

## 17. The End of Early Man

'And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD (Genesis 6:1-8).'

Though filled with a sense of hope at the completion of chapter 5, a fuller picture of the world's state is now brought before us in chapter 6. Far from being a picture of great hope, the world has become cesspool of human sin. Sin has plunged the world of men into utter corruption and depravity, so much so that the Lord God 'repented' for having made man and 'it grieved him at his heart (6:6).'

**Verses 1 and 2:** It is not at all surprising that daughters were born to men as humanity began to be fruitful and multiply. These daughters seem to have been very beautiful in appearance and soon drew the attention of the 'sons of God.'

These verses have been subject to a number of interpretations. One interpretation sees the 'sons of God' as being those of the godly line and the 'daughters of men' as being of the ungodly line. Another interpretation has the 'sons of God' as being fallen angels and the 'daughters of men' as being humanity's women.

The intermarriage that is here described certainly points to the corruption of the line of Seth in some manner. It is probable that the corruption that had so defined the line of Cain was now becoming more pronounced in the line of Seth, a condition which was being accelerated through the intermarriage of the 'sons of God' with the 'daughters of men.' It would seem that lust was now overruling the better judgment of the godly line and they were rushing into marriages with the ungodly line of Cain. The few who would be delivered from the flood seem to point in this direction.

**QUESTION:** Why is the intermarriage of the godly with the ungodly such a terrible thing? Discuss the implications of such relationships for the godly.

**NOTE: INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY QUESTION HERE:** What is to be understood

by the 120 years mentioned in Genesis 6:3?

**Verse 3:** In this verse we see the longsuffering of God. Since the fall of man God has dealt with man in a compassionate and longsuffering manner, but now His patience with fallen man is coming to an end. The time for judgment was drawing nigh and soon the world would be visited by His righteous wrath. The time of patiently bearing with the sin of man was over. The opportunity for repentance was passing and would soon be gone.

There is no reason for continued longsuffering for man is simply flesh, being unable to turn out of the way of sin (1 Cor 2:14). Yet though this is the case man will still have 120 years.

The 120 years has been interpreted over the centuries as one of two possibilities. It is either referring to the amount of time left until the arrival of the flood or to a more limited lifespan for men. 1 Peter 3:20 leans us toward that of the longsuffering of God and the period of time remaining until men were to be judged by the flood. Therefore in the continued forbearance and longsuffering of God, men still had 120 years to go before God would destroy His creation.

**QUESTION:** Is man still unable to turn out of the paths of sin? If this is the case, why does God still call upon men to repent and do what they cannot do?

**Verse 4:** It would appear from a reading of this verse that giants were the result of these ungodly unions, though giants appear to have existed prior to the intermarriage of the 'sons of god' with the 'daughters of men.' These giants appear to have belonged to the line of Cain and were introduced into the line of Seth by these intermarriages.

Some have suggested that so-called 'Neanderthal Man' and other so-called primitive forms of men came about through such unions as these. This however is mere speculation and cannot be proved either way.

These giants 'became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.' Because of their size they became like Goliath in the early years of David's life. They were well known and probably brought great fear to everyone they encountered.

**Verse 5:** Verse 5 now expounds the reason why men have no more than 120 years to go. Far from being 'very good (1:31),' the world had now become extremely wicked. Everything about man had now become dominated by sin. Men had become the very slaves of sin. This verse is very similar in content to Romans 1 in its description of the corruption of sinful man.

In language adapted for man's understanding, the reason for God judging the world is here made apparent to all. Man had become so wicked that nothing was left to be done

but to destroy them. It was not just an isolated area, but the entirety of humanity that had fallen into gross wickedness. It was not just one area of man's being that was corrupted by sin, but his entirety. Man's corruption by sin was now complete in every sense.

**QUESTION:** Does this description of the corruption of man really differ from any description that may be given of man in our own day? Explain your answer.

**Verse 6:** This verse on first appearance would seem to clash with the Biblical doctrine of God's unchangeableness or immutability. However this is not the case. This is an example of God adapting His language to humanity's understanding in order to get His message across. What the passage is therefore saying is that the relationship between God and man had now changed, with God's purpose now appearing to have changed (though His eternal purpose had not). God now intended to judge and destroy man whom He had created, resulting in very greatly changed circumstances for man.

Where previously God acknowledged His creation as 'very good,' it had now degenerated to a state of terrible wickedness. He was no longer pleased with creation and what it had become under the corruption of sin.

**QUESTION:** Had God's plan for creation now been wrested from His control? Explain.

**Verse 7:** This verse brings to our attention the coming of a great judgment that will in effect be the reversal of creation. Having brought order out of chaos, the Lord will now return the world to chaos as He destroys his creation in response to human sin.

**Verse 8:** After the sweeping condemnation of verse 7, this verse brings a sense of hope to the coming judgment. God is not going to destroy everyone and everything. He will yet exercise mercy upon one who has found favour in His eyes.

**QUESTION:** How is it that Noah found favour in God's eyes?

## INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY

Explain how Noah could be a just man in a world so utterly corrupted by sin (6:9)?

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