoughts: Does it pass the 4 tests? Law, Faith, Love
Glory.

Radical Corruption reveals 4 things about sin according to Geerhardus Vos:

—It's intensity, inwardness, absolute, habitual

Radical Corruption: Identifying the problem is not pointing the finger but getting a spiritual EKG.

The LORD

- The most important person in this narrative is the LORD.

We see 3 things about the Lord:

—What he sees, feels and determines.

1. What God sees

Looking at something is to be fully aware.

The Bible reminds us that God sees all.

--Sometimes this seeing moves God to act with compassion (Ex. 2:24-25)

--But other times it's there to remind us of the sheer sovereignty of God, and accountability we have before him.

2. What God feels

- Now I'm very reformed in my doctrine scripturally, and confessionally.

But I also want a text to say exactly what a text says.

- The text expresses that the wickedness of man causes God regret and sorrow.

Regret (also can mean relent).

- We don't want to misunderstand.

- First, the Bible uses language about God’s emotions that are like ours (anthropomorphism).

We know what it feels like to be hurt by actions of another—do you want to hurt someone you love?

- Second, God’s actions are very different from ours:

Our regrets lacked foresight; and ours is due to our limited knowledge. (Key difference)

When Emily and I were newly married we both did something we regret: bought a brand-new car and financed 100 percent. We had not listened to any of the Dave Ramsey stuff. We just figured if we could afford it, go for it!

But our problem was based on lack of foresight—we did not know.

Then a higher insurance deductible came in, and the outrageous SC vehicle property tax...

Other texts give us the balance:

1 Samuel 15:29 ESV

And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret.”

Numbers 23:19 ESV

God is not man, that he should lie,
or a son of man, that he should change his mind.
Has he said, and will he not do it?
Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

Q: See the key: “God is not a man”; he does not regret like people do.

God does not have a regret because something snuck up on him.

Everything happens according to his eternal plan.

Grief

- The Bible describes God having real emotions.

Yet...if we think God’s feelings are like ours, we lose “impassability”.

Jl Packer: “God is impassable which means that no one can inflict suffering, pain or any type of distress upon him. God’s experiences don’t come upon him as ours come upon us, for his are *foreknown, willed, and chosen by himself*, and are not involuntary surprises forced on him from outside.....”

In other words, he is never really the “victim”.

(Quoted in Carson, *Gagging of God*, p 236)

God foresaw, willed, and chose the pain that human wickedness would cause

3. What God determines

The final thing we see of the LORD is what he determines: to blot out the entire human race.

- This is a powerful foreshadowing of the flood.
- Blotting out/wiping out = complete removal.

Eg. Ps. 51:1—David’s prayer of confession

2 Kings 21:13 (ESV)

I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down.

This is how appalling human wickedness is... God will wipe it clean.

Ps. 5:4 God is not a God who delights in wickedness, evil will never dwell.

Noah

- Everything would seem hopeless if it were not for this verse.
- Noah was born in times of unrest.
- The text draws our attention to the Lord’s eyes, twice (v5; 8).

--First, God looks on human wickedness...objects of judgment (5).

--Finally, God looks on one man... and looks at an object of his sovereign grace (8)

Conclusion

So what would we miss if we skipped this?

› *If you skip hard stuff in the Bible, you might miss some of the best stuff.*

Best stuff: God is the ultimate problem identifier and problem solver when it comes to our ultimate problem—Wickedness of Men.

- Problem identified: Cosmic rebellion and Human Total Depravity

Have you identified it?

- Problem Solved:

1) Through a fixed day of judgment. In those days, it was a global flood. In ours, it's the second coming...Day of the Lord.

God will solve the problem and put an end to all the wickedness of men.

2) Through patience and grace

- One verse we did not cover: v3.
- It can either mean that men's lives will be limited to 120 years; or that 120 will be left until the flood comes.

1 Pet 3:20 "God's patience in the days of Noah"

Because God is a God of patience, he keeps a window of grace open for wicked men to turn to Christ and not face judgment.

The gospel brings hope that God does solve the problem of our wickedness.

Romans 5:6 ESV

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.