

The Gospel in the Antediluvian World  
Gen 6:1-12

Introduction

1. Define Antediluvian: refers to the world before the Flood
2. One of the most—if not THE most—controversial events in the Bible
3. After the devastating news of Cain killing his brother Abel, we get some good news in Genesis 4:26: **“And to Seth, to him also, a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then men began to call upon the name of Yahweh.”**
4. However, by the time we come to chapter 6 we see a very different picture, one of total rebellion, wickedness, and corruption
5. READ 6:1-12

A. The Sons of God and the Nephilim

1. There are two main questions that always get asked about this passage: Who are the Sons of God, and Who are the Nephilim?
  - a. If we spent the kind of time necessary to adequately address this it would take up our entire morning
  - b. However, I want to focus on some other aspects of our passage this morning that relate to the Gospel so I’m not going to go into much depth, but want to at least address it
  - c. After spending almost a week putting together my own notes I came across a great article by Bodie Hodge (a speaker, writer and researcher at Answers in Genesis) and he did a fantastic job outlining the four main views
  - d. So, I pitched my notes and decided to rely on his outline to summarize the different views and then point you to his article for a much more in-depth discussion (<https://answersingenesis.org/bible-characters/who-were-the-nephilim/>):
2. Who are the Sons of God, and what in the world was going on??? (READ 6:1-2)
  - a. The four views:
    - 1) The first view is that the sons of God were fallen angels who had sexual relations with human women (the daughters of men) and produced half-demon/half-human offspring:
      - a) This is the most popular view and there are pros and cons to it, but there’s one really major con: nothing in the Bible suggest that angels can procreate with humans
      - b) In fact, Genesis 1 states specifically that every living thing can reproduce only after its own kind (Gen 1:11, 12, 21, 24, 25) and there’s only been one exception to that and it’s Mary’s supernatural conception by God
      - c) We also have to ask, If this were possible why do we not see it today?
    - b. The second view is that the sons of God were fallen angels who overtook men through demonic possession to engage in sexual relations with women:
      - 1) This view is certainly more probable than the first view because you don’t have angles cross breeding with humans to produce some demon-human hybrids
      - 2) Plus, we know that demons can possess and control humans so this view is certainly possible

- c. The third view is that the sons of God refer descendants of Seth who are claimed to be the Godly line, while the daughters of men refer to the descendants of Cain who are claimed to be the ungodly line:
  - 1) While there's some merit to this view, the main objection is it's a hard argument to make from the Biblical text
  - 2) Essential this view rests on the statement made in Genesis 4:26 that men began to call upon the name of the Lord after Seth's first child was born—but nothing in the passage suggests that this only applied to Seth's descendants.
- d. The fourth and final view is similar to the previous one but doesn't limit the sons of God to only Seth's descendants and the daughters of men to Cain's descendants:
  - 1) Essentially, it proposes that the sons of God were those who were calling on the name of the Lord as described in Genesis 4:26, but over time—as mankind began to multiply upon the earth—they began to act less Godly
  - 2) They became enticed by the beauty of the women and engaged in sexual immorality and/or polygamy (if we understand "wives" to simply refer to "women"; e.g. they **"took woman for themselves, whomever they chose"**)
- e. If you really must know my position, I lean toward the fallen angels possessing men view:
  - 1) While the 2 Peter and Jude passages do not explicitly say that angels engaged in sexual relations with humans, they do seem to be alluding to this event and describe angels abandoning their proper domain (heaven) and indulging in gross immorality and going after strange flesh
  - 2) The way I see it, if this is a reference to engaging in sexual relations with woman, the only way I can see it happening is through demon possession
- 3. Who were the Nephilim (READ 6:4)?
  - a. The exact meaning of the word is unknown, but suggestions based on etymology and other factors include everything from giants, to fallen ones, to mighty warriors and heroes
  - b. The ancient Hebrew understanding, and that reflected in the LXX, is that they were giants, and this seems to be supported in Scripture:
    - a) You'll notice that some English translations translate it this way
    - b) Numbers 13:33 suggests the Nephilim were giants: **"There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim), and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."**
  - c) The Bible reveals that giants did exist, even after the flood: the Amorites, Emim, Zamzummim, and Rephaim who dwelled in and around Canaan at the time of the Exodus are all referred to as giants (Amos 2:9; Deuteronomy 2:10, Deuteronomy 2:20; 3:11, 13)
  - d) We even have the names of some giants in the OT:
    - 1) The most famous is Goliath at 9' 9" tall (most manuscripts of 1 Samuel 17:4-7 support the six cubit and a span reading)
    - 2) Four of Goliath's sons are referred to in 2 Samuel 21:15-22, one of which is described as a man of great stature with 12 fingers and 12 toes (v. 20)
    - 3) The Amorite King Og was the last remnant of the Rephaim (giants) and his bed is described as being 13.5 feet long by 6 feet wide (READ Deuteronomy 3:11)

- c. Some interpret v. 4 to mean that the Nephilim were the offspring of the sons of God and the daughters of men, but that's not technically what the text says:
  - 1) Those who believe the sons of God were fallen angels who procreated with human women physically (not through demon possession) generally believe the Nephilim were their offspring—half fallen angel and half man
  - 2) Others believe they were 100 percent human but the wicked offspring when godly men married ungodly women
  - 3) However, the text doesn't explicitly say that the Nephilim were the offspring of the sons of God and daughters of men; let's go back and re-read the verse: **"the Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, WHEN the sons of God came into the daughters of men, and they bore children to them..."**
  - 4) In other words, verse 4 is simply telling us WHEN these events occurred and that time was something Moses assumed his readers would have been familiar with
  - 5) It was apparently a legendary time in the past when the Nephilim, **"mighty men who were of old, men of renown"** were common on the earth
- d. My personal opinion is that the Nephilim were giants, and prior to the Flood may have represented most if not all of humankind:
  - a) There is tons of fossil evidence indicating that many (most?) modern animals were significantly larger in size in the pre-flood world than they are today (reference Monumental Monsters book)
  - b) While there is no genuine fossil evidence proving the same was true of mankind, since animals were so much larger it seems reasonable to assume it might have also been the case for humans:
    - 1) The average lifespan before the Flood was between 800 and 900 years, which might lend itself to growing for longer periods of time resulting in larger size (e.g. we grow until about 18 which is about ¼ of our lifetime; if the same were true pre-flood then they might have continue to grow for 200+ years)
    - 2) As I mentioned a few minutes ago, the Bible reveals that giants did exist after the Flood, which means that their genetics ultimately came from Noah and his wife
  - c) This begs the question, If giants existed before and after the Flood, why do they not exist today?
    - 1) Lifespans after the Flood shrank quickly and drastically after the Flood (less than half as long within four generations, and to less than a quarter as long within 10 generations which was just over 400 years after the Flood)
    - 2) We also no longer see modern animals anywhere close the size they were before the Flood which means they shrank considerably; it's likely the same with us
    - 3) Some suggest both of these are related to the drastic changes in the atmosphere and environment

\*\*The remaining verses 3-12 describe what God SAW, what He FELT, and what He DETERMINED to do about it

<h2>B. What God Saw</h2>
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1. What God saw when He looked down upon the Earth was total wickedness and evil (look at v. 5):
  - a. **"The wickedness of man was GREAT upon the earth"**

- b. **“EVERY intent of the thoughts of [mankind’s] heart was ONLY evil CONTINUALLY”**
2. All flesh, and even the earth itself, had become totally and completely corrupt (look at vs. 11-12):
    - a. 6:11: **“Now the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was FILLED with violence”**
    - b. 6:12: **“And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for ALL flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth”**
    - c. As we’ll see in a moment, the only exceptions were Noah, his wife, his three sons (born after this), and his sons’ wives
    - d. Imagine this: estimates for the population of the pre-flood earth range anywhere from 700 million to 20 billion and yet only one man and his family were found to be righteous! If that doesn’t give us an idea of how bad things were, nothing will.

C. What God felt
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1. Twice in this passage God says that He was sorry for (or as some translations, regretted) making man (look at vs. 6-7):
  - a. It’s hard for us to imagine God feeling sorry or regretting doing something because He is perfect and I admit this is a tough one to get our heads around; God doesn’t make mistakes so what could He regret or feel sorry about?
  - b. So, we might be tempted to write this off as just an anthropomorphic statement (meaning that the author is just describing God in terms we can understand as men)
  - c. But, it would be a mistake to assume God is beyond the ability to feel sorrow, or sadness, or disappointment
  - d. In fact, He specifically says here that He was **“grieved in His heart”** which refers to deep, emotional pain:
    - 1) We know that God can be grieved because Isaiah 63:10 says that when Israel rebelled against God it **“grieved His Holy Spirit”**
    - 2) We are also warned in Ephesians 4:30 not to **“grieve the Holy Spirit”** by our own sin
2. What’s described here in Genesis 6:6-7 is not that God somehow felt that He has made a mistake in creating man, but rather that He felt sorrow and grief over what had become of man
3. The source of this grief and sorrow wasn’t just the wickedness and corruption God witnessed in His creation, but the necessity of what He was about to do

D. What God DETERMINED to do (two things)
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1. The first is that God determined to judge the world:
  - a. Because He is holy and just, God has no other option than to judge sin
  - b. Look back at v. 3: **“Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”**
    - 1) We learn here that God had reached the limit of His patience with the wickedness of man and would no longer **“strive with man forever”** (or as some translations, remain/abide)
    - 2) He would only allow it to continue for 120 years which refers to how long God would wait before bringing the Flood; it was a sign of His patience and mercy (Noah was called a preacher of righteousness)

- 3) The reason given is that man is “**flesh**” which likely refers to the infallibility of mankind and our propensity for sin
- c. We get a picture of the universal nature and magnitude of God’s judgment in v. 7: “**The LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.”**”
  - 1) His judgment would involve wiping out nearly every living thing that dwelt upon the earth—humans, animals, reptiles, even birds
  - 2) In v. 13 we learn that much of the earth itself would be destroyed
  - 3) We know from the next couple chapters that God would accomplish His judgment through a world-wide flood
- d. Some would call God’s actions here an over-reaction, cruel, even wicked: how could a righteous and loving God wipe out an entire planet?
  - 1) We have to keep in mind the severity of God’s judgment was in direct correlation to the depth and severity of sin, wickedness, evil, violence and corruption that filled the earth
  - 2) It reminds me of the back and forth between Yahweh and Abraham before He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (He would relent if 50 righteous were found, then 45, then 40, then 30, then 20, then 10...but even 10 righteous could not found)
  - 3) 2 Peter 2:6: says that God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah “**as an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter**”
  - 4) In the same way, the Flood serves as a warning:
    - a) It reminds us of what happens when men turn their backs on God and pursue their own path of sin and corruption—IT NEVER ENDS WELL!!! (Romans 1 gives us a good picture of this)
    - b) It also reminds us that God judges sin and a time is coming when He will once again judge this world—not with water but fire—and mankind will face eternal consequences for their sin
- e. Fortunately, God’s determination at the Flood didn’t stop with judgment
2. The second thing God determined was to provide a way of salvation:
  - a. READ 8-10: Dustin is going to get into this more next week, but for now I will simply say that in the midst of His judgment, God provided a way of salvation
  - b. The Bible makes it clear that God takes no pleasure in the judgment and death of the wicked (READ Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11)
  - c. He doesn’t want any to perish but desires all men to be saved:
    - 1) 2 Peter 3:9: “**The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.**”
    - 2) 1 Timothy 2:3-4: “**This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**”
    - 3) In fact, “**God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him**” (John 3:16-17)

- d. So, when it came to judging the pre-flood world, God made a way to save not just Noah and his family, but ALL of His creation: mankind, animals, even the Earth

Conclusion
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1. When we started this series, we promised that we'd see glimpses of the Gospel throughout all the events in Genesis 1-11
2. In some respects, this is almost the most glaring ones, isn't it?

The Door at the Ark
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3. The flood teaches us about the gravity of God's justice, the depth of His love, and the promise of His salvation
4. The same is true of the Gospel—it reveals the gravity of God's justice, the depth of His love, and the promise of salvation