

Genesis 6:1-10 Grace Is Found In A Degenerating World

NOTE: Almost every aspect of this section is controversial and can be interpreted in different ways. The key question to ask is what makes the most sense in the context of Genesis and the themes we have seen presented. That being said, we cannot be absolutely certain, but must weigh the probabilities.

I. The Lord Declares Judgment On a Degenerating World (1-5)

A. The Degeneration of The Seed's Line (1-2)

1. Man is Multiplying On The Earth (1)

- a. Man is growing in population and filling the earth
- b. However, we have already seen that this means that sin and corruption are also growing in the earth
 - i. Adam shifted blame but finally confessed
 - ii. Cain lied and complained about his judgment
 - iii. Lamech boasted of his murder and defied judgment
 - iv. Fallen man is incapable of fulfilling God's command to spread His image over the earth
- c. Daughters are born from them
 - i. This seems to be a general statement of daughters being born of mankind
 - ii. This is also a summary statement of what we are about to examine in the following verses

2. The Lines of The Seed and The Serpent Intermarry (2)

- a. Who are the Son's of God? Three Possibilities.
 - i. They are Fallen Angels who take wives from among men
 - Arguments for this view
 - The term "Sons of God" is used for angels in Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7
 - Job 38:7 parallels the Sons of God with the morning stars which are angels in Ps. 29:1
 - 2 Peter 2:4-5 is often said to explain the sin of these angels – *"For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;*

- Jude 6 is also used to explain it - *And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,*
- Daughters of men has a general referent to all mankind in verse 1, if the sons of God are angels, the daughters of men would maintain this general reference
- Problems with this view
 - Introduction of fallen angels interrupts the context of the genealogies of Cain and Seth without warrant
 - The mixing of angel and human marriages makes no contextual sense of God's judgment on mankind
 - Why does God flood the earth because of the sin of angels?
 - Why are fallen, rebellious angels called "sons of God?"
 - Jesus says that angels do not marry – Matt. 22:30 - *For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.*
- ii. They are Tyrants, Unjust judges, and Rulers –
 - Arguments for This View
 - Unjust Judges are called *Elohim* in Exodus 21:6, 22:7-8. (translated 'judges' in the English text)
 - The Sons of God (tyrants and rulers) take as many women as possible (polygamy) and build harems to have a multitude of offspring.
 - This exponentially increases the wickedness of man as these children bear the wickedness of their fathers
 - Problems with this view
 - Nowhere are rulers or judges called the "Sons" of God

- Polygamous harems is a view that must be imposed upon the text from “whomever they chose”
- Once again, the “ruler” interpretation doesn’t make sense of the context in regard to the genealogies and the “seed” theme in Genesis so far.

iii. The Godly Line of Seth

- This is a spiritual designation God’s chosen people. Deut 14:1 – *“Ye are the children of the Lord your God”*
- The Godly line of Seth intermarrying with the corrupt line of Cain makes sense of the genealogies and the context of the seed of the woman.
- The line of Seth, marrying outside their godly heritage leads to an increasing wickedness among all, and especially a decline of the line of the seed, bringing God’s judgment.
- Sons of God – can also be rendered “godly sons” (this is called an attributive genitive)
- The “daughters of men” doesn’t necessarily have to mean women from the line of Cain – the point is that they were taking wives indiscriminately based on their beauty.
- The Mosaic community was later prohibited from marrying with their Canaanite neighbors (Exod 34:16; Deut 7:3), and when they did it caused them to sin (Num. 25)

iv. NOTE: Some people combine two or more of these views saying that it was men who intermarried but they were influenced by the demonic, tempting them to corrupt the line through which the “seed” would come.

b. The Similarity Between The “Sons” sin and Eve’s

- The same verbs are used describing Eve’s sin in the garden and the Sons of God taking wives.
 - Eve saw the fruit was good (*Tov*)
 - The Sons of God saw the daughters were fair (*Tov*)
 - Eve “took” of the fruit and ate

- The Sons of God “took” wives
- ii. We see the same temptations and sin that characterizes humanity
 - Now sin and corruption is infecting the godly line of Seth
 - Satan’s purpose is to destroy the line from which the Messiah would come
 - Satan will continue this in the killing of the Hebrew children in Egypt and the children in Bethlehem

B. God Declares the Coming Judgment (3)

1. Now all of mankind is descending into sin and corruption and the line of the seed is in jeopardy. God must act.
2. The Declaration of the Judgment
 - a. The Spirit of God will not always strive with men
 - i. “Strive” (*Din*) here is a very complicated word
 - ii. This is the only time it occurs in the Hebrew Bible which makes it hard to define with certainty.
 - iii. It may mean to remain with, to contend with, or to strive with.
 - b. The point is that God’s Spirit will withdraw from sinful mankind, turning him over to his sinful desires (see Rom. 1)
 - i. The Holy Spirit will remove the spiritual conviction he provides to restrain men’s sin
 - ii. The Holy Spirit will remove the common grace men enjoy (including life and blessing, hence the flood)
3. The Reason For The Judgment
 - a. The Spirit will not always strive with men because man is flesh
 - i. This is another reason I don’t accept the view that these are angels.
 - b. The characterization of man as flesh means that man is corrupted and fallen. The continual spread of mankind upon the earth will only bring the spread of corruption and sin
4. The Time of The Judgment
 - a. This could mean that God has decided to shorten the lifespan of mankind to only 120 years
 - i. But some of the Shemites after the flood lived longer than 120 years (Gen. 11:10-32)
 - ii. Abraham also lived to 175 years

- b. However, in the context of Genesis 6, it seems more plausible that this is the amount of time between God's declaration of judgment and the beginning of the flood
 - i. Man has 120 years to repent and turn to God before the flood comes to destroy creation
 - ii. God gives mankind a period of testing by which Noah (a preacher of righteousness) calls mankind to turn to God and trust His word of judgment.
- C. The Marriages Spread Depravity to the Seed's Line (4-5)
 - 1. This is a time when *Nephalim* are on the earth
 - a. The word Nephhalim (translated giants) literally means "fallen ones" (The LXX translate the word as giants probably based on the text in Number 13:33 speaking of men of great stature)
 - b. The word is used in Numbers 13:33 to speak of men of great stature. But there are also some problems in that text. The spies say that ALL of the men of Canaan were of great stature. And the list of the peoples of Canaan in Deuteronomy does not contain reference to Nephhalim. More than likely, the word Nephhalim used in Numbers 13:33 is likely an exaggeration by the frightened spies to describe the inhabitants of the land and dissuade Israel from invading.
 - 2. Children Are Born of These Marriages (4a)
 - a. The children born to these marriages are NOT the Nephhalim – the text says this occurred when the Nephhalim were in the earth.
 - b. The children of these marriages became mighty men
 - i. The term here is *gibborim*
 - ii. It speaks of a warrior class of reputation whose violent exploits are remembered
 - 3. The Children Become the Men of Renown (4b)
 - a. The children are described as "men of name"
 - b. Notice that in Genesis we have seen the significance of name – man desires a name for himself
 - i. Cain named his city after his Son
 - ii. At Babel, men desired to build a tower to make a name for themselves
 - iii. What is being communicated here is the multitude of children born from these marriages were rebellious, independent and sought their own name – they were lifted up among mankind because of their name
 - iv. This is a sign that man's sin and independence is increasing and infiltrating the godly line of Seth.

4. The Wickedness of Man Expands Exponentially (5)
 - a. As a result of these offspring, God sees the wickedness increasing on the earth.
 - b. Now every imagination (thoughts) of man's heart was ONLY evil ALL THE TIME.
 - c. Man has reached the pinnacle of his rebellion
- II. The Lord Extends Grace In The Midst of Judgment (6-10)
 - A. The Lord Decrees Creation's Destruction (6-7)
 1. The Lord Grieves the Creation of Man (6)
 - a. It "repented" God doesn't mean that God has changed his mind – it means that God is grieved over what man has become
 - b. The language is "anthropomorphic" – explaining God in human terms to present a spiritual reality – Sin grieves the Lord
 2. The Lord Purposes to Wipe Out Creation (7)
 - a. Justice must be done
 - b. Mankind has increasingly corrupted the earth and now the godly line of Seth is falling into the trap of sin
 - c. The only recourse now is to destroy humanity because they are filled with sin and wickedness
 - B. The Lord Gives Grace To The Seed (8-9)
 1. Noah Finds Grace in God's Eyes (8)
 - a. Even in the midst of a world of wickedness and sin, God gives grace to Noah
 - b. God will maintain his promise and preserve the seed of the woman. There will indeed be a godly line preserved.
 - c. Noah found grace in God – not because he was good or better than other men. Grace is unmerited favor
 2. The Results of God's Grace To Noah (9-10)
 - a. God's grace produces a new heart in Noah and that is seen in his life and actions.
 - b. Noah is a Righteous Man – Not perfect, but following after Christ
 - c. Noah is Blameless in His Time – He maintained his integrity of faith in God
 - d. Noah Walked With God – He strove to be in relationship with God and obey God's commands
 - e. NOTICE: All these things are not something inherently good in Noah that other men did not have. All these things are the results of Noah receiving the grace of God.
 - f. Noah Bears Three Children (10)
 - i. He bears Shem, Ham, and Japheth
 - ii. The Godly line will continue