

NOAH

Genesis 6:5-10

Intro: Noah's name appears almost sixty times in the Bible, and a little over half of the references to him are in Genesis 6, 7, 8, and 9. His name is used twice in Genesis 10, but these have to do with his sons.

Unfortunately in the KJV his name in the NT is spelled N-O-E. I personally think that that is unfortunate because a new reader of the Bible may read it several times without realizing that they are one and the same person. One of the daughters of Zelophehad was named Noah, and so it probably was a name, like many of our names, which was used for both males and females. My mother's given name was Cecil, and I remember as a child thinking how strange it was for a man to be called Cecil. But that is probably a feature that you will probably find in most languages. But clearly the Noah we are considering today is the one whom most people think about when the name, "Noah," is mentioned.

It seems that it is not really possible to tell how long after Enoch was born that Noah was born, but it probably was around 400 years. If this is true, and Enoch lived only 365 years, then it was not long after he was translated that Noah was born. But one thing seems to be certain, and that is that Noah knew about Enoch, about his godly life, and about his mysterious disappearance after which no one was able to find him. We can imagine that a lot of rumors circulated concerning Enoch, but how much people really knew, we cannot say.

What we can say is that the Holy Spirit definitely placed a very special emphasis upon just two men between the time of creation and the birth of Abraham. Perhaps we could mention a third, Abel, who was not only the first man to die, a victim of murder, but also a martyr for his faith. So while those early years of human history were basically dark years, yet we see that God always has His servants who are faithful even when it could not be said even of those who may have known the Lord, that they "walked with God." But it was said about Enoch, and now in our text for today we see that it was said about Enoch's great grandson, Noah. Perhaps we have an indication of Lamech's faith, Noah's father, because Noah means *comfort*, or *rest*. Perhaps providentially God revealed to Lamech that blessing was "on the way."

Now let us notice, first of all,

I. THE TIMES IN WHICH NOAH LIVED (Gen. 6:1-5).

They were bad, very bad!

These verses have been translated basically in two ways. The word used for “giants” in verse 4 could be brought into English as *nephilim*, as it is in some of the more recent translations. The word is only used one other time in the OT, and that is in Num. 13:33. It seems to be used in verse 5 of the children which were born of the union between “the sons of God” and “the daughters of men.” Some feel that “the sons of God” were angels who intermarried with human women, and the result was giants, or Nephilim.

But we know that there will be no marriage in heaven, but we will be like the angels as far as marriage is concerned. Besides, the Scriptures say nothing about angels having children. So we must assume that “the sons of God” cannot refer to angels.

Instead, it seems to me that “the sons of God” would refer to the godly line of people, those who claimed to be the people of God, as compared with “the daughters of men” who would have been unbelievers. Thus, I would say that these were marriages, as we would say today, or believers with unbelievers, or marriages between those who were the children of God with those who were not the children of God. And since it says that “the sons of God saw the daughter of men that they were fair, and they,” the sons of God, “took them,” the daughters of men, “of all which they chose.” So it seems that “the sons of God” were really the offenders, which was very displeasing to God.

The Israelites later were told that they were not to marry the Canaanites (but they did anyway), and Paul told the Corinthians that they were not to be “unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Cor. 6:14). This would apply to any close relationship between believers and unbelievers, as, for example, in a business partnership. But it especially applies to marriage. When a believer marries an unbeliever it is generally true that the unbeliever pulls the believer down and away from the Lord, not *vice versa*.

Now add to this what our Lord said about “the days of Noah” during His time here on the earth. Listen to what we read in Matt. 24:37-39:

37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the

Son of man be.

38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

This, of course, means that life was going on as usual without any thought about God or His will, but it seems to point in a special way to the fact that when the Lord comes even those who profess to know the Lord will not be paying any attention to the will of God regarding marriage, but they will be doing whatever they want to do, and marrying whomever they desire, regardless of what the other persons relationship to the Lord might be.

People today think that they are getting away with anything they want to do. But nobody gets away with anything with God! He may be letting people do whatever they want to do with the marriage relationship, even so-called marriages between two people of the same sex, but homosexuality is an abomination to God by itself, but when our officials sanction such a relationship, and call it marriage, they are courting the judgment of God in a major way. It brought a world-wide judgment in the days of Noah, and it is going to do the same again in our day. When God is clear in His Word about anything, like He is marriage, we had better have our ears rolled out and cleaned out so we can hear exactly what God has to say. The only thing more sacred in life than our relationships as husbands and wives, is our relationship to God. And the first matter we all need to take care of is our relationship to Him, and then be very, very careful that in marriage and everything else we are doing what He wants us to do.

So the corruption of society was first to be seen in what the people were doing with marriage, but behind that was all kinds of ungodliness, as we learn from verse 5. Let's look at it together. This is not how people felt about their society; this is how God saw it all – and what He sees is what is important!

Lucille and I were listening to the news on the Fox channel, and the woman reporter was criticizing President Bush because he used the word "evildoers." I guess she is one of those people who thinks that there is no evil, no sin, no wickedness. She has a lot to learn. I hope she learns it before it is too late for her. I can tell you that when God looks at our world, He sees just exactly what He saw in Noah's day. Verse 5 tells us

what He saw. Verse 6 tells us how He felt about it. And verse 7 tells us what He was going to do about it.

I'm amazed that God hasn't done something about us long before now. We are ripe for judgment. Warnings are all around us, but we are too blind to see what God sees, and we are too deaf to hear what He has told us in His Word. Don't talk about Mother Nature bringing four hurricanes on our country. God is in charge of the weather. And what happened there is nothing compared with what He did in Noah's day. And it was not because the people of Florida are worse than any of the rest of us, but it was a warning to our whole nation that unless we repent, we shall all perish!

Verse 5 teaches what is wrong with our world even today, and it is what was wrong with the world in Noah's day. The word that is used here, "wickedness," speaks of the "breaking up of that which is good and desirable in man and in society" (Girdlestone, p. 80). It is that which is bad as opposed to good. It is that which is wrong instead of right. It is ungodliness as compared with godliness. God saw that man's wickedness was "great," that is, it was the dominant characteristic of man's behavior. Man was devoting to tearing down what God had established.

What is the meaning of the word "imagination"? The word means *a plan*, or *a purpose*. It has to do with man's *thoughts, what is going on in his mind and heart*. Man is not always thinking about how he can please God, but he is totally concerned about what he wants to do and how he wants to live and what his goals are – totally apart from the will of God, or the Word of God. And although he may be very prosperous outwardly and financially, yet he is spending his life wrecking himself.

This is God's definition of total depravity. (Explain.) God purposed to destroy all men on the earth.

But there is another side to this whole story, and it has to do with one man by the name of "Noah."

II. ONE MAN WHO LOVED THE LORD (Gen. 6:8-9).

His name was Noah (as we have already seen in the last five verses of Genesis 4. But look at what is said about him here in chapter 6, verses 8 and 9.

A. He “found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Gen. 6:8).

The spiritual history of Noah’s relationship with God began with *the grace of God*. What does this tell us about Noah? It tells us that he did not deserve the blessings that the Lord gave him. It means that means that Noah was a sinner just like everyone else in his generation. But for him to *find grace* meant that he was looking for grace. He wanted God. He wanted to please God. He did not want to do what everybody else was doing in his day. And God answered the desire of his heart.

Now let us be sure that we understand what is doing on here. The Apostle Paul in the book of Romans quoted from Psalm 14 and Psalm 53 which tell us that “there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God” (Rom. 3:11). How then can the Scriptures say that “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord”? Was Noah naturally different from everybody else? No, he was a sinner just like the others. But he was like Zacchaeus in the NT. Do you remember that story of how the Lord came into Jericho where Zacchaeus lived? Zacchaeus was very short, and he had climbed up to watch the Lord go by. But to his amazement, when the Lord got to the tree He looked up and told Zacchaeus to come down because the Lord wanted to go home with him. Zacchaeus had been seeking the Lord in a general way, but we know that the Lord had been working in Zacchaeus’ heart or he never would have gone up that tree. And that day Zacchaeus found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He was saved, and his life was changed.

The Bible does not tell us how the Lord had been working in Noah’s heart, but He had! And “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” Instead of being condemned with His generation, the Lord in eternity past had set His heart on Noah’s salvation, and He had shown Noah that he, too, was a sinner, deserving of nothing but the judgment of God. And so as he sought the Lord, he learned that the Lord had been seeking him, to save him. So this statement is not for us to glorify Noah, but for us to glorify God that out of that whole generation of how many people we do not know, Noah felt in his heart that he wanted to know God, and when he did, “he found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” Link this statement with what the Lord saw according to Genesis 6:5.

You see it was not to Noah’s credit that he was not living like the rest of the world, but it was to the glory of God’s grace. If you haven’t done a lot of the things that the people in the world are doing today, then thank

God. And if you haven't sought Him yet, seek Him now. But remember that nobody can come to God except through Christ. He is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

But what else is said about Noah? Let me mention four more things.

B. "Noah was a just man" (Gen. 6:9).

This means that Noah was right with God. He was justified, made acceptable to God through faith. His sins were forgiven. And it was not because he deserved it. Not because he had earned it, or paid for it. It was all by grace, grace ultimately to be manifested in the coming of the only One Who is able to save us.

C. "Noah was perfect" (Gen. 6:9).

This does not mean that he was sinless, but it means that he was complete. He needed only the Lord. When we have the Lord, we have the only One we will ever need to make us acceptable to God, and to enable us to live in a way that will be pleasing to God.

Two more points:

D. "Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6:9).

All that I said last week about Enoch walking with God, I can say this week about Noah walking with God. Noah lived the way God wanted him to live. He was in complete agreement with God about the human heart and about conditions in the world which we have already read about. He did what the Lord wanted him to do. His relationship with the Lord was the most important part of his life, and it affected all that he was and all that he did and all that he said. He trusted the Lord, even to the point of building an ark when there is no record in Scripture that it had ever rained up to that time. The Lord told him to build an ark, and he did, strictly according to the specifications that the Lord gave to him. You can hardly say any more about a person than you are saying when you say that *he walked with God!*

But I want to add one more point. This one comes out of the NT. And in this Noah was like Enoch before him. In 2 Peter 2:5 we are told that:

E. Noah was “a preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5).

I believe that it can be said that this means at least two things. First, it meant that Noah preached the Gospel. That is what the Gospel is. It is the message of how sinful men can become right before God. But it also means that Noah preached how people were to live if they were to escape the judgment of God.

Noah was not the kind of a man who did not wait to see what people wanted to hear; he preached what they needed to hear, and what was pleasing to God.

How long did Noah preach, and what results did he have? Genesis 6:3 gives us the Lord's words that man's days on the earth would be 120 years, and this is taken to mean that this is how long Noah preached! What results did he have? Maybe the members of his own family – maybe! But beyond that, NONE! Not one after preaching all of those years.

Concl: This is meant not only to be instructive for us, but encouraging. We have each other, but Noah was very much alone. He did what he knew was pleasing to the Lord. He preached the Gospel all through those many years. But he remained faithful to the Lord even though he never saw another person saved. Let us go and do likewise.