

# GENESIS

## Chapter 6

### *Increasing Corruption on Earth*

**When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, 2 the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. 3 Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.” 4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown. 5 The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. 7 So the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.**

Moses had interrupted his genealogy of Adam’s descendants in order to describe the awesome catastrophe God sent on earth’s inhabitants during the life of Noah. Here he traces the development which led to God’s decision to send the flood. (PBC)

**6:1 daughters** – These specially mentioned because of their role in the following verses. (TLSB)

**6:2 sons of God saw ... daughters of man ... took them as their wives** – See v. 4. The phrase “sons of God” here has been interpreted to refer either to angels or to human beings. In such places as Job 1:6; 2:1 it refers to angels, and perhaps also in Ps 29:1 (where it is translated “mighty ones”). Some interpreters also appeal to Jude 6–7 (as well as to Jewish literature) in referring the phrase here to angels. (CSB)

Others, however, maintain that intermarriage and cohabitation between angels and human beings, though commonly mentioned in ancient mythologies, are surely excluded by the very nature of the created order (ch. 1; Mk 12:25). Elsewhere, expressions equivalent to “sons of God” often refer to human beings, though in contexts quite different from the present one (see Dt 14:1; 32:5; Ps 73:15; Isa 43:6; Hos 1:10; 11:1; Lk 3:38; 1Jn 3:1–2, 10). “Sons of God” (vv. 2, 4) probably refers to godly men, and “daughters of men” to sinful women (significantly, they are not called “daughters of God”), probably from the wicked line of Cain. Thus, the context suggests that vv. 1–2 describe the intermarriage of the Sethites (“sons of God”) of ch. 5 with the Cainites (“daughters of men”) of ch. 4, indicating a breakdown in the separation of the two groups.

This closing episode in Moses’ “Account of Adam’s Line” is not a happy one. The Sethites, the people of God who had up to now remained separate from the unbelieving Cainites began to drift from their loyalty to the true God and to draw closer to their heathen neighbors. When contemplating marriage, the most important of human relationships, the Sethites pushed their faith and their godly heritage into the background. When looking for a prospective wife, they didn’t ask: “Will this woman help to make my home a place of godly instruction?” They asked only the question which to them was the most important: “Is she good-looking?” (PBC)

*sons of God* – These were godly believers. Sethites, through whom the promised Messiah would come (3:15). Some interpreters have considered the “sons of God” angels, based on the expression in Job 38:7. However, such a conclusion directly contradicts Jesus’ teaching about the nature of angels (Mt. 22:30 and Moses’ teaching about “kinds.” (TLSB)

*daughters of man* – These were godless unbelievers, Cainites. (TLSB)

*and they chose* – The “sons of God” looked longingly upon Sethite and Cainite women, interested only in the attractive ones. (TLSB)

**6:3** *Spirit will not abide* – Despite the presence of God’s Spirit, people’s conduct continually demonstrated that they were weak and sinful. (TLSB)

*in man forever* – The Hebrew is “basar” which usually means musculature of a body. Here it is contrasted with the uncreated and divine Spirit, which lasts forever. People had degenerated to the point of being mere flesh. (TLSB)

These mixed marriages led still to further degeneration of the Sethites, until it was no longer possible to distinguish them from the Cainites. The Spirit of God had been active then as now through the Word of God that was still being preached – for example, by Noah (2 Peter 2:5). But the Spirit cannot continue to rebuke and correct people if they reject his gracious work. As God saw it, his human creatures were nothing but sinful flesh, totally under the control of sin. In an amazing display of his patient love the Lord, the Savior God, granted the human race another 120 years. For more than another century he would continue to speak through his spokesmen, seeking to reverse the daily drift toward evil, seeking to stop people from plunging headlong into judgment. (PBC)

2 Peter 3:8-10, <sup>8</sup> *But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.* <sup>9</sup> *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.* <sup>10</sup> *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.”*

**6:4** *Nephilim*. People of great size and strength (see Nu 13:31–33). The Hebrew word means “fallen ones.” In men’s eyes they were “the heroes of old, men of renown,” but in God’s eyes they were sinners (“fallen ones”) ripe for judgment. (CSB)

These were thugs and tyrants. (TLSB)

*men of renown* – The first nobility of the world was a group of tyrants, who were admired nonetheless. They were sinners ripe for judgment in God’s eyes. (TLSB)

**6:5** One of the Bible’s most vivid descriptions of total depravity. And because man’s nature remained unchanged, things were no better after the flood (8:21). (CSB)

Both the indifference of the Sethites to their heritage and the high-handed violence of the Cainites made clear the magnitude of the wickedness that engulfed the earth. Humankind was incapable of doing good, due to the condition of their hearts. (TLSB)

*Note from Psalm 51:5 TLSB – BROUGHT FORTH IN INIQUITY, AND SIN DID MY MOTHER CONCEIVE ME* – *Sexual union of husband and wife, which initiates life, is not itself sinful but commanded by God (Gn. 1:28). David knows that it is not only what he occasionally does wrong that he*

*must confess. His evil act brought to the surface the depth of his sinfulness (Gn. 8:21; Ps. 58:3). “This hereditary sin is such a deep corruption of nature that no reason can understand it. Rather, it must be believed from the revelation of Scripture. (Herman Sasse III 1 3) Melanchthon: “He does not deplore the sin of (his) mother, but his own... There was born with me an aversion away from God and a corrupted tendency. Therefore he testifies that there is sin in human beings which they bring with them when they are born” (Chemnitz LTh 1:272). (TLSB)*

**6:6** *The LORD was sorry – Man’s sin is God’s sorrow (see Eph 4:30). (CSB)*

Human emotions are used to express the pain that God experienced when He reflected on the total corruption of humankind by sin. Man’s sin is God’s sorrow. (TLSB)

**6:7** *I will blot out man – The period of grace was coming to an end. (CSB)*

*animals ... creeping things – Though morally innocent, the animal world, as creatures under man’s corrupted rule, shared in his judgment. (CSB)*

Originally created for the use of humankind, other living things will share in the consequences of man’s evil. (TLSB)

Romans 8:22, “*We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*”

This is what is happening as we have earthquakes, fires, floods, hurricanes, tornados, etc. The earth, too, wants the time for a new heaven and earth to come. EWB

It is significant to note that the One who announced the destruction of the world is the Lord., the God of loyal love. His action has been seen by some as heartless and vindictive; actually it’s the very opposite. He took this drastic action because he didn’t want his plan for gathering his family of believers to be frustrated. (PBC)

**6:8–9** *found favor ... righteous ... blameless ... walked with God – Noah’s godly life was a powerful contrast to the wicked lives of his contemporaries. This description of Noah does not imply sinless perfection (see 9:21). (CSB)*

**6:8** *found favor – The Lord’s favor, found and not won, is present even in the midst of the most severe judgments. (TLSB)*

**6:1–8** Seth’s descendants increasingly participate in the evil that overwhelms God’s creation, preferring their own inclinations toward beauty and power over God’s clear will for their lives. Recognizing that the human heart is a continual source of evil, God’s patience is about to give way to judgment. But God also plans to have mercy. Even as Noah finds favor in the eyes of the Lord, so also the faithful of all times have God’s favor on account of the promised Savior. • We thank You, O Lord, that You look upon us with favor because of Christ Jesus, our Savior. Keep us ever in this faith. Amen. (TLSB)

*Noah and the Flood*

**9 These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the**

earth. 13 And God said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. 14 Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. 15 This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. 16 Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. 17 For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. 18 But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. 19 And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. 20 Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. 21 Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them.” 22 Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

**6:9** *generations* – The focus is not on the great disaster of the flood but on the deliverance God provided to and through Noah. (TLSB)

*righteous* – Hebrew is “tsadaq,” which means “proved right” or “in good order.” It is used to describe a person in a right relationship with God, trusting God’s promised salvation and living by the covenant promise. The Psalms describe how the wicked plot against the righteous, but the Lord watches over the righteous and delivers them. God is righteous because He faithfully and justly keeps His Word. (TLSB)

The account begins with a capsule description of Noah. He was, first of all, righteous. In the Bible this is a courtroom term. Noah, a sinner, had been pronounced innocent by God. God wanted Noah, as he wants us, to believe him, to trust his promise of help and forgiveness through the promised Savior. “By faith Noah... became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith” (Heb. 11:7). (PBC)

*blameless* – Noah’s character and conduct were quite different from that of his contemporaries. However, he was not sinless. (TLSB)

*walked with God* – Noah was publically known to worship the Lord. (TLSB)

His saving faith in the promised Messiah was not confined to his heart, but showed itself in every phase of his life. (PBC)

**6:10** *three sons* – A major part of Noah’s walk with God was the rearing of three God-fearing sons during godless times. (TLSB)

God-fearing parents have always had a tough job training children in the fear of the Lord in an ungodly world. Noah’s job of parenting, however, was infinitely tougher than any other parent has ever faced, because he and his wife stood absolutely alone in a world which had turned against God. (PBC)

**6:11-12** V 8 closes the second section of the history recorded in Genesis, a history of humankind’s degeneration and the Lord’s that He will destroy the world. These verses again briefly describe condition in the world to inform the reader of their cause. (TLSB)

**6:11** *was corrupt* – This is a term used elsewhere of idolatry and perverted worship (Ex. 32:7; Judges 2:19). (TLSB)

*full of violence* – This denial of the true God leads to cruelty toward fellow human beings. (TLSB)

**6:12** *God saw* – This anticipates God’s action. Corruption and violence had become so conspicuous and outrageous that God could not refrain from enacting punishment. (TLSB)

**6:13** *end of all people* – With exception of Noah and his family, the whole human race, which had resisted the influence of God’s Spirit, was marked for destruction. (TLSB)

**6:14** *ark*. The Hebrew for this word is used elsewhere only in reference to the basket that saved the baby Moses (Ex 2:3, 5). (CSB)

The main part of the church where the congregation is seated during worship is called the “Nave.” In Latin it means “ship.” (Worship is Celebrating as Lutherans) When we bring people with into the church they can hear the saving message. EWB

*gopher wood* – Resinous wood, possibly cypress, used for shipbuilding. (TLSB)

*with pitch*. Moses’ mother made his basket watertight in the same way (see Ex 2:3). (CSB)

Caulking, probably asphalt, used also by Moses’ mother to make his basket watertight. (TLSB)

**6:15** He was to build a large seagoing barge – 450 feet long (as long as a football field and a half, 75 feet wide, and as tall as a four-story building (45 feet). The storage capacity of this vessel would be a million and half cubic feet – approximately the equivalent of a 14-ton vessel. (PBC)

**6:16** *roof*. Perhaps overhanging, to keep the rain from coming in. (CSB)

*finish it to a cubit above* – Noah’s ark probably had a series of small windows (see 8:6) encircling the entire vessel 18 inches from the top to admit light and air. (CSB)

Probably refers to openings for light and air around the entire structure, a cubit from the roof. (TLSB)

**6:17** *flood of waters upon the earth* – The universal terms of the text—both here and elsewhere (vv. 7, 12–13; 7:4, 19, 21–23; 8:21; 9:11, 15)—indicate that the deluge was worldwide. Some argue that nothing in the narrative of chs. 6–9 prevents the flood from being understood as regional—destroying everything in its wake, but of relatively limited scope and universal only from the standpoint of Moses’ geographic knowledge. The apostle Peter, however, affirms that the flood and its devastation were universal and total, except for Noah and his family (2Pe 3:6). (CSB)

*breath of life* – Humans and animals would be destroyed, with the exception of aquatic animals for whom breath is not essential to life (cf. 7:22) (TLSB)

**6:18** *covenant*. God assures Noah that he will live through the coming flood to receive His covenant. (TLSB)

One gets the impression God had previously made a solemn agreement with Noah (perhaps at the beginning of the 120 year grace period) and here promised to implement the provisions of that covenant – to preserve in the ark a tiny remnant. (PBC)

*come into the ark.* The account of Noah’s salvation from the flood illustrates God’s redemption of his children (see Heb 11:7; 2Pe 2:5) and typifies baptism (see 1Pe 3:20–21). (CSB)

*your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you.* God extends his loving concern to the whole family of righteous Noah—underscoring the moral and responsible relationship of parents to their children (see 17:7–27; 18:19; Dt 30:19; Ps 78:1–7; 102:28; 103:17–18; 112:1–2; Ac 2:38–39; 16:31; 1Co 7:14). (CSB)

**6:19-20** The ark was large enough to carry two of every “sort” of animal and still leave ample room for food. (TLSB)

**6:19** *two of every sort* – Most animals were doomed to die in the flood (see note on v. 7), but at least one pair of each kind was preserved to restock the earth after the waters subsided. (CSB)

God’s interest in the preservation of a remnant included the animal world. (TLSB)

**6:20** *kind* – Not species as described by modern biology. (TLSB)

Note from 1:11: Phrase here and in following passages indicates that chapter 1 talks not only about creation of specific individuals but of classes (or kinds) of things. God does not make one plant (and have it evolve), but many plants of different kinds. This is also true of the animals referred to later in chapter 1. (TLSB)

*shall come to you* – The instruction to “bring two of every kind” (v. 19) is facilitated by the animals making themselves available. (TLSB)

**6:21** *every kind of food* – Noah and his family would stay busy providing more than a year’s supply of food for thousands of mouths. (TLSB)

**6:22** *did all that God commanded.* The account stresses Noah’s obedience (see 7:5, 9, 16). (CSB)

Noah responded with willing obedience as one who walks with God. (TLSB)