

(Genesis) 14 - the Day of Noah

by S. Lewis Johnson

The sermon explores the significance of the days of Noah, highlighting the wickedness of man, the judgment of God, and the faith of Noah.

Duration: 55:37

Scripture: Genesis 6:3-7, Matthew 24:37-39, Ephesians 2:8-9

Topics: "Noah"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that a new stage of evil is reached in the progress of humanity, leading to the need for God's final cataclysmic judgment. He compares the story of Noah and the flood to ancient mythology, highlighting the unusual evil of man that necessitates such a judgment. The preacher also discusses the lack of success in evangelism, using the examples of Noah and Abraham to illustrate that even faithful individuals may not have many converts. Finally, he suggests that the rise of demonic activity may be expected before the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Just by way of review, remember that in the fourth chapter of the book of Genesis, Moses has recounted the struggle between Cain and Abel, the murder of Abel, and then he discussed briefly the Cainitic civilization. At the conclusion of the chapter, he mentioned the birth of Seth and the fact that men then began to call upon the name of the Lord. In the fifth chapter, he discussed this long line of men from the line of Seth, laid a little bit of stress upon Enoch and Noah, and now in chapter six we come to the description of the days that just preceded the flood.

Now it came about when men began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men were beautiful, and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. 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.

May I just make a comment or two which we will not discuss in the message. It is possible to render verse three in different ways. Quite a bit of debate among the students of the Hebrew text has raged over this particular verse because there are several differences of opinion in it.

It is possible to translate the verb strive as abide. Now as it appears in the version that I have read, My spirit shall not strive with man forever, reference is made to the common grace of God in the restraint of

sin. But if it should mean My spirit shall not abide with man forever, the reference would be to the principle of life, and the reference being to the human spirit and the principle of life, and to the fact that God would take life from the earth in the flood that would follow.

That is a possible rendering. Personally, I prefer the one in the New American Standard Bible, but the other is certainly a distinct possibility. The last part of the verse has also been understood in two different ways.

Nevertheless, his days shall be one hundred and twenty years. It has been suggested that perhaps the meaning of this is that from this time on, men shall not live to the length of days that they did preceding the flood or preceding this time. Rather than living nine hundred years as some of the men did, they would henceforth live only about a hundred and twenty years.

That would be, generally speaking, the range of a man's life. That is a possible interpretation. On the other hand, many of the commentators, probably the majority, have believed that this is a reference to the fact that God was going to give them one hundred and twenty years to see if the burgeoning iniquity of the times before the flood might be changed.

And so the one hundred and twenty years represents a test of man. That's probably the rendering most preferred, or the explanation preferred by most students of Genesis. The fourth verse begins with, The Nephilim were on the earth.

Now, Nephilim is simply a transliteration of a Hebrew word which is derived from the Hebrew verb to fall. Now, phal in Hebrew means to fall, and so Nephilim means either fallen ones, or perhaps it means those who fall upon others, hence, to attack them. It has been translated by John in the Authorized Version because of the things that are stated at the end of the verse.

Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. And there is justification for that rendering, incidentally. Not every rendering in the Authorized Version is wrong.

And the Authorized Version is often right, and modern versions are often wrong. But Nephilim is simply a transliteration of the original word. 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.

Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of the name, or men of renown. Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and he was grieved in his heart.

That has puzzled a lot of people. After the message this morning, I was discussing this with someone who still finds this a very difficult thing. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth.

How can God be sorry? After all, does it not state in Holy Scripture that he is an unchangeable God, that he is immutable? I am the Lord, I change not. So how can he be sorry? And to make it more of a problem, it's stated twice. We read, And the Lord said, verse 7, 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.

Reading the Bible, I think, is a great blessing. As you already know, I've been urging you to read your Bible. And I would suggest to you that as you read through the Bible that you notice anthropomorphic language, that is, language adjusted to human custom.

To put it in another way, phenomenal language. Language that is adjusted to the things that we see ourselves. In other words, in the Bible we have much language that is addressed to human beings and is given in such a way that we human beings will understand.

The Bible speaks about God's eyes, for example, about his ears. The Bible even speaks about God's nostrils. Now, God does not have eyes and ears, but he does see and hear.

And so the language is phenomenal. It's human language. It's language adjusted to the experience that we know and so hear.

God does not change in his essential being. But if man acts one way, he responds in a certain way. If man acts another way, his response will be different.

The principles that guide him are unchangeable principles, but they are principles that are carried out in different ways, dependent upon the activities of man. It's like a thermometer. I've often used that illustration.

It's like a thermometer. A thermometer appears to be changeable. One day it reads 86, in Texas 110.

But then the next day it might read 40. And a few months on it might read minus 10. Now the thermometer is not changeable.

The thermometer acts according to fixed principles, dependent upon the activity of temperature upon the mercury. The principle is fixed. But because of the changeability of heat, it appears that the thermometer is very changeable.

Now the principles of God are eternal and unchangeable. But when man responds one way, the activity appears to be different from the activity when man responds another way. So when we read here that God was sorry, we're not to think that God is changeable.

It's rather that man's activity has now brought into activity on God's part the justice and righteousness of his character and the necessity of divine judgment. We read in verse 8, but Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. The subject for this morning in our study of the book of Genesis is the days of Noah.

It was our Lord who invited us to compare Noah's day with the day of his second advent. In the Olivet Discourse in Matthew chapter 24, to use the Matthean account, the disciples had asked the Lord Jesus what was the sign of his coming and of the end of the age. And then in answering the question of the disciples, the Lord Jesus, incidentally launching into the longest answer that he ever gave to any of their questions, discussed some of the things that had to do with the last days.

He discussed the sign of his coming. And then having given the sign of his coming and a description of it in verses 29 through 31 of that chapter, he went on to say, for as the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark.

And they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. So it was our Lord then who encouraged us to take a look at the days about us and compare them with the days of the flood. For the days of Noah and the flood were days just like the days that precede the second advent of the Lord Jesus.

By the way, he verified the historicity of the flood in that statement. And he also then validated the analysis of human society. By such analysis, one discovers the staggering fact that all human attempts to create a continuously progressive, growing civilization have failed.

After 6,000 years, we are further from success than ever before. Most of us who have attended college, or who have done much reading, have been exposed to Professor Arnold Toynbee's massive study of history. You may remember that in that particular work, Professor Toynbee claimed that there were 21 different civilizations in human history.

He said that 14 of these civilizations were moribund. That is, they were dead. And in fact, I'm not sure he said this, but others have said it, that some of them were so dead that it was not until recent years that we even knew of their existence.

It has also been said, by the way, that Professor Toynbee's work might be entitled *The Science of Original Sin*. But Toynbee said that 14 of the 21 civilizations are dead and seven are left, but these are dying as well. Western civilization, which may be the proudest achievement of the natural man, is also now collapsing, a shining example of an experiment in social independence of God.

It's not surprising at all to orthodox theologians that Professor Toynbee traced the cause of the collapse of the civilizations of the past to internal discord, because we know from the teaching of the Bible that it is human nature that is the root cause of human problem. Man is a fallen man. If Noah's Day is like the winding up of the age, then it's imperative for us to analyze Noah's Day.

What was characteristic of Noah's Day? Well, we know it, too, collapsed from internal discord. That was the basis of the failure of the men of Noah's Day. Satanic invasion into the human scene, perhaps.

Gross materialism, certainly. Gross sensualism, very definitely. Rejection of divine revelation, as found in the preaching of Noah.

Only eight souls, seven converts, if we can call them converts of Noah. Eight people were all that were left to enter into the ark when the flood came. Violence, and also uniformitarian philosophy.

Can you not imagine Noah's preaching for 120 years and people saying, well, everything has continued just as it has been since the founding fathers. The same kind of philosophy that greets us today, not only in our scientific world, but almost especially in the religious world, where we are told that we can only look at our age as a fixed or a closed continuum and there can be no divine intervention in human society in the simple sense in which people used to think of that any longer. Noah's Day was the day of the gathering storm, and it's not long after that that the storm broke and the whole ancient world was carried away by the flood.

Now, of course, we cannot set dates. It would be foolish for us to set dates. It's possible that the Lord's coming is hundreds of years away from us today, but in the light of the teaching of the Word of God concerning the nature of Noah's Day and in the light of human society about us, it certainly would be very plausible for us to think that the days of the winding up of human history in its present form may not be so

far away at all.

First we read here in the passage about the strange union of the sons of God. Now I want to say right at the beginning that what I am going to say will appear to be rather weird, certainly strange and eerie, and I don't want us to lose the force of this passage over the difficulty of interpreting it. There are some passages in the Bible like this and occasionally we get so involved in the interpretation of them that we lose the message of the passage.

Now this is one thing we do not want to do here. Regardless of how we take this following passage that we shall look at in a moment, we want to say that the chief point is that a new stage is reached in the progress of evil. God's bounds are overstepped in another realm and it is necessary for him to bring final cataclysmic judgment.

So let's not lose that overarching point that it is by virtue of the unusual evil of man that this unusual judgment of the flood must come to pass. Now I admit when I look at this passage it suggests fairy tales, legends about ogres, dragons, men-gods, the kinds of things that you read in ancient mythology. Now I majored when I was in college in the classics and one of the courses that I had to take was ancient mythology.

And I took a course in ancient mythology and some of the things that I find here are things that I remember from ancient mythology. The idea of the possibility of angelic beings cohabiting with human beings suggests those ancient legends. And I must confess that as an evangelical Christian, and I think a rather orthodox one, I find this passage difficult from a practical standpoint.

If a non-Christian knew about it, he could embarrass me. Many of them try to embarrass me, but they usually don't know enough about the Bible to embarrass you very much. But if they did know much about the Bible, they could embarrass you with this passage.

Because if you were to say to them, I believe in the Bible, and they were to say, you mean to say you believe that passage over in the book of Genesis about angels marrying women and having giants as children? And I think my face would flush, because I find it very difficult to explain this passage to someone who has a very unbelieving attitude, and then also difficult to explain to some who have a believing attitude. It's a very difficult passage. So I want you to know that when I give you my interpretation, I give it to you with a little bit of reluctance.

Reluctance based upon the fact that I'm not certain, absolutely certain my interpretation is correct. And then it is a difficult and sometimes embarrassing passage. Now the time of the situation is given us in the first verse.

It's when men began to multiply on the face of the land. And when that is compared with the preceding context, it appears that the time is just before the birth of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The race is multiplying.

But not only is the race multiplying, evil is multiplying too. And it's in that context that Moses writes, now it came about when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, good, and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. Now we have here evidently a marriage union, some kind of union of the sons of God and the daughters of men.

This has been understood in different ways. I'll just select the two most prominent interpretations. It has been said that what we have here in the marriage of the sons of God and the daughters of men is the union of the descendants of Seth, the sons of God, and the daughters of men, the descendants of Cain.

So that we have the union of the Sethites and the Cainites, the sons of God and the daughters of men. Some commentators are very certain about this. Leupold, the very good Lutheran interpreter, whose volumes on the book of Genesis are well worth reading, is so certain about this that he says that his interpretation is true without a shadow of a doubt.

But really, Professor Leupold is whistling in the dark. There is some doubt about his interpretation, though he may be right in his interpretation. But there is some doubt.

Occasionally, you know, we like to make people think that our interpretation must be right because we're so certain of it. And it reminds me of that ancient note in the margin of a preacher's notes. Someone looked at it and it said, shout here, point weak.

And so when we do shout, the devil is right. The tendency sometimes is to be engaged in the covering up of something that is rather difficult. Methinks the lady doth protest too much.

Was it not Shakespeare? I may be wrong about that. Shakespeare, who said that? So what are the supports for this interpretation that Moses is speaking about the union of the Sethites, the sons of God, and the Cainites, the daughters of men? Well, we must admit from the context that might make sense because have we not just been speaking about the Sethites in chapter 5, that line of men who died, but in which line was Enoch, Lamech, that is, the second Lamech, and Noah? And did we not have mention of Seth in chapter 4, verse 25, so that we do have the line of Seth in the preceding context? And did we not have just before that the discussion of the Canaanite civilization? So it is possible to reason that what we have here is a marriage between the descendants of Cain, the wicked men, the men who evidently were not believers in Jehovah and did not take it upon themselves to begin to call upon the name of the Lord, and the Sethites, the sons of God, the godly men, the descendants of Seth, down through Enoch and Methuselah, Lamech, the good Lamech, and Noah. So the context might seem to be suitable for that interpretation.

I would have to agree that is a good argument. If I were to hold that view, I would have to argue, laying stress upon that. A second support for this view is the fact that the expression in verse 2, they took wives for themselves, the Hebrew expression is *lachach ishah*, that expression, those two words are always used in the Old Testament with reference to an ordinary marriage.

So the use of the term took wives for themselves might suggest an ordinary marriage. And that surely could not be true of angelic beings cohabiting with the daughters of men. And finally, to select the strongest support for these views, for this view, did not the Lord Jesus Christ, in answering a question that concerned the resurrection, say that in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven.

And does not that suggest that angels are sexless beings, and therefore they do not marry? And consequently, how could we possibly have then, it said, that the sons of God were angels and that they married the daughters of men? Now I'd ask you just to remember this, that the Lord Jesus did not say all the angels. There are two classes of angels, just as there are two classes of men. There are elect angels and there are non-elect angels.

And he said they are as the angels of God in heaven. His statement has no reference to the fallen angels of the past, either group, the demons or this special group here in Genesis chapter 6. Now you can see, I think, the strengths and some of the weaknesses of that view. Other interpreters, and this has been the view of ancient Jewish men, generally speaking, and also of the earliest fathers of the Christian church, generally speaking, that Moses is writing about the union in some way of angels and men.

Now one of the major supports for this view is the problem that we have with the first view. For example, in verse 1 we read, Now it came about when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them. It's clear that the word men there is a reference to both men and women because even in those days daughters weren't born to male men.

It is generically used in other words. But then in verse 2, And the sons of God saw the daughters of men were beautiful, then that would be a particular class of men. That is, the Cainites.

So we have in verse 1 men used generically, but in verse 2 used specifically of the Cainites. Now that's not totally uncommon, but usually in the precise local context words have similar senses and if we give them different senses we tend at times to make the text unintelligible. Furthermore, why are the Nephilim associated with such a natural union as Sethites and Cainites marrying? Why would John's be the product of that particular kind of union? In addition, why are God's people associated with the male sex only? The sons of God, the Sethites, they are males.

So are the daughters of men, the Cainites, they're all females. Now we males might like that. We might think it's good to think that we male members of the human sex have been more faithful than the women.

But that would certainly seem strange. Not true to history, we would say. God's people limited to the male sex? That doesn't make sense.

At least not real good sense. Furthermore, if the Sethites were all godly, if the Sethites were all godly, then why did they all perish in the flood? When the flood came, there is only Noah and his wife and his three sons and their wives and that's all. Only eight souls.

So you can see that it's not so easy as it sounds to say that this is the union of Sethites, godly men, and Cainites, ungodly women. In addition, the term sons of God, now the precise form that is found here in the Hebrew text, is found several times in the Old Testament, but in every place in which this precise form is found. Now there are some similar forms to which this does not hold.

But the precise form in which we read the sons of God, that precise form is used only of angelic beings in the Old Testament. You turn to the book of Job, three times we have the expression the sons of God as is found here and angels are unquestionably in view. In Daniel chapter three in the Aramaic section of that particular book, there is the same expression only it is Aramaic and again it is a reference to angels.

The Old Testament translation in Greek of the Hebrew Bible, while there is some support for a different reading, generally, according to textual critics of the Septuagint, generally speaking, it too stands behind, well specifically speaking, it stands behind the sense of angels. For the preferable text of the Septuagint, that great translation of the Old Testament at this point is ungoloi, which is the word for angels. So an old interpretation such as that translation is that it is angels.

Josephus, the Hebrew interpreter, took this to be angels. The book of Enoch also took this to be of angels. The ancient writers, both Jewish and Christian, felt that this was a reference to angels.

So let's, without a great deal of desire to coerce you in your thinking, let's just suggest that what is set forth here is some kind of angelic invasion into the human scene. Some kind of union in some way between angelic beings and men. Oh, I did forget one thing that is probably extremely important.

I always get so anxious to get through something like this to the main point. But the New Testament references to this event are in the minds of many decisive. I had a professor of New Testament when I was going through theological seminary who was a very proper man.

He was a Presbyterian man, a very conservative man, a very fine scholar, Dr. Everett F. Harrison. Dr. Harrison was the kind of person who, in my opinion, he's still living, in my opinion, was the kind of man who constitutionally would have been opposed to this kind of interpretation. It's just not a Presbyterian interpretation to talk about the union of angels and men.

Presbyterians, remember, are all vogue on the outside, even though they may be vague on the inside. And so it's just not a Presbyterian interpretation. But I can remember Dr. Harrison in class as we were studying the book of Jude from the Greek text, coming to verse six and seven of the book of Jude and saying, even though the question is difficult and moot, Jude seems to make it decisive there was an angelic incursion.

That made a lot of sense to me because I respected Dr. Harrison very much, and I was a Presbyterian, too, and quite a bit vague on the inside at that time myself, and not a lot of vogue on the outside either. But in verse six and seven, the writer of the book of Jude says, he wants his readers to be reminded of how the Lord saved a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe, and he wants to remind them, he says, of angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, and that God has kept them in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, like Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities round about them, since they in the same way as these, that is, as Sodom and Gomorrah, indulged, I'm sorry, as the angels, in the same way as these, indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh. Isn't that startling? He says that Sodom and Gomorrah, just like the angels, indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh.

Now in the Bible we have two words for different. In fact, we have something similar in English. But let's suppose that I have here, I have here a pencil, a pen, and let's suppose that I buy this pen at a jewelry store, and I describe it to a friend of mine, and he says, you know, I would like to have one like that.

And I said, well, I'm going by there tomorrow, I'll be glad to get one for you. So I go into the store again, and I put this on the counter, and I say, I would like another pen. I mean another one like this.

Now in Greek, there is a word that means, essentially, another of the same kind. Now that word is not the word that is used here, but there is another word that means another, but it's another of a different kind. It's the word from which we get heterodoxy, for example, as over against orthodoxy.

A different kind of opinion, usually associated with wrong opinion. Let's suppose that when I bought the pen I was very dissatisfied with it, and I had spent a good bit of money upon it, and so I go in the next few days and I put it down on the counter and say, I want another pen. But I mean another of a different kind.

I'm dissatisfied with this. Now that word in Greek is ordinarily heteros. Not always, but generally that's the meaning.

A different kind. I want a heteros pen. Well, that's the word that's translated strange here.

Strange flesh. So that what Jude is saying is that the angels, just as Sodom and Gomorrah, went after strange flesh. Now what happened in Sodom? Well, we will read about this when we study the 19th chapter of the book of Genesis.

Let me just state it. What happens is that God came down to visit Abram, and there were three of them. And you're reading through the Bible.

Have you gotten at least to Genesis chapter 18? And you'll remember that the Lord came with two angelic counterparts, and he confirmed the promise made to Abram. And the next chapter describes these two men, but who were angelic beings, who went down to Sodom. And the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly, the text of Scripture says.

And that night they sought to force themselves into the place where the men of, where these men who had been with the Lord, angels, were staying with Lot. And it says that they wanted to have sexual relationship with them. They wanted to have homosexual relationships with the angels.

They went after strange flesh. It was a case of men interested in beings who were angels, but who had human bodies, given them for that specific task. Now it would seem then from Jude, since he says that these angels are just like Sodom and Gomorrah and had gone after strange flesh, is saying that the angels are those who went after strange flesh, different flesh.

And that would certainly harmonize with Genesis 6. That is, the angelic beings, the sons of God, took to themselves as wives the daughters of men, but they were human, as over against the angels who were angelic beings, but who may have, for purposes of this, cohabited with human bodies, or as demonic possession, took hold of individuals. Now if you turn over to 2 Peter chapter 2 and verse 4, you will find another very interesting passage that seems to confirm this in a slightly different way. We read in 2 Peter chapter 2 and verse 4, for if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into Tartarus, and committed them to pits of darkness reserved for judgment, and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, do you not see that the angels here are not spared when they sinned, and it occurred at the time of the flood? That would suggest, since they were placed in a distinct imprisonment, Tartarus, and since it occurred at the time of the flood, it would apparently indicate that Peter held to the view that Genesis 6, the sons of God, was a reference to angelic beings.

Turn over to 1 Peter chapter 3, and again you find what you might expect, because if Peter in the second epistle took that view, you would expect him to express it in another place as well, if that subject should come up. And we read in chapter 3 of 1 Peter, verse 18, for Christ also died for sins, once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that he might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit, in which he also went and made proclamation to the spirits. That word is never used of anything but angelic beings, spirits, in the New Testament.

Spirits, now in prison, now of course it is used of the human spirit, but as a spirit, it's a reference to the angels, now in prison, who once were disobedient when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons were brought safely through the water. And I remember my professor, Dr. Harrison, saying, it's the New Testament that seems to be the decisive feature of the interpretation. Well, we do know from the New Testament that, upon occasion, the demons apparently had desire to take to themselves human bodies.

We know, for example, Derek Kitna, who is a very sound interpreter and not an extreme one, certainly not given to sensationalism, says the craving of demons for a body, evident in the Gospels, offers at least some parallel to this hunger for sexual experience. Later in the book of Genesis, we will read that those angels that were with Abraham ate food. So it's not inconceivable, totally inconceivable, that angelic beings should possess human bodies, and in the possessing of human bodies, carry out the acts that are described here.

I confess, it still is weird. It's very weird. I don't understand this.

I don't even know any angel. I only know them by reputation. I have never entertained an angel unawares.

Have you? I know some of you thought that when I was in your home you might have, but let me assure you that that is far from the truth. But yet the New Testament speaks about entertaining angels unawares. That's what Lot did in Sodom.

They were angels unaware. So what we have to say is that we don't understand all that transpired then. This is hundreds and thousands of years ago, and it may just be that we don't understand human structure as well as we might.

It has been suggested that demonic possession might have the power to affect genetic structure. One interpreter has said the chromosomes are changed so that the progeny are markedly different. A sort of mutation takes place, and the result is a pronounced change in the children of such a union.

We know that simple things like LSD have had strange effects upon the human body. So chromosomal changes may take place, and children may be malformed and mentally deficient. And so there may have been such change, some kind of change, in the genetic structure of individuals that jobs did result from this union.

The purpose of it, if we may take a guess, would have been to corrupt the seed in order that the promised seed, the Lord Jesus, might not come. And that would explain why the Lord Jesus went and preached to the spirits in prison. He gave them a victory proclamation after he had succeeded in accomplishing the redemption, pointing out that their attempt to destroy the line of the seed before the flood had failed.

Now having said all of that, we've spent a good bit of time on this, and probably it's not justifiable except that a hundred people always ask questions about this afterwards. The point of the section is clear. There is a tremendous development in evil in the days of the flood.

And so the point is that man is beyond self-help. He must come under the judgment of God. It might suggest to us that we should expect to find a rise in the demonic in the days before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The amazing Nephilim are described in the fourth verse. They were mighty men. They were men of the name.

Now we know that in paleontology, one of the interesting discoveries that the paleontologists have made is that nearly all the modern animals were once larger or had larger ancestors. There are mammoths, the cave bears, and ladies, believe it or not, giant cockroaches. These cockroaches would have terrorized Orkin.

Huge reptiles such as the dinosaur. And occasionally also we have discovered giant human footprints. Modern genetic engineering aspires to produce a race of Einsteins by cloning.

Did the angels perhaps possess some knowledge that modern people do not possess? It would have been terrible to have a whole generation of Einsteins, wouldn't it? We'd all starve to death if everybody was an Einstein by grafting. But nevertheless, there may have been understanding of human nature such as we do not have yet today. The amazing Nephilim.

They are honored by men, incidentally, not by God. When it is said that these were mighty men who were of old men of renown, the reference is probably to military prowess. And they were called men of the name, not by God, but by the men.

While the divine reaction to human wickedness is described in the remainder of the section, you can see that ultimately the intrigue of sin has affected the Sethites as well. We read in the fifth verse, then the Lord saw. In the beginning, do you remember, in Genesis 1, it says, the Lord saw everything that he made, and behold, it was very good.

And now we read, the Lord saw. But all he could see was the wickedness of men, great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. So the earth is filled, all right, as God had told the earth to multiply and fill the earth, the human race to fill the earth, but it's filled with violence.

And the grotesque evil reflects a grotesque cause, and it requires the deluge. Evil is presented, incidentally, extensively. It's great in the earth, but also intensively.

Every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Do we have any more powerful description of depravity that has touched all of the aspects of human being than that? Every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And notice it has a sexual flavor.

That's characteristic of our day, isn't it? Even in the religious world, and these were all religious people, they all believed in God. Characteristic of our age is the evil of men who stand in the pulpit. They are men who are filled with greed.

They would love to have giant sums of money at their disposal, all kinds of material possessions. And furthermore, they're arrogant. They're assumed to be the total interpreters of the will of God in every aspect of life, for those who listen to them.

That's a very sad thing. Coming to the meeting this morning, I listened to a man who was speaking about this very same thing. And he himself spoke about the tendency of evil men toward greed, toward the desire to be the mouth for the revelation of God, not realizing that the very organization of which he was a part, which lodged all authority in one man as the leader of the church, fostered the development of that very same kind of thing.

It's one of the weaknesses of the system practiced in most of our Christian churches today, which has the pastor as a kind of organizational head of the church. That makes it possible for men like that to arise. That's why the Bible teaches multiple leadership in the church.

Leadership bound up in a body of men, the elders, so that there is some counterbalance. That does not prevent the rise of evil, of course, but it certainly helps. Now we read that God was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and therefore he said, I will blot out man whom I've created, and the animals as well.

You know, it's interesting. Men like to find relief, but God requires justice. And there is no tempering of justice here because evil is total.

And the time comes when God must act in justice, for he is a righteous and holy God, and he does. And furthermore, even the animals are involved because they are identified with the representative man and his followers. There's one exception, and that exception is Noah.

He's the prototype of a sinner saved by grace. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, sovereign electing grace. Notice, by the way, that he found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

He found favor in the eyes of the Lord. It was something that Noah received that made him different. And then notice the proper order.

We have, first of all, the reception of grace, sovereign electing grace, which produces faith on Noah's part, and justification, for he now stands in a right relationship to the Lord. We read in the ninth verse, Noah was a righteous man, justified man, and it is only justified men who are able to walk with the Lord. The order is beautiful.

It is divine sovereign grace that centers attention upon an individual, transforms him in sovereign grace, brings him to the knowledge of the Redeemer who is to come, brings him to the place where he rests upon that Redeemer for his salvation, and then, having been justified, he begins his walk with God. I speak to you this morning as God in his grace brought you to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, if he has you stand justified before him. As the Puritans used to like to say, just as if I had never done anything wrong, and you could add, just as if I had always done everything right.

God's righteousness is the righteousness of God, which God's righteousness requires him to require. Mr. William Cunningham used to say, that's the kind of righteousness the believer has in the Lord Jesus Christ, and then begins the walk with God. You cannot walk with God until you have been justified by grace through faith in the knowledge of a crucified Redeemer.

Now, you would think that Noah would have been a great, effective preacher, wouldn't you? In an age like that, why, people would have crowded to the preaching of the man who talked about the flood to come, and they would have come down to the altar and signed decision cards, raised their hands in the meeting, and we would have had a great pre-flood church. A flood of people coming in to the knowledge of the Lord before the flood came. How different.

He preached for one hundred and twenty years and had seven converts, if we can call his own family his converts. There was a man who is with the Lord now. He was a very interesting man.

He's a modern man. He died just a few years back. He used to go around the country preaching the gospel.

He was an evangelist, he was an Irishman, and a Bible teacher too. And a very, very colorful character. Jim McGinley was his name.

If you ever run across any old tapes of Mr. McGinley, listen to them. They are interesting and they are funny. He was a man with a great zeal for the gospel and a great fearlessness.

Now he generally was identified with people who engaged in evangelistic style meetings of the last generation or so. He went over to a Bible college over in Tennessee, in eastern Tennessee, and he was asked to speak there because he was a friend of the people in the organization. But the man who introduced him was the president of the organization and he had some false views about evangelism.

He thought that the whole Christian faith was bound up in evangelism. Now evangelism is important, but it's not the whole Christian faith. So in the course of his introduction of Mr. McGinley, he launched into an exhortation to the students and the student body and finally concluded with, if you're not winning souls every day, you're a flop in the Christian life.

So Mr. McGinley stood up. He was fearless. He knew he might not be invited back, but he started out and he said, now nor.

So I was interested in that remark that the president made. Now nor. He preached for 120 years.

He had seven converts at most. Evidently he didn't win somebody every day. What a flop.

Now take Abraham, he said. Abraham walked with the Lord many years. He was chosen in electing grace.

At the most, so far as we can tell, he had 300 converts. He had 300 men who worked for him. He didn't win somebody every day.

Nor the friend of God. What a flop. Jacob.

Jacob, the great man of God. Israel. Prince with God.

Jacob had about 70 people that went down into Egypt after all those years. What a flop. Elijah.

He went on like this. Elijah. In Elijah's day, so far as Elijah knew, he was the only one.

It was God who said I have 7,000 others, but Elijah hadn't won them. It was Elijah alone, Elijah thought. So he hadn't won somebody every day.

What a flop. And so on. Oh how foolish we are.

We tend to let our human thought run ahead of the teaching of God's Word. Nor was a man of God and he walked with God. And Enoch was a man of God and he walked with God.

And they had great influence. Down through the years their testimony has been winning people. But to affirm that we must measure up to some human standard is totally wrong.

Well what then were the marks of Noah's day? Materialism. Sensualism. Advancing technology and the kinetic line has been set forth.

Growing population and population expansion. Uniformitarian philosophies. By faith Noah constructed the ark.

But only seven people went in with him into it. Uniformitarian philosophies. I can just imagine them saying Noah what are you doing? Building an ark? Building an ark? Why it hasn't even hardly rained since the beginning.

Ah but there is a great flood coming. Noah don't you know all things continue as they have been since the time of the fathers? It is not possible for a being to intervene in our human society. Rejection of divine revelation.

You mean to say God told you to build this? Oh Noah surely you must be mistaken. The rejection of divine revelation. Someone told me incidentally after the message this morning there was one difference between our society and Noah's.

In our society in Noah's society one man had a boat in ours everybody has a boat. Well I had not thought of that I must confess. And I appreciate that comment that one of you have made.

You see our fourteen Moribund civilizations have gone down the drain and the seven that are remaining are fast going the same way. And we shall soon meet the society that lived at the time of Noah. What was the remedy in Noah's day? Well the remedy in Noah's day was the ark prepared by divine revelation finally.

It was divine revelation who gave Noah his instructions and that ark was the salvation of Noah and the seven souls with him. Today the remedy is the ark of God our Lord Jesus Christ. Peter tells us about that in first Peter chapter three.

He says just as in Noah's day those few souls were saved so today the Lord Jesus Christ has ascended into has gone down into death and has ascended up to the right hand of the Father angels and others being in subjection to him and the way of salvation is through him for the just died for the unjust that he might introduce us to God. Have you put your trust in him? By the grace of God do you know Jesus Christ as the one who has offered the redemption for our sins? May God speak to you. May you come to him and may the days of Noah not be days of terror but days which announce the approaching of the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ for you.

Let's stand for the benediction. Father we are grateful to thee for these wonderful passages from holy scriptures which so beautifully set forth divine revelation and the truth concerning Christ. Oh God help us to wisely respond to the teaching of the word of God through the Holy Spirit.

If there should be some here without Christ oh God speak to them. Warn them through the spirit, admonish them, draw them to Christ to glorify thy name. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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