

From God's Creation to God's Nation

Genesis 1:1 to Exodus 17:16



From God's Creation to God's Nation

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From God's Creation to God's Nation

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From God's Creation to God's Nation (Adult Sunday School Lesson Winter 2015)

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From God's Creation to God's Nation, a Sunday School Lesson, taught by Ed Alsteadt, covering Genesis 1 through Exodus 17. It covers the first four dispensations found in the Bible, as well as the key characters that would eventually establish the Nation of Israel. It also reveals the great and eternal attributes of the God of the Bible.

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• [Lesson 1 Handouts](#)

• [Lesson 1 PDF](#)

• [Lesson 1 Appendix](#)

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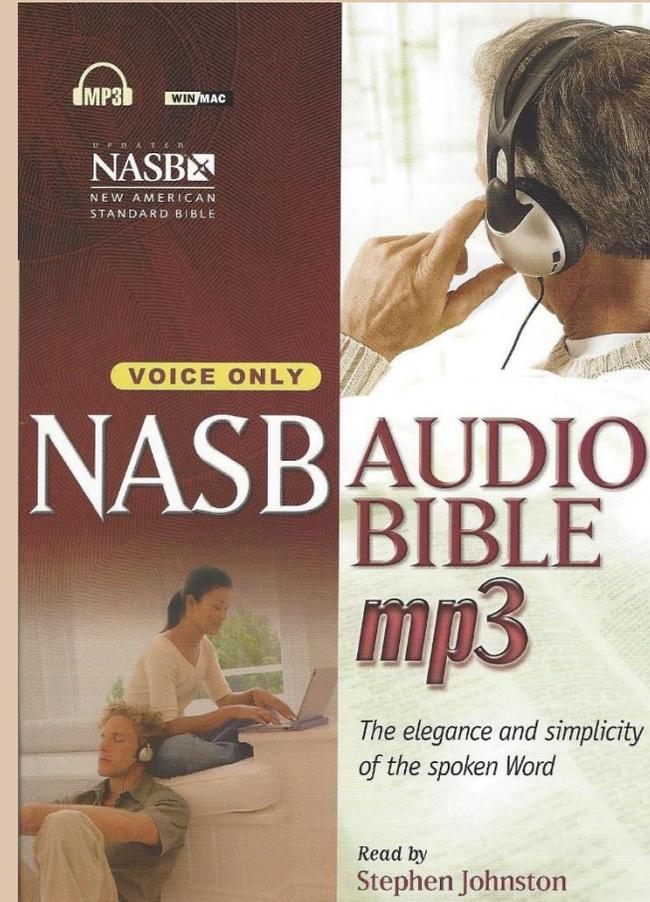
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From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section One

GENESIS 6



From God's Creation to God's Nation

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From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

In discussing Genesis 6:1–4, one of the early echoes of the promise of Genesis 3:15, it has been stated that these verses describe the intermarriage of fallen angels with human women. Because this view is contested by some, it will be necessary to study these verses in some detail and provide a justification of the interpretation which has been given.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Multiplication of Humanity—Genesis 6:1

Verse 1 emphasizes the multiplication of humanity before the Flood. The Hebrew word for “men” used here is generic and refers to humanity in general, including male and female. The word, as such, cannot be limited to the sons of Cain. It included both Sethites and Cainites, and both of these groups died in the Flood.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Multiplication of Humanity—Genesis 6:1

Another key word found in verse 1 is “daughter,” a Hebrew word that means “females.” The emphasis in the second part of verse 1, “daughters were born unto them,” is on the female portion of humanity. Again, the expression cannot be limited to the female descendents of Cain, as some teach. It simply is a word that means “the female portion of the population.” Verse 1 can read: “Man [humanity] multiplied and daughters [females] were born unto them.” The distinction in verse 1 is not between male Sethites and female Cainites, but the emphasis is on the female portion of humanity in general which would include both Cainites and Sethites.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Intermarriage—Genesis 6:2

Verse 2 describes an intermarriage. The first key phrase is, “sons of God.” The term “sons of God” is a general term which means “to be brought into existence by God’s creative act.” Because the term carries this meaning, it is used very selectively. Throughout the Old Testament the term “sons of God” is always used of angels. This is very clear when the usages of the term are compared in the Old Testament. Elsewhere, the term is used in Job 1:6; 2:1, and 38:7. No one debates that the other places where “sons of God” is found in the Old Testament clearly refer to angels. But some want to make Genesis 6:1–4 the one exception, and there is simply no warrant for making an exception here.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Intermarriage—Genesis 6:2

In the New Testament the term “sons of God” is expanded. Adam is called the son of God (Luke 3:38) because he was brought into existence by creation. Believers are called sons of God (John 1:12) because believers are considered to be a new creation (Galatians 6:15). But in Genesis, the text is dealing with a specific Hebrew expression, *benei elohim*, and, as it is used in the Hebrew Old Testament, it is a term that is always used of angels. The distinction in this passage, then, is not between Sethites and Cainites, but between humanity and angels. The word men here emphasizes humanity. The term “sons of God” emphasizes angels.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Intermarriage—Genesis 6:2

The second key expression in verse 2 is “daughters of men.” This is a generic term for women, which includes females of both Sethites and Cainites. What the verse is saying is, “the sons of God saw the daughters of men.” There is no justification for this verse to be interpreted to mean “godly males” intermarried with “ungodly females.” Would truly godly men marry ungodly females? The “daughters of men” simply means womankind, and the “sons of God” refers to angels. If the meaning is kept consistent with its usage elsewhere in the Old Testament, the passage is clearly speaking of fallen angels intermarrying with human women. This is obvious in two ways.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Intermarriage—Genesis 6:2

First, it is always a one-way intermarriage; it is always “sons of God” marrying “daughters of men.” There is no record of “daughters of God” marrying “sons of men.” If the distinction was between Sethites and Cainites, it simply would not happen this way. In human society, intermarriage occurs both ways. Today, saved males sometimes marry unsaved females, and sometimes saved females marry unsaved males. If the other claim was true, it would mean that male Sethites married female Cainites, but male Cainites never married female Sethites, which is entirely unlikely. Intermarriage would thus be confined to godly men with ungodly women, but not godly women with ungodly men. But in Genesis 6 there is only a one-way intermarriage, the “sons of God” intermarrying with the “daughters of men.”



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Intermarriage—Genesis 6:2

Second, the context clearly speaks of a cohabitation that is unusual and unnatural and causes the worldwide Flood. Verses 1–4 deal with the angelic cause of the worldwide Flood, while verses 5–6 deal with the human cause. Cohabitation between Sethites and Cainites would not be unusual or unnatural, while cohabitation between angels and humans would be.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Intermarriage—Genesis 6:2

Those who do not like this teaching object to it by quoting Matthew 22:30, claiming that this verse clearly teaches that angels are sexless:

22:30 “For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.” (NASB)



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Intermarriage—Genesis 6:2

What Jesus said is that human beings “in the resurrection” and “in heaven” do not “marry, nor are [they] given in marriage.” The angels that Jesus was speaking of are “angels in heaven.” The comparison is not with angels in general, but with angels “in heaven.” The emphasis is that in heaven, good angels neither marry nor are given in marriage. Matthew 22:30 makes the same point about human beings. Humans in heaven do not marry, nor are they given in marriage. What about humans here on earth? Humans on earth certainly do marry and are given in marriage.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Intermarriage—Genesis 6:2

This is a contrast between what happens in heaven as compared to what happens here on earth. Genesis 6, however, is speaking of angels on earth. So in heaven, angels do not marry, nor are they given in marriage, and humans in heaven will not marry nor be given in marriage. But Genesis 6 discusses things happening on earth. Angels are never declared to be sexless. In fact, the male gender is always used. Matthew 22:30 teaches that angels do not procreate after their kind, meaning that angels do not give birth to other angels. But angels are always described in the masculine gender, not in the feminine, nor in the neuter. They are always masculine gender in both the Old and New Testaments.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Intermarriage—Genesis 6:2

Whenever angels became visible, they always appeared as young men. Anytime an angel appeared to a person he always appeared as a young man and never a woman (Genesis 18:1–19:22; Mark 16:5–7; Luke 24:4–7; Acts 1:10–11).

Matthew 22:30 cannot be used as an argument against the angelic interpretation of Genesis 6:1–4, because it is dealing with a situation on earth, not in heaven; nor does Matthew 22:30 teach that angels are sexless.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Intermarriage—Genesis 6:2

Another question is: Why did Satan have some of his fallen angels intermarry with human women? Why bother? The reason for this can be understood by investigating the greater context of Genesis. Three chapters earlier (Genesis 3:15), the first messianic prophecy is recorded. This prophecy declared that the Messiah would be the Seed of the Woman, and this Seed would crush the head of Satan. What is happening in Genesis 6:1–4 is a Satanic attempt to corrupt the Seed of the Woman by having some of his angels take on human form—angels always appear as young males when they take on human form—and intermarry with humankind to try to corrupt the seed. Therefore, the events of Genesis 6:1–4 were a Satanic attempt to cancel out the prophecy of Genesis 3:15.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Result of the Intermarriage—Genesis 6:3

The result of this intermarriage was the judgment of God:

In verse 3 God pronounced the judgment: the Holy Spirit would not continue to strive with this kind of evil forever, and God decreed the destruction of humanity to be fulfilled 120 years later. The means of the destruction would be the Flood. The purpose of the Flood was to destroy the product of the union of angels and women, discussed in the next verse.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Product of the Intermarriage—Genesis 6:4

To get a clearer concept of what this verse is saying as a whole, individual parts need to be discussed first.

First is the name Nephilim. In some translations the word Nephilim has been translated by the word “giant.” People reading it picture huge human beings. But the word does not mean “giants”; rather, it means “fallen ones.” The word does not refer to giants in the sense of huge beings, but to a race of fallen ones. The reason it was translated as “giant” is because in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament made around 250 B.C., the Jewish scholars translated verse 4 by the Greek word gigantes which means “Titan.” Our English word “giant” comes from this Greek word gigantes.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Product of the Intermarriage—Genesis 6:4

But what were the Titans in Greek mythology? They were part man and part god, because they were products of gods and men. When the Jewish scholars in 250 B.C. translated the word Nephilim to Greek, they used the Greek word for Titans because they recognized this to be a union not of two types of human beings, but of angels and humans which produced a being that was neither angelic nor human. So at least the Jewish scholars of 250 B.C., who lived much closer to the time when Moses originally wrote this passage, clearly understood this to be an intermarriage between angels and human women.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Product of the Intermarriage—Genesis 6:4

As a result of this union, a new race of beings called the Nephilim, a race of fallen ones, came into being. They were gigantes, they were superhuman, but not in size. They had human characteristics but were, at the same time, superhuman. They had extra capacities, both mentally and physically, though they may not have been any larger than normal human beings. It is from the events of Genesis 6:1–4 that the source of Greek and Roman mythologies were derived. These mythologies record how gods from Mount Olympus intermarried with human beings on earth and produced children who had superhuman characteristics, who were greater than men but less than the gods.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Product of the Intermarriage—Genesis 6:4

The book of Genesis gives the true history of what really happened, while Greek and Roman mythologies give the corrupted account. In Greek and Roman mythologies the human perspective is given, and what happened is elevated to something special and glorified, but God called it sin.

From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Product of the Intermarriage—Genesis 6:4

The second word to note in this verse is giborim, which is translated as “the mighty men ... the men of renown.” Again, because this was a product of fallen angels and human women, they were unique. They were the giborim. Notice that there is no mention of mighty women, which would be strange if this were a product of a normal union. After all, a normal union produces both males and females. If this were a natural union, then the product should have been mighty men and mighty women. But there are only mighty men because this is a new race of beings that is neither human nor angelic. The only way to explain the origin of the giborim is that they were the product of this union, the point of verse 4.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Product of the Intermarriage—Genesis 6:4

Only by the angelic explanation of chapter 6 do other areas of biblical teaching make sense. It provides the only adequate explanation for certain statements in II Peter and Jude which will be studied next. It is a peculiar sin, it is connected to the flood, and it is different from the original fall of the angels; otherwise, all fallen angels would be permanently confined.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Product of the Intermarriage—Genesis 6:4

2 Peter 2:4–5 (NASB95)

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; 5 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;

Verse 4 gives the location of the permanently confined demons. The temporarily confined demons are found in the Abyss, but the permanently confined demons are elsewhere.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Product of the Intermarriage—Genesis 6:4

The Greek word translated in this passage as “hell” is tartarus. Tartarus is a section of Sheol or Hades where the permanently confined demons are located. Both the Abyss and Tartarus are sections of Sheol or Hades. The Abyss is for demons that are temporarily confined, but Tartarus is for demons who are permanently confined. Tartarus is referred to as “pits of darkness” and these angels are reserved there unto the “judgment.” This will be the Great White Throne Judgment, the final judgment. This means that at no time will these angels ever be released. When the time comes, they will go directly from Tartarus to stand before the Great White Throne Judgment and then be cast into the Lake of Fire. There will never be a time when they will be free to roam—they are permanently confined.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Product of the Intermarriage—Genesis 6:4

Verse 5 reveals the timing of their confinement: it was in conjunction with the Flood. This agrees well with the events of Genesis 6:1–4 which are also connected with the Flood. The purpose of the Flood was to destroy this product of fallen angels and human women. So by comparing the II Peter passage with the Genesis passage, there is good evidence to show that Genesis is not speaking about Sethites intermarrying with Cainites, but fallen angels intermarrying with human women. This is a valid conclusion just from a study of the Old Testament passages themselves. However, the New Testament also supports this particular interpretation.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Product of the Intermarriage—Genesis 6:4

Jude 6–7 (NASB95) — 6 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, 7 just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

Verse 6 emphasized the fall of a select group of angels and described their fall in four statements.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Product of the Intermarriage—Genesis 6:4

First, “they kept not their own principality.” The word “principality” is frequently used of the angelic realm and is one of the various ranks within the angelic realm. It means that they did not remain in their position and place of rank within the Satanic cosmos. Second, they “left their proper habitation.” They left the demonic-angelic sphere of operation and entered into the human sphere by taking on the form of young men and intermarrying with human women.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Product of the Intermarriage—Genesis 6:4

Third, they are now “kept in everlasting bonds under darkness.” Here Jude mentioned the same thing as Peter, that these angels are now permanently confined. Peter also revealed the place of their confinement: Tartarus. Fourth, they are to be kept there until “the judgment of that great day.” Again, Jude reaffirms Peter’s statement that they are being kept in bondage until the judgment of that great day. This is the Great White Throne Judgment. Once again, it is reaffirmed that these demons will never be free to roam around but are permanently confined in Tartarus. When the time comes, they will be taken out of Tartarus to stand before the Great White Throne Judgment, and then be cast into the Lake of Fire.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Product of the Intermarriage—Genesis 6:4

Verse 7 deals with the nature of their sin. The key phrase is “in like manner.” In like manner, as Sodom and Gomorrah, they went after “strange flesh.” The sin that these angels committed is similar to the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah, the sexual sin of going after strange flesh. “Strange flesh” means sexual union that is unnatural; it goes contrary to nature. In the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, the strange flesh was homosexuality; in the case of these angels, the strange flesh was female flesh. Instead of remaining in their usual state of residence, they invaded a new state of residence, one of alien flesh, to commit gross sexual immorality.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Product of the Intermarriage—Genesis 6:4

Sodom and Gomorrah and these angels have one thing in common: they are guilty of sexual sins. In the case of Sodom and Gomorrah it was homosexuality; in the case of these angels, it was intermarrying into the human sphere.

By comparing the Genesis passage with the passages in II Peter and Jude, it is clear that these are angels who intermarried with human women, and not simply Sethites who intermarried with Cainites.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

When did the Nephilim exist?

The passage reads, "The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward; when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them." The phrase "in those days" refers to the time the angels intermarried with women, and bore children. These children were the Nephilim. The phrase "after that" does not mean "after the Flood", because this is not mentioned explicitly in the Adamic toledot. Rather, it means that the Nephilim were around for some time after the intermarriage that produced them.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

When did the Nephilim exist?

Next section, we see that God resolves to 'blot out' humanity, and this is connected with this demonic corruption of the seed of women. God would start afresh with an uncorrupted line of people, and imprison those demons in Tartarus. So the Flood wiped out these Nephilim. However, some use Numbers 13:33 to claim that these Nephilim existed after the Flood: And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

When did the Nephilim exist?

But the context is that Moses had sent 12 spies to the land of Canaan, leaders in each of the 12 tribes. When they returned, 10 of them presented a 'bad report' a description repeated in Numbers 14:36-37. They were totally intimidated by the size of the inhabitants. Only two faithful spies, Caleb and Joshua, dissented. They pointed out that with YHWH on their side, no enemy could withstand them. However, most of the people grumbled because they listened to the faithless ten. YHWH judged them severely: the Israelites would wander in the wilderness for 40 years, one for each day the spies explored the land. And none of the adults would enter the Promised Land, except for Caleb and Joshua (Numbers 14:26-35).



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

When did the Nephilim exist?

As for the 10 ring-leaders, YHWH killed them in a plague (14:37). So we see that YHWH severely judged this 'bad report'. Thus we should not presume that those 10 spies were telling the truth. Fruchtenbaum says:

The reported existence of the Nephilim after the Flood was a lie of the ten spies, as they tried to discourage the people. This was one of several lies they told. When Joshua conquers the land, he never runs into any Nephilim. Therefore it seems apparent that these Nephilim were the product of the intermarriage of the fallen angels and human women, and they only existed before the Flood in keeping with the phrase "in those days"; they did not remain after the Flood."



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

This has been another difficult verse (v. 6), subject to varying interpretations. When God said, “My spirit shall not always strive with man,” there is a question as to whether He meant the Holy Spirit or the spirit which He had breathed into man's body, and also whether He meant mankind in general or Adam in particular (the word “man” is Adam, and Adam himself may still have been alive when God spoke those words, perhaps in the days of Enoch). The reference to “one hundred and twenty years” has been understood by some to refer to man's future longevity and by others as the time yet remaining before the coming of the Flood, in addition to the interpretation that this was simply the time remaining before Adam's death

From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

It does appear that the most natural reading of the passages refers to God's Holy Spirit in His ministry of "convincing the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). As the moral and spiritual character of the antediluvian world degenerated, especially following the demonic takeover just described, it was apparent that the people had become so hopelessly corrupt as to be beyond reclamation. They had completely and irrevocably resisted the Spirit's witness, so that it was futile any longer for Him to "strive" with man. This word (Hebrew doon) is used only here and is therefore of somewhat uncertain meaning, possibly including also the idea of "judging."



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The Lord emphasized that man also was “flesh,” the “also” probably referring to the fact that he had a physical body as well as a spiritual nature. Since the witness of God's Spirit to man's spirit had been rejected, there was no purpose to be served any longer in maintaining his physical life and continued multiplication. There may also be an implicit suggestion that man had become no better than the animals: he was dominated exclusively by the “flesh”—no longer concerned with God but only with his own bodily appetites, just as the animals. God told Noah that “the end of all flesh is come before me” (6:13), and later, indeed, “all flesh died” (7:21), including both man and animals.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

This striving of God's Spirit with man's fleshly appetites was later taken by the apostle Paul as a type of the conflict in the New Testament believer between his spirit (as illumined and energized by God's Spirit) and his flesh, the natural and carnal nature with which he was born (Romans 8:5; Galatians 5:16, 17).

This antediluvian witness of the Holy Spirit to man must have been accomplished by the preaching of God's Word through one of His prophets. It is known that both Enoch and Noah bore a strong witness to the people of their day, and it is possible that Methuselah and Lamech did the same.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

This particular prophecy was evidently given, perhaps through Methuselah, just 120 years before the coming of the Flood. Since Enoch had already been translated, Methuselah was the oldest living patriarch at this time. Shem, Ham, and Japheth had not yet been born; and presumably God's specific commands to Noah (5:32; 6:10; 6:13–21) had not yet been given.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

The revelation of the Lord's response may be divided into two sections: his pain and his plan. Verse 6 reports how the wickedness of the race pained the Lord's heart (note the contrast between the heart of the wicked and the heart of the Lord). The text says that the Lord was sorry that he had made man in the earth, and it grieved him in his heart. As has been mentioned above, these words reflect the words of Lamech in 5:29, which in turn reflect the wording of the curse. Painful toil had entered with the curse, and Lamech longed for comfort from the painful toil in the earth that the Lord cursed.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

God's grief (6:1–7): He sees nothing but human wickedness of every kind, everywhere, at all times.

But now we read that God was sorry that he made man because it grieved him. Here we learn why pain was brought into the world as a result of sin—God was pained by sin. But now, rather than “comfort” the humans in their sinful plight, God was “sorry” (the niphal) that he made them. This anthropomorphic description of God's response to sin underscores the point of the passage: men and women are so desperately wicked that they grieve God's heart to the extent that, rather than comfort them, God will destroy them.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

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The second section reveals what God would do about the pain: “I will destroy mankind that I have created.” The verb is literally “blot out”; its uses in the Bible provide an interesting study. One striking use is the word of the prophet: “And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down” (2 Kings 21:13). The verb indicates a complete removal of one thing from another—in Genesis, of the human race from the earth (cf. also Ps. 51:1, which refers to blotting out transgressions). The judgment will include all living creatures on the face of the earth.



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An interesting parallel occurs in Exodus 32. In his anger over the nation's idolatry, the Lord was determined to destroy the entire nation and begin again with Moses (v. 10). Through Moses' intercession the Lord relented from the harm that he would do to the people. Afterward Moses prayed that the sin of the people might be forgiven, saying, "If not, blot me out from your book that you have written" (v. 32). The Lord responded by saying, "Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot him out of my book" (v. 33). The interpretation of these verses is, of course, another matter entirely. At this point it is simply worth noting the similar themes and terminology. God's pain over sin, especially idolatrous activities, prompts him to blot out the wicked.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Three

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Just as world conditions in the days before the Flood presaged a coming catastrophe, so will world conditions in the last days of this age foreshadow an even greater catastrophe. Some of these characteristics are summarized as follows:

- (1) Preoccupation with physical appetites (Luke 17:27)**
- (2) Rapid advances in technology (Genesis 4:22)**
- (3) Grossly materialistic attitudes and interests (Luke 17:28)**
- (4) Uniformitarian philosophies (Hebrews 11:7)**
- (5) Inordinate devotion to pleasure and comfort (Genesis 4:21)**



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Just as world conditions in the days before the Flood presaged a coming catastrophe, so will world conditions in the last days of this age foreshadow an even greater catastrophe. Some of these characteristics are summarized as follows:

- (6) No concern for God in either belief or conduct (2 Peter 2:5; Jude 15)**
- (7) Disregard for the sacredness of the marriage relation (Matthew 24:38)**
- (8) Rejection of the inspired Word of God (1 Peter 3:19)**
- (9) Population explosion (Genesis 6:1, 11)**
- (10) Widespread violence (Genesis 6:11, 13)**



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Just as world conditions in the days before the Flood presaged a coming catastrophe, so will world conditions in the last days of this age foreshadow an even greater catastrophe. Some of these characteristics are summarized as follows:

- (11) Corruption throughout society (Genesis 6:12)**
- (12) Preoccupation with illicit sex activity (Genesis 4:19; 6:2)**
- (13) Widespread words and thoughts of blasphemy (Jude 15)**
- (14) Organized Satanic activity (Genesis 6:1–4)**
- (15) Promulgation of systems and movements of abnormal depravity (Genesis 6:5, 12)**



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These conditions prevailed in the days of Noah and they are all rapidly growing again today. There is good reason, therefore, to believe that these present times are those which immediately precede the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.