

THE BIG UNFRIENDLY GIANTS

GENESIS 6:1-12 SEPTEMBER 1, 2021

If I were to ask you to think of times in history you would like to travel back to for a visit I'm guessing we'd bump into each other at certain points - maybe at Lazarus' tomb or the parting of the Red Sea or the Gettysburg Address. I can't imagine many of us would choose to send ourselves back to the days of Noah - a time of violence, corruption, depravity, and danger. Maybe we'd enjoy seeing part of the building of the ark, but we'd run the risk of being killed while we watched! But consider this: We may not want to travel *back* to that evil time, but Jesus has assured us that the days of Noah are coming *again* just before His return.

Are we in those days now? What made them different than the run-of-the-mill sinfulness that has defined humanity since the fall of man? Is there any hope for Christian ministry if we know that things are going to go from bad to worse as the end of all things approaches?¹

Here at Calvary Hanford, we have spent focused time on the days of Noah. We have a whole series on the website. We think it is important, given the Lord's discussion of it in His Olivet Discourse. But this topic, particularly in the first part of chapter 6, is controversial in the Christian community and some of it is hard for us to wrap our minds around. But, in difficult passages, we remind ourselves that God's word is trustworthy and it is meant to be understood - it's presented clearly and plainly for our benefit, so we might be made complete and equipped for the Christian life.

When we left off, the genealogy of Seth came to a sudden halt with this man Noah. Now, the story is going to zoom in on the world of Noah, showing what had become of God's once-perfect creation.

Genesis 6:1-2 - When mankind began to multiply on the earth and daughters were born to them, ²the sons of God saw that the daughters of mankind were beautiful, and they took any they chose as wives for themselves.

The immediate question is: Who are the 'sons of God' and the 'daughters of men?' There are three major perspectives you will encounter. The first is that the 'sons of God' were the males born to the line of Seth. The 'daughters of men,' then, are the females born to the line of Cain. This argument says that the good boys from Seth eventually started marrying the bad girls from Cain and their Godliness was corrupted. This perspective came about sometime around the 3rd century AD.² The problems with this view are: It does not harmonize with what Peter and Jude say in reference to this period of time. It also doesn't work linguistically. It doesn't *explain* why the offspring of these unions are described the way they are in verse 4. And it doesn't account for the fact that verse 12 says that *everyone* on earth was corrupt in God's eyes - everyone except one man and his family.

The second view is that the 'sons of God' are meant to be understood as nobles who started marrying peasants, adding to their harems. But this still doesn't explain the offspring issue. And, it almost gives us the impression that God was upset that humans weren't keeping to a caste system, and that, in response, He was going to judge the innocent along with the wicked.

The third view is the strangest, but is the one that has been accepted since antiquity. More importantly, it harmonizes with what we read in both Testaments. And this view states that the 'sons

¹ 1 Peter 4:7

² Bruce Waltke *Genesis*

of God' were fallen, supernatural beings who came to earth and procreated with human women, defiling the population of earth and proliferating great evil by their offspring.

Why do we think this? First, it's the plainest reading. Second, in their letters, Jude and Peter refer to angels during Noah's time who left their proper domain and fell into perverse, sexual sin.³ Also, it's important to note that, in the Old Testament, the term 'sons of God' *only* refers to angelic beings.⁴ There's never a time when it refers to a human being until the *New Testament*, when we're told that believers are made *into* sons of God through a divine act of creation, which we call the new birth.

But critics recoil at the suggestion that angels could mate with humans. They argue, "Jesus said the angels don't marry." That's true, they don't marry *in heaven*. But nowhere does it say that angels could *never* perform these activities. We do see angels doing "human" things in the Old Testament. Angels eat with Abraham later in this very book.

Some scholars synthesize the Noble view *with* the angelic view, that fallen angels possessed human men who took all these women as wives.⁵ However it happened, what we're seeing is fallen angels procreating with human women and producing a very specific, very evil offspring.

Genesis 6:3 - ³And the Lord said, "My Spirit will not remain with mankind forever, because they are corrupt. Their days will be 120 years."

God doesn't mean that He's going to start limiting man's lifespan to 120. Noah would live to be 950. But then, by the time you get to Psalm 90, the lifespan was 70 or 80 at best.⁶ No, God was saying that judgment *must* come, but, in His grace, He would *still* wait 120 years before sending the flood.

God assesses mankind and says, "They are corrupt" (your version may say they are 'flesh'). They had fully turned away from any sort of spiritual communion with God and had embraced the sinful fleshiness of humanity. Thanks to Adam and Eve's sin, this was now the natural inclination of the human heart. And it still is today. All are sinners. All have gone astray. As unbelievers, our minds are set on the things of the flesh. Our desires, our drives, our selves. The problem is, that mentality only leads to slavery and death. Paul explains in Romans that the mindset of the flesh is hostile to God and it causes us to be enslaved to sin, and it only ever ends in one place: The grave.⁷

During the days of Noah, the people *would not* believe, but God still waited 120 years, sending them preachers like Noah and Enoch, offering them a way of escape because He has always been a God of compassion and mercy.

Genesis 6:4 - ⁴The Nephilim were on the earth both in those days and afterward, when the sons of God came to the daughters of mankind, who bore children to them. They were the powerful men of old, the famous men.

We can get confused in this topic because the Old Testament talks about Nephilim, or the Rephaim or the Anakim or the Zamzummim.⁸ *Nephilim* is the term God uses to describe these hybrid offspring

³ 2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6-7

⁴ Ray Stedman *Signs Of Collapse*

⁵ See Waltke, CSB Study Bible Notes, Bible Knowledge Commentary

⁶ Psalm 90:10

⁷ Romans 6:16, 8:5-6

⁸ Deuteronomy 2:20-21

- part supernatural, part human. The term means “fallen ones.”⁹ The other names (listed above) are either names used by other people or they are proper names given to specific descendants of the Nephilim. For example, the descendants of a particular Nephilim named Anak came to be known as the “Anakim.” We run into them in Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua and, perhaps, 1 and 2 Samuel. The Nephilim are shown in the Bible to be giants of great strength and ferocity.

I think for most of us, it’s easy to believe Goliath existed. We’ve seen tall people before. It’s harder to accept the idea of what we would elsewhere call ‘demigods.’ That is, after all, what we’re talking about, right? A part-man, part-supernatural being? Isn’t that mythology? The Bible is *history*, isn’t it? How could this kind of mythological idea be supported?

Before writing it off, let’s ask ourselves a few questions. First, it’s true, human mythology contains the idea of demigods. *But where did that idea come from?* This concept of divine beings cohabiting with humans to create titan offspring can be found, most famously, in Greek culture, but they’re hardly the only ones. This idea is also found in places and cultures like Egypt, Sumer, Persia, India, Mesopotamia, the Incas, the Mayans, the Assyrians, the islands of the South Seas, among the American Indians, in South America,¹⁰ the Zulus, Sudan, Senegal, the Philippines, the Romans, and in Norse mythology.¹¹ As Bruce Waltke writes, “*Instead of the Bible representing myth as history, as is commonly alleged, perhaps the ancients turned history into myth.*”

Another question we might ask is: Doesn’t this make sense as a satanic strategy? What had God promised thus far in human history? That a Seed of the woman would destroy the Serpent. Then what happened? Cain was influenced by the Devil¹² to kill his Godly brother, Abel. Of course, that didn’t stop God from providing Eve with *other* sons. Satan couldn’t kill them all. So, why not switch tactics? Why not completely *pollute* the population of the earth, thereby making it impossible for the Seed to arrive? We know he loves to plant tares among the wheat. The Devil has gone to great lengths, again and again, to stop God’s plan. He always fails, but he always tries.

Chuck Missler brings up an interesting thought. As most of you know, there are quite a few monuments around the world that cause archaeologists to scratch their heads. How did ancient societies, without machinery, set up things like Stonehenge or Easter Island? Is it possible that incredibly powerful giants had a hand in it? Sites like the Gilgal Rephaim, an ancient megalithic monument found on the Golan heights. Today, it’s called the “Wheel of Giants” and it’s a series of huge circles of tens of thousands of rocks, weighing in at more than 40,000 tons.¹³ Some of the stones weigh 5 tons on their own! The plot thickens when you discover that what we call the Golan Heights today was once known as Bashan, the place where Og, King of Bashan ruled. Og, *the last of the Rephaim*, a particular line of the Nephilim.¹⁴

Wouldn’t it also be just like the Devil to influence human cultures to take these horrible monstrosities and turn them into *heroes*? To call good, evil and evil, good? Instead of acknowledging just how wrong this was, human societies started to *venerate* Hercules and Maui and Wonder Woman.

One very significant phrase there in verse 4: “The Nephilim were on the earth both in those days *and afterward.*” It seems that, after the flood, God permitted the fallen angels to once again introduce the

⁹ Brandon D. Smith *Who Were The Nephilim*

¹⁰ Chuck Missler *Genesis 6 Giants*

¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_demigods

¹² 1 John 3:12

¹³ <https://www.jpost.com/Magazine/Features/The-wheel-of-giants>

¹⁴ <https://knowingscripture.com/articles/giants-in-the-land-a-biblical-theology-of-the-nephilim-anakim-rephaim-and-goliath>

Nephilim into our world, but they were much more limited in their scope and they were ultimately overcome by God's servants like Caleb, Joshua and David with his mighty men.

Genesis 6:5-7 - ⁵When the Lord saw that human wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time, ⁶the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and he was deeply grieved. ⁷Then the Lord said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I created, off the face of the earth, together with the animals, creatures that crawl, and birds of the sky—for I regret that I made them."

The Bible is clear that God does not change.¹⁵ So what are we to make of a passage like this? God is describing the pain He felt because of the sin of man. God has emotion. God *can* feel emotional pain. The term 'grieved' there is likened to the deep breathing in in response to pain.¹⁶ When we regret things, it's usually because we've made a mistake. We regret that haircut or that thing we said. God's regret was not because He had made some sort of mistake, but because of His love for humanity which had rejected Him. In the Garden, Adam and Eve had disobeyed, but (as we saw) they then remained in communion with God. Not so in the days of Noah. All but 8 had rejected the Lord. And now, God must respond to their sin. As one writer put it, they had "spent all the capital of God's mercy." It was time to pay the bill.

You and I can cause God pain. That is a shocking thing to hear. We see Jesus weeping over Jerusalem and He is the exact expression of God the Father's nature. Ephesians 4 commands us to *not* grieve the Holy Spirit. Your words, your actions, the attitude of your heart, these things *matter* to God. And *because* He is love, He is able to be hurt by our rebellion and disobedience. God was personally sorrowful over the ruination of sin all over the earth and He was *right* to respond to it with wrath. But then verse 8 gives us this amazing sentence:

Genesis 6:8 - ⁸Noah, however, found favor with the Lord.

The word favor is also translated as 'grace' and this is the very first use of it in the Bible. This all-important blessing from God - His *unmerited* favor. It's important that we realize that Noah did not *earn* favor with God. Grace is always a free gift. It's not that Noah was the one guy on the planet to keep the rules. We're told why he laid hold of grace in the book of Hebrews:

Hebrews 11:7 - ⁷By faith Noah, after he was warned about what was not yet seen and motivated by godly fear, built an ark to deliver his family. By faith he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

We're told the secret three times: By faith, by faith, by faith! Noah *believed*, and therefore he was justified by God and made righteous by God. And here, we learn the unchanged principle that, no matter *how* wicked the days are, no matter *how* evil those around us are, if we trust God in faith, He will pour out His grace in our lives and in our families and deliver us from evil.

Verses 9 through 12 summarize what the first 8 verses said.

Genesis 6:9-12 - ⁹These are the family records of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among his contemporaries; Noah walked with God. ¹⁰And Noah fathered three sons: Shem,

¹⁵ Numbers 23:19

¹⁶ *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* / Missler

Ham, and Japheth. ¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with wickedness. ¹² God saw how corrupt the earth was, for every creature had corrupted its way on the earth.

We’re told Noah was...blameless among his contemporaries. On the one hand, we’re seeing Noah described as a man in whom God was accomplishing sanctification. Noah was a sinner, of course. He made mistakes just like we do. But God was conforming his life into the image of His Son. He was giving Noah his righteousness and as Noah walked with God, that process developed.

But that phrase can also be translated as “perfect in his generations.” Not only was he living in such a way that he did not violate God’s commands, *his own* genetic makeup had not been violated by the fallen ones. This is so important because the *Messiah* would come from Noah. Therefore, no one can come along and claim the Promised Seed had been polluted.

As we close, we have to come back to the question from the beginning. We know the days of Noah are going to make a comeback before Jesus’ return, so, are we in those days now?

Dr. Henry Morris gives a good list that summarizes the days of Noah based off of what we read in the Scripture. In that time there was a “preoccupation with physical appetites, rapid advances in technology, grossly materialistic attitudes, inordinate devotion to pleasure and comfort, no concern for God in belief or conduct, disregard for the sacredness of marriage, rejection of the inspired word of God, a population explosion, widespread violence, corruption throughout society, preoccupation with illicit sexual activity, widespread blasphemy.”¹⁷ Sounds an awful lot like today, doesn’t it?

Noah wasn’t the one who decided what his “days” would be like. I’m guessing he would’ve much preferred the era of David or Solomon or Christ Himself. But there he was at an apex of earth’s evil. The difference between him and us is that *we* have each other. Noah’s family was the *only* believing family at the time of the flood. What could be done when the dark is *that* dark?

Besieged by monstrous, inhuman adversaries at Helm’s Deep, King Theodin nearly gives in to despair and says, “So much death. What can man do against such reckless hate?” The answer was to join the king and ride out in courage. It would not be accomplished without danger or without sacrifice. But as they launched into the fray there on the hill came the White Rider with the dawn and with victory in his hand, a host of the faithful following after him.

If we *are* in the days of Noah, we can still fulfill the commands of our King. He tells us to “be alert.” Watch and recognize the hour in which you live. At the same time, we can conduct ourselves like Noah did. He preached, prepared, and performed. He preached the Gospel, because God would have shown mercy to *anyone* who believed, whether they were related to Noah or not. He prepared, not just the ark, but he prepared his family. He prepared himself to do the right thing, the Godly thing, even when it was incredibly difficult. And he performed his calling. God asked him to do a very specific task. Noah performed it faithfully and excellently, with God’s help, direction and provision. Jesus said, “Blessed is that servant whom the master finds doing his job when he comes.”

Maybe we’re not quite to the days of Noah, though it seems like we are. Even still, we don’t know when the Master will come for us. So, let’s watch, let’s preach, let’s prepare and perform our callings, knowing the King is with us and the dawn is coming.

¹⁷ Henry Morris *The Genesis Record*