

The Days of Noah

Text: Gen. 6:1-8 (Read also Matt. 24:37-38)

Introduction:

1. Chapters 6-9 are the great flood chapters in Genesis. They describe the lead up to the flood (chap. 6), the flood itself (chap. 7-8), and the events immediately after the flood (chap. 9).
2. The first part of chapter 6 documents the moral degeneracy and depravity of the antediluvian civilization and God's determination to judge man's wickedness. "Moral and spiritual conditions in the antediluvian world had deteriorated with the passing years, not only among the Cainites but eventually among the Sethites as well. Materialism and ungodliness abounded, except for a small remnant connected with the line of the promised Seed, along with those few who may have been influenced by the witness of such men as Enoch." (Henry Morris)
3. Godly Noah is the prominent character of these chapters. Noah is a significant character in the Bible, being mentioned at least 58 times by name in the Scriptures. Only two men lived longer than Noah – Methuselah (969 years) and his great-great grandfather Jared (962 years). Noah lived 950 years.
4. The Bible's description of Noah's day is of great significance to us as the New Testament predicts that as the second coming of Christ draws near, the climate will be very much like that of Noah's day.
5. In this message, we will consider three truths the text unfolds concerning the world of Noah's day.

I. THE WICKEDNESS OF NOAH'S DAY (Vs. 1-2, 4-5)

We can summarize the evil of Noah's day under three headings. The pre-flood generation was characterized by:

A. Evil Marriages (Vs. 1-2)

1. The setting of these marriages (Vs. 1)
 - a. These were days when the population was dramatically increasing on earth. Noting that the antediluvians (chap. 5) all "begat sons and daughters", even into their later years, we can get a sense for the size of the pre-flood population. In their classic book, *The Genesis Flood*, Dr. John C. Whitcomb and Dr. Henry M. Morris suggest the population to have been approx.... one billion by the time of the flood. They state that "the present rate of world population increase is...approximately 2 per cent per year." By computing the population of the earth during the pre-flood days at only 1.5 per cent, they arrive at the one billion figure.¹ This is a very conservative estimate. The population could have been much higher than this given the longevity of the people in the pre-flood era.
 - b. Note: There was nothing evil about multiplying as it was God's express will that this take place (Gen. 1:28). However, where you have the multiplication of people who are living apart from God, you have a corresponding multiplication of depravity and

¹ Cited by John Butler in *Noah the Ark Builder*, p. 13.

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sin. Leupold writes, “Where mankind comes to be of great numbers, somehow the places where they congregate together thickly become the scenes of the development of evil on a greater scale.”

2. The spirits behind these marriages (Vs. 2a)
 - a. As studied in our last message, we believe there was an explosion of demonic activity in the pre-flood world as indicated by the New Testament passages of 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 1:6. We do not take the view that fallen angels literally married women and produced offspring. Rather, we believe it was likely a form of demon infestation and a resultant interference in the reproduction of the antediluvians in an attempt to thwart the promised seed of Genesis 3:15. It would be something akin to the demon possession described in the New Testament.
 - b. Significantly, there will be an increase in demonic activity in the end times (See 1. Tim. 4:1; Rev. 9:20).
3. The sensuality of these marriages (Vs. 2b)
 - a. On the human side, these marriages were based on sensual, physical appeal rather than godliness and spirituality. The word ‘fair’ means beautiful. The outward looks became the primary criteria for a marriage partner in Noah’s time.
 - b. An overemphasis and fixation on physical attraction is a feature of a society in spiritual and moral decline. In fact, there are really two words that summarize the wickedness of Noah’s day:
 - i. **Vice** – Lamech’s polygamy an example (4:19).
 - ii. **Violence** – Lamech’s murder an example (4:23-24).
 - c. Our day has become like Noah’s where outward feminine beauty is being used to fuel moral corruption on an alarming scale with the online pornography industry, the advertising industry, the Hollywood movie industry and so on. The majority of marriages and relationships are based on lust and passion rather than purity and truth.
 - d. Note: Physical beauty and attraction, though created by God and not evil in itself within the marriage context, is a very fragile foundation for a marriage. If physical beauty was the key to a lasting and happy marriage, then Hollywood stars and starlets should have the lowest divorce rates in the world. The opposite is true. Make sure you are marrying for reasons deeper than the attractiveness of your prospective spouse! Marry a woman who possesses inward beauty as a priority. Prov. 31:30 gives some wise instruction on this topic, “Favour *is* deceitful, and beauty *is* vain: *but* a woman *that* feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.” “Absolute consecration to Jesus is the strongest bond between human hearts.” (J.N. Darby)
 - e. Leupold notes, “When God’s children lose sight of such basic distinctions and look about only for the pretty faces and the shapely forms, then, surely, degeneracy has set in.”

B. Evil Men (Vs. 4)

These men were:

1. Fearsome Men (Vs. 4a)

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They are described as:

- a. **Giants.** The word 'giant' literally means "fallen one". It has the sense of 'tyrant', 'attacker', 'bandit' (Leupold). The same word is used in Numbers 13:33 to describe the giants in Canaan in the days of Joshua.
 - b. **Mighty Men.** The word 'mighty' means "powerful; by implication warrior, tyrant" (Strong's concordance). In light of the reference in verse 2 to the "sons of God", it could be the devil was the source of their might and strength. Undoubtedly these men played a leading role in the violence of those days as described in verse 11-13.
2. Famous Men (Vs. 4b)
 - a. These men are also described as men of 'renown'. Interestingly the Hebrew word is often translated 'name'. E.g., "and called his **name** Seth" (Gen. 5:3). So, these men had made a 'name' for themselves; they were men of notoriety in the ancient world. "The world certainly did not in those days, even as it does not now, esteem godly men highly. Only the wicked were renowned or had a name." (Leupold)
 - b. Sadly, like Noah's day, the world idolizes evil men rather than godly men. Today, the most famous people in the world tend to be the godless, immoral stars of the music and movie industries.
 - c. Note: Who your heroes are says a lot about the kind of Christian you are. Do you highly esteem the godly or ungodly?

C. Evil Minds (Vs. 5)

1. Depraved Actions (Vs. 5a)
 - a. "God saw" = mankind's wickedness does not go unnoticed by God. What a contrast to what God saw in Genesis 1:31 at the end of creation week.
 - b. "wickedness...was great" = evil was rampant and widespread. The elevation of evil men as heroes a major contributor to world at that time being overtaken by wickedness (See Vs. 4).
2. Depraved Imaginations (Vs. 5b)

Mankind's imaginations had become:

 - a. Completely Evil – "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart".
 - i. Given the fixation on physical beauty it is not hard to see how the world became so corrupt. Their minds were "in the gutter."
 - ii. "every imagination" = the imagination is the image generating faculty of the mind. It is "the faculty of imagining, or of forming mental images or concepts of what is not actually present to the senses." The same Hebrew word is translated 'formed' in Gen. 2:7. The heart is "the thought-workshop" (Leupold). The imagination is a God-created, God-given gift which can be exercised in a God-honoring manner. However, because of the fall of man, it is often used in a depraved manner. It is staggering just how much wickedness the depraved mind of man is capable of inventing.

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- iii. Prov. 6:18 God hates, “An heart that deviseth **wicked imaginations**, feet that be swift in running to mischief,”
- iv. Rom. 1:30 “Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, **inventors of evil things**, disobedient to parents,”
- b. Constantly Evil – “evil continually”.
 - i. Further emphasizes the previous statement. This is not a mind that occasionally indulges in an evil thought. This describes a mind totally given over to the pursuit of evil things.
 - ii. The “great wickedness” was the fruit of these sinful thoughts. Evil actions are first conceived in the heart before they are committed in three dimensions.
 - iii. Jesus Christ put His Divine finger on the heart being the source of sinful actions. Mark 7:21-23 “For **from within, out of the heart of men**, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: **All these evil things** come from within, and defile the man.” Our thought life is the fountain of our conduct. We are products of what we think (Prov. 23:7).

II. THE WITNESS IN NOAH’S DAY (VS. 3, 9; 2. Pet. 2:5)

The pre-flood world was not without God’s witness. God provided the antediluvians with light from at least three sources. There was:

A. The Voiceless Witness of the Spirit’s Striving (Vs. 3)

This verse reveals that God was active in the Person of the Holy Spirit, seeking to bring the pre-flood inhabitants to a place of repentance. It also reveals that while God graciously strives with man, His longsuffering and patience have a limit. There is:

1. A time limit on God’s pleading with man (Vs. 3a)
 - a. This is the second reference to the Holy Spirit in Genesis and points to one of His major functions as the third Person of the Godhead. He strives with the hearts and consciences of lost sinners, seeking to bring them to repentance (See John 16:8-9). The Spirit’s striving was probably through the preaching of Enoch and Noah as well as His direct appeal to the conscience.
 - b. But there is a warning in the verse. God warns that His Spirit will not “always strive with man”. The convicting, drawing ministry of the Spirit is not to be taken for granted.
 - c. Note: This verse refutes the Calvinistic thesis that men are irresistibly drawn to salvation. If the Calvinist view of sovereign election were true, then we should ask why the Holy Spirit was striving with those who were already ordained to destruction as the non-elect! Evidently God strove with them because they were being offered a real opportunity to repent. The reality is that mankind was created with the freedom to choose (freewill) and he can choose to either accept or reject God’s offer of salvation.

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2. A time limit on God's longsuffering with man (Vs. 3b)
 - a. The reference to 120 years appears to be a reference to the time remaining before the judgment of the flood would be sent as opposed to a reference to the expected lifespan of man.
 - b. This is a testament to the longsuffering of God that he would give another 120 years for men to repent before the flood would be sent. God had also provided a warning in the name of Methuselah which means "when he is dead it is sent".
 - c. 1 Peter 3:20 "Which sometime were disobedient, when once **the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing**, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."
 - d. Sadly, evil men often misinterpret God's longsuffering and rebel rather than repent (Ecc. 8:11; Rom. 2:4).

B. The Verbal Witness of Noah's Preaching (2 Pet. 2:5)

1. The theme of his preaching – 'righteousness'. Noah was a herald for righteousness in an unrighteous world. May God help us to follow his example!
2. The timeframe of his preaching – the Bible does not specifically state how when Noah started preaching but it may have been around the same time as when he built the ark. How long he took to build the ark is not stated specifically but it was probably around 100 years given the fact Noah's age is mentioned in Gen. 4:32 as being 500 years and then 600 years when he entered the ark and the flood came in Gen. 7:11.
3. The triumph of his preaching – from a human standpoint, Noah's preaching was a failure. From a Divine and spiritual standpoint, it was a success.
 - a. The world was lost. I wonder how many mission boards would continue supporting someone after 100 years of preaching with no visible results? The fact is, God still wants men to hear the truth, even if He knows they are not going to respond. From the spiritual standpoint, Noah was a success as he was faithful to the Lord over many decades irrespective of the hardness of heart around him.
 - b. His family was saved. There was fruit for all that labor and witness. Noah's family all got on the ark!
 - i. Heb. 11:7 "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, **prepared an ark to the saving of his house**; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."
 - ii. 1 Peter 3:20 "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, **wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.**"

C. The Visual Witness of Noah's Living (Vs. 9)

1. Noah Walked with God.
 - a. The context of his walk – Noah walked with God in the midst of a wicked, immoral, violent and depraved world. What a

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testimony! By the grace of God, he did not allow the floodtides of iniquity into his heart and home. Noah's family was the only remnant of godliness left by the time the flood came.

- b. The consistency of his walk – except for a sad episode of drunkenness towards the end of his life, Noah lived for hundreds of years in an upright and God-honouring manner.
2. Noah Worked for God.
 - a. Imagine what a testimony the building of the ark was to the antediluvians. No doubt boat building wasn't new but a ship of this size was undoubtedly the biggest in history to date. The massive structure stood as a towering reminder to all that saw it that time was running out.
 - b. Every blow of Noah's hammer ringing out from the ship yard and every rasp of his saw were sermon sounds of warning that judgment was coming.
 - c. Alexander Whyte expresses it powerfully, "Not only did Noah preach his best and his most earnest as the end drew near...but every tree that fell in the forest, and every plank that was laid in the ark; every axe-stroke and echo of every hammer was a louder and ever louder call to men of that corrupt and violent day to flee from the wrath to come."

III. THE WILL OF GOD FOR NOAH'S DAY (VS. 6-8)

These verses record God's Divine response to the wickedness of mankind. God determines:

A. The Destruction of Mankind (Vs. 6-7)

1. The reaction of God to the sinfulness of man (Vs. 6).
 - a. It repented Him – this does not mean that God decided He had made a mistake. God's character does not change but His dealings with mankind change depending on whether he is obedient or disobedient.
 - i. Jonathan Sarfati explains it well, "God actually does not repent from His own perspective (1 Samuel 15:29) – He is unchanging. However, from a human perspective, God changes his actions because of a change in the subjects of His actions...Indeed in the same chapter of Samuel, we see that God repented of making Saul king (Vs. 11, 35). The resolution is simple: God made Saul king when he was obedient, and removed Saul's kingship when he was disobedient (Vs. 23, 28). God's standards do not change; He merely reacts to man in different ways, depending on whether man obeys or disobeys Him."
 - ii. Henry Morris adds, "Indeed, it is exactly because God does not repent, that He must seem to repent when man "changes his mind." God's attitude toward man is conditioned by man's attitude toward Him."
 - b. It grieved him – the word 'grieved' has the idea of "to hurt, cause pain". God's heart was moved with grief over the sinfulness of man. Because evil filled the thoughts of man's heart God was "grieved at his heart". Are we grieved by sin?

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2. The ruling of God concerning the sinfulness of man (Vs. 7).
 - a. The severity of the judgment (Vs. 7a).
 - i. "I will destroy man" = the word 'destroy' means to erase, to wipe out, blot out, erase totally. The same root word is frequently translated "blot out" in the Old Testament (Deut. 9:14, 25:19, 29:20; 2 Kings 14:27, Ps. 51:1, 9; 69:28; 109:13, 14, Is. 43:25, 44:22, Jer. 18:3). It is also translated 'wipe in 2 Kings 21:13 where God says, "...I will **wipe** Jerusalem as a man **wipeth** a dish, **wiping** it and turning it upside down." So, God is literally saying "I will wipe out mankind".
 - ii. "whom I have created" = it is God's sovereign right to judge man since God made him. "The Giver of life is the Supreme Lord over life and death." (Leupold)
 - b. The scope of the judgment (Vs. 7b)
 - i. The judgment would also fall on the animal kingdom. Three specific categories of animals are mentioned – beast, creeping thing and fowls of the air. God still showed mercy on the animal kingdom by preserving at least two of each kind on the ark (7:2-3).
 - ii. Note: No mention of sea creatures as some would survive the flood.
 - c. The sense of the judgment (Vs. 7c). The reason for the judgment is reiterated, "for it repenteth me that I have made them."

B. The Deliverance of Noah (Vs. 8)

1. The basis of Noah's salvation – grace.
 - a. This is the first mention of that wondrous word 'grace' in the Word of God. "Grace! 'tis a charming sound Harmonious to my ear; Heaven with the echo shall resound, And all the earth shall hear." Against the dark backdrop of the depravity of man and the gathering storm clouds of God's wrath, grace shines forth like a pure ray of light. "Though Satan had managed to corrupt the whole world, the one man whom he wanted most of all to destroy, was under the invulnerable, protecting shield of the grace of God." (Morris)
 - b. Notice that this grace was unmerited. Noah did not "earn" grace in the eyes of the LORD, he "found grace" in the eyes of the LORD. Note the order in verse 8-9:
 - i. Noah found grace in the eyes of God.
 - ii. Noah was a just man (justified).
 - iii. Noah perfect (complete, mature, godly) in his generations.
 - iv. Noah walked with God.
 - c. God's method of salvation has been the same from the beginning of time. It is by grace alone through faith alone to the glory of God alone! (See Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:5)
2. The means of Noah's salvation – the ark.
 - a. There was only one way of salvation from God's judgment and only one door to enter it.

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- b. Christ is the only way of salvation. Have you entered the ark of God's grace?

Conclusion:

1. What is the state of your thought life? How do you live in the secret chambers of your imagination where no one but God sees?
2. Have you received God's free gift of grace like Noah did?