

Worlds Apart Genesis 6:1-8

In **Genesis 1** we were introduced to the 6 days of creation and God's crowning achievement of man on day 6. God saw everything He had made and it was very good. He couldn't have done any better and He wouldn't have done anything differently.

Genesis 2 is a close up of the creation of male and female. They were given some specific instructions. They could eat anything in the garden except one plant. They were forbidden to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If they did they were told they would die.

Enticed by the serpent in **Genesis 3** they disobeyed and resulted in God's condemnation for their sinful act. Yet within the context of His judgment, God gave them hope that would come through a promised redeemer born to the seed of the woman. They had to exercise faith. God sacrificed two animals to provide a physical covering for them and served as a picture of the type of spiritual covering that would be required through the sacrifice of this promised redeemer.

In **chapter 4** we see the beginning of civilization through the birth two sons – Cain and Abel. But sin was deeply imbedded in the character of mankind as Cain rose up and slew his brother. **Chapter 4** shows us the lineage of Cain and although they were industrious and creative they also depict an independent spirit rejecting God as seen in acts of defiance like murder, arrogance and a breakdown of honoring marriage through polygamy.

But just as there was hope given to mankind in **chapter 3**, so hope is given once again in **chapter 4**. Another son was born to replace Abel. It would be through he lineage of Seth that the redeemer would be born. It was at this time that men began to call on the name of God. That pursuit of God is woven throughout the chapter, highlighted by

Enoch who walked with God. His pursuit of God was a walk of faith that pleased God, one that proclaimed God. He was a witness to that generation of God's judgment for continued disobedience. The capstone of the chapter, which sets the stage for the next several chapters, is the birth of Noah. We read in **verse 29** that **"He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the Lord has cursed."** Lamech had no idea how his son would bring comfort but he serves as a glimmer of hope in a chapter that is otherwise surrounded by death.

What is troubling in these chapters and the ones to follow is that even with the strong witness of Enoch and Noah, their brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles and cousins all died in the flood. Remember that it wasn't just the line of Cain that died. Except for Noh and his family, the line of Seth also died in the flood. It tells me that you aren't saved just because you are born into a godly home. You must also exercise personal faith for salvation just as Enoch and Noah did.

And that brings us to **chapter 6** where I invite you to turn today. And let me just say this before we get into this chapter, if the testimony and translation of Enoch didn't convince unbelievers to follow God nothing would. It reminds me of the New Testament account of Lazarus and the rich guy. He wanted Abraham to send someone back from the dead to tell his brothers to get it together or they would end up in the same place. Abraham said if they didn't believe the Scriptures and the prophets they wouldn't believe someone from the dead. Now, turn to **Genesis 6:1-8**.

This passage has some difficult sections that scholars don't agree on. We want to know who the **"sons of God"** and **"daughters of man"** are. We want to know about the Nephilim. We also want to know about this 120 year life span given by God. I am only going to touch on them and give you my thoughts but my focus on this passage will be about

something else I see in the passage of greater importance. **How did the world get so bad?**

So today in our passage we will discuss

The corruption in the world

The condemnation by God

The conviction of Noah

As we have seen in **chapters 3, 4, and 5** so we see in **chapter 6** that God always gives us hope and we will see it in the life of Noah.

I. THE CORRUPTION IN THE WORLD – vs. 1-6

Right away in **verse 1** we notice that there was a population explosion. People were born, got married had more children and well, that's how civilizations grow. There's no way of knowing the population size in the days of Noah, but more than just thousands. I'm thinking there were 100's of thousands by this time. Keep in mind they were all living to be 900 years old having lots of children during that time. The world's population was growing exponentially and while not specifically stated in **chapter 4**, we can assume Cain's family tree was living just as long and having lots of kids. Imagine the family reunion.

Now we come to one of those difficult passages with several ideas by scholars.

Who are the sons of God and the daughters of man?

Traditional Jewish Rabbinical teaching believes that the sons of God were princes of these family lines who marry the daughters of men who they claim to be women from lower orders as in a caste society, royalty marrying commoners.

Some Bible scholars believe that the sons of God are angels who left their original state in order to marry. The daughters of men they claim to be mankind in general. This follows Greek or Roman mythology that believes the gods married mortals to create demigods who create this line of giants we'll

talk about later.

Another belief is that the sons of God refer to the line of Seth or the godly line who marry the daughters of men which refers to the Cainites who are the ungodly line.

One more view holds that fallen angels possessed man in order to have a physical relationship with women and that resulted in the race of giants.

I won't go into detail here, but for obvious reasons I think the first two views are weak. The other two have some merit. **Job 1:6** speaks about the sons of God coming to give an account. This is an obvious reference to angels. On the other, you can read a passage like **Deuteronomy 32:5** or **Hosea 1:10** that speak of people also referred to as the sons of God. Because the passage is speaking about mankind seems to rule out that these were fallen angels.

I also don't believe that the reference to angels leaving their first estate was to have a physical relationship with women, but refers rather to their rebellion against God, where initially they were in union with God. Further, we are told in **Matthew 27:30** that angels don't marry and in **Matthew 24:38** it refers to marriage in general.

One additional objection is that in the preceding verses the discussion is about people in or out of relationship with God and not about angels. We also see in this chapter that the punishment God metes out is directed toward mankind and not toward angels, fallen or otherwise.

If, and that's a big IF, if angels are involved, it is fallen angels who have possessed man in order to direct them to commit sin as we see on numerous occasions in the New Testament.

If it is the godly line of Seth marrying those from the ungodly line of Cain God's clear directive on marriage given to us in Paul's writings tells us that a

believer should not marry an unbeliever, especially since it tells us they married whoever they wanted.

The point I want to drive home here is not to definitively identify who the sons of God and the daughters of man, but rather to be clear about one thing. Satan was in the garden and heard the promise God gave about a redeemer that would be born sometime in the future and this is his attempt to do all he can to disrupt God's plan of redemption by corrupting the godly line. And folks, if I read my Bible right, it almost worked. It came down to just one family who would carry on God's promise.

So the sons of God saw how beautiful the daughters of men were and took whomever they wanted in marriage. The point being, according to Henry Morris, that wickedness and corruption had become rampant in both branches of the human families. This spurious relationship between them resulted in God's judgment on them. God saw them as having given in to the fleshly desire. They had broken with the ideal covenant of marriage as given by God in **2:24** the result being their wickedness and His condemnation. But before the announcement of His judgment these unions produced the Nephilim who are described as being **"great heroes and men of renown."** **So who are they?**

The word Nephilim means fallen ones. Some scholars take this to mean the giant offspring of fallen angels. They were giant in stature. The spies spoke of giants in the land of Canaan when they came back with their report. Goliath was over 9' tall. It is possible that they were giants in stature. It stands to reason that if some of the animals today were represented by larger animals in Noah's day, for example the woolly mammoth in comparison to today's African or Asian elephant it's possible that there were people of all sizes back then as there are now.

Others see this term as referring to their fallen sinful character given how wicked they had become.

The word giant can also refer to a tyrant, someone who rules by force.

But here's the point, mankind looked at the Nephilim and were awed by their physical presence. Remember that Saul stood head and shoulders over his countrymen. He had a wow factor that people admired. When choosing the next king, God told Samuel He didn't look at man's outward appearance but rather what was in the heart. We look at people today and are wowed by their athletic prowess or their tremendous achievement. We are awed by some who have big names and bigger bank accounts. People go crazy, drool and have eyes glazed over when they meet musicians or Hollywood stars. They are the giants of our time.

But remember that God sees them differently than man does. In man's eyes they were heroes, but in God's eyes they were fallen ones, people who had no relationship with Him. In His eyes they were sinners ready to be judged, a judgment that no earthly accolade could change. Their days were numbered. **So, does the 120 years refer to the longevity of man or to the time before the coming judgment?** My opinion is that the 120 years refers to the time until the flood. In the next chapter Noah is instructed to build the ark. The timeframe would be about 120 years. It was a period of grace God was giving to mankind to repent and obey Him. It reminds me of **II Peter 3:9** where we are told that God is patient, but will judge. We are also reminded in **Hebrews 9:27** that man is destined to die after which comes His judgment.

That is a summary of how I see **verses 1-4**. Now as we consider **verses 5-6** in our discussion about their corruption we have to ask ourselves how it got to be so bad. We are told that the Lord saw how wicked they had become. Every motive, every thought, every action was evil all the time. In the KJV the word imagination is also used to describe a potter who fashions something out of clay. These people fashioned evil philosophies, wicked lifestyles and

acts of depravity. Anything their minds thought up they did. The book of Judges describes it as everyone doing what was right in his own eyes. Let your imagination run wild for a moment and it was probably 10 times worse. They had no regard for God or His authority. They had no desire to obey Him. They had no moral compass to guide them. One author states that this is one of the Bible's most vivid descriptions of total depravity. We sometimes look around, hear the news of atrocities we can't even imagine and wonder how much worse it can get and I'm here to tell you I think it can and will. And what is perhaps even more troubling is what we read in **verse 6** that God was grieved and pained in His heart because of man's blatant sin. Your translation may read that God repented that He made man.

Keil and Delitzsch in their [Commentary on the Old Testament](#) write "Repentance of God is an anthropomorphic expression for the pain of the divine love at the sin of man, and signifies that 'God is hurt no less by the atrocious sin of man than if they had pierced His heart with mortal anguish.'" The latter is a quote from John Calvin.

Don't think that God isn't hurt by our sin. Understand that when we disobey Him, He grieves. John Phillips explains that grief is a love word. We don't grieve for what we don't love. God loves us and is pained by our sin. That in itself should be a motivation to obey Him.

In **Genesis 6** man's corruption pained God.

I want to give you three steps to corruption. The first is complacency.

1. Complacency

Complacency is defined as a feeling of quiet pleasure or security, often while unaware of some potential danger, defect, or the like. It is self-satisfaction or smug satisfaction with an existing situation, or condition. I see it as a satisfaction with

the way things are with no desire to change. Maybe you don't feel like you need to change, that you like things just the way they are. I think complacency stems from an attitude of pride.

It's a character trait in **Proverbs 16** that God hates.

Let's say you hear about someone on the news who has committed some crime or who has fallen morally and you say to yourself "that will never happen to me", that's a smugness in your own spiritual life that puts you in potential danger of falling yourself.

For the Christian, complacency can begin when you start to skip a day or two each week reading your Bible. After all you know it pretty well. Or you start skipping church once in a while. Or you start skipping your prayer time. You're tired. You've got too much to do. It's boring. It doesn't do anything for me. You don't feel like it today or you have to cut something out of your schedule. You can be complacent at work. You can be complacent at home. You can be complacent in your relationships.

I think King David became complacent and that led to his adultery with Bathsheba.

I think King Solomon became complacent and led to his spiritual demise after starting out so well.

For the Christian, complacency can begin when we stop taking our spiritual life seriously, when sin no longer grieves us, when we rest in our past spiritual victories instead of staying sharp against the attacks of the enemy. We can become complacent when we think we have this spiritual walk all figured out. We let our guard down and start to coast to the finish line. Paul says that to avoid complacency we need to finish strong all the way to the end.

Somewhere along the way these people became complacent about God. Like them, we are in danger of corruption if we are complacent about our walk with God.

The second step toward corruption is compromise. Compromise always follows complacency.

2. Compromise

I have been on more than my fair share of diets. I'm guessing some of you have been as well. I should go on another. I saw the results of my last physical. It had one word that caught my attention – overweight. You know how it goes right. You start out your diet and everything is going well. Every week you weigh yourself. You watch what you eat, increase your exercise - you do all the right stuff. After a few weeks you really start to see a difference and you feel great. Then it happens. Your brain begins to bargain and you entertain thoughts that go like this: “Wow, look at all the weight you've lost. You deserve a reward. Treat yourself. Have a cookie or a candy bar or ice cream cone. You can work it off tomorrow at the gym.” Pretty soon one and done becomes two then a few and you have compromised yourself right off your diet and you put all that weight back on.

The dictionary makes it sound like compromise isn't all that bad. You give up a few things and the person you are negotiating with gives up a few things until you come to a common ground that you both can agree on. It's a win-win for both.

Compromise doesn't work that way with God for the Christian. We give a little and God gives a little till we're both satisfied doesn't work. The Bible is clear that God does not condone when people compromise His Word.

Psalm 119:1-4 “Joyful are people of integrity, who follow the instructions of the Lord. Joyful are those who obey His laws and search for Him with all their hearts. They do not compromise with evil, and they walk only in His paths. You have charged us to keep Your commandments carefully.”

Somewhere along the way even the godly line of Seth began to compromise the commands of God.

Psalm 1:1-2 “Blessed is the man who walketh not after the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But His delight is in the law of the Lord and in His law doth He meditate day and night.”

We cannot compromise God's Word and expect to walk with God. It doesn't work that way. Walking with Him means wholehearted devotion with no room for negotiation.

Folks, think for a moment about some of the laws that are being enacted today all in the name of equality, laws around a redefinition of marriage, a redefinition of what constitutes life, a redefinition of gender identity, each of which is opposed to God's standard. **How did we get to this place in our nation?** It's because somewhere along the way God's standards have been compromised. It is important to see these opening chapters in Genesis as foundational to our faith, standards that are not to be altered. If we will compromise these we will compromise anything else in Scripture.

When the Christian begins to compromise it isn't long before he or she is no different than the world. We are told in **Romans 12:2** not to be conformed to the world but to transform our minds through the Word of God. We must meditate on God's Word daily if we want to remain uncompromising in our faith.

Jesus gave us a picture of the person who compromises in the illustration of the seed sown on the thorny grown where the cares of the world and deceitfulness of riches choke out God's Word. Those who profess Christ compromise their faith when they begin to crave the things of the world.

How do we compromise God's Word?

We compromise when we fail to accept and obey it or when we begin to rationalize some of it away. **II Timothy 4:3-4** says that instead of being

challenged by God's Word people would rather hear someone tickle their ears and give them what they want to hear. Pretty soon they will accept anything.

We compromise God's Word when we place our desires and will above His Word and His will.

We compromise God's Word when we no longer believe it to be the absolute and inerrant truth.

There is an outright assault on the truth of God's Word today by people who want us to compromise. Let me say that compromise always weakens your character. Study the life of Solomon and you will see the sad result of compromise. When standards are lowered, morals fall.

When we are complacent in our spiritual walk, it becomes easy to compromise which always leads to contamination.

3. Contamination

Contamination is the act of making something impure or unsuitable by contact with something unclean. Somewhere along the way God's people, probably through marriage, came in contact with those who were not godly resulting in contamination. The result is corruption. We read that Solomon's many wives turned his heart from seeking and serving God to the point where he began to worship their pagan gods.

Complacency, compromise, contamination, corruption, the result or consequence which we see in **verse 7** and that is condemnation by God.

II. THE CONDEMNATION BY GOD – v. 7

God is preparing to cleanse the world of man's sinfulness. Notice how inextricably the destiny of creation is linked. One author writes that though morally innocent, the animal world, as creatures under man's corrupted rule, shared in his judgment. Everything would be destroyed. Because of their sin

and unwillingness to heed the warnings of Enoch and Noah, everything was going to be wiped out.

Harold Stigers in his commentary on Genesis writes "While the mercy of God, so to speak, prolongs the time during which judgment is restrained, yet the justice of God is ultimately to be fulfilled on men...since He is holy, He must execute judgment on the unrighteous."

Because sin was over the whole world, the judgment would also be on the whole world. Where once God had announced that all He had made was very good, now as He looked at it, He saw only wickedness all the time. We are reminded that the heart is deceitfully wicked.

This is the first destruction that God brought to the earth, but it will not be the last. There is a day yet coming when God's wrath will once again be poured out on the world and its people for their rejection of His gift of salvation. In the next 2 chapters we will see the punishment God brought on mankind for their wicked and unrepentant hearts. **Nahum 1:2-3a "The Lord is a jealous and avenging God; the Lord takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The Lord takes vengeance on His foes and maintains His wrath against His enemies. The Lord is slow to anger and great in power; the Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished."**

Yet even in a world that was darkened by the corruption of mankind, there stood a single beacon of hope, a bright shining light that beckoned people to come to the truth of God's Word. **Verse 8** shows us the conviction of Noah, someone who was unwilling to bend to the winds of compromise and be a part of the corruption around him.

III. THE CONVICTION OF NOAH – v. 8

What was it that God saw in Noah that would make him stand out against everyone else? We see it in

this simple but descriptive verse – **“Noah found favor in the eyes of God.”** He stands in stark contrast to all the rest of his contemporaries who were seen by God as wicked deserving judgment. **How is it that Noah found favor with God?** **Hebrews 11:7** tells us that it wasn't through any inherent righteousness he had. It wasn't because of the family he grew up in. It was his faith. The Bible tells us that there is no one who is righteous, that everyone is a sinner, but Noah had faith and it was this faith that God saw and extended to him His favor.

The word favor is the also the word grace. Noah found grace in the eyes of God. It is only by grace that we are saved and it comes through faith. That is the only reason Noah had favor with God.

Habakkuk 2:4 reminds us that the just, those who find favor with God, live by faith.

Warren Wiersbe notes that **“Grace isn't God's reward for a good life, it is God's response to saving faith.”**

The destruction of the world did not end the world or snuff out the promise of God for a redeemer because Noah found favor with God through his faith. Nothing can alter the plans of God, not even the twisted schemes of the devil, not even the wickedness of mankind. His plans will endure.

Again, from Harold Stigers we read **“The righteousness of Noah was the only factor standing between God and complete destruction of the world. By this means the world is guaranteed a continuance. Salvation is to continue among men.”** In this case we see that judgment brings salvation.

Oh, that we might be like Noah and have a conviction about our faith in God that stands in the gap and against the tide of wickedness in our land. Like Noah let us stand strong in faith so that we do not give in by compromising God's Word. Don't compromise the Word of God by justifying what the

world says is okay. God's standard has never changed.

This passage shows us that there are only two paths we can take and they are worlds apart. Your choice determines your destiny. One path leads to condemnation, the other path leads to salvation.

So as we come to communion this morning it's a time to ask which path we are on.

It's a time to reflect on God keeping His promise of sending the redeemer. Nothing would stop his promise.

It's a time to remember that judgment is coming. It's a time to ask if we have found favor with God. It's a time to ask if we have experienced His grace by our faith.

It's a time to ask if we have in any way become complacent in our walk with God or compromised His commands or become contaminated by the world.

Let's prepare our hearts to take communion.

(Communion slide)