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*Facts to Keep Your Faith Afloat*

Paul Taylor

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## Introduction

Since the creation of the universe, one of the most significant events in history was the Flood. Yet this world-changing event is today ridiculed and scorned — as are those who accept its historicity. Most people would, today, prefer to suggest that the account of the Flood in Genesis 6–9 is at best a clever allegory, and most probably ranks alongside stories like *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty*.

Regrettably, so-called conservative evangelical churches have led the way, in recent years, in compiling a theology of doubt. Driven by fear of ridicule or lack of academic respectability, conservative evangelicals have become ever more imaginative in their efforts to harmonize the Scriptures with old-age geology and evolutionary biology. While they do this, the atheists are ever more vociferous in pointing out (rightly, in my view) that it is not possible to believe both the Bible and evolutionary theory. However, so many of these conservative evangelicals have invested so much theological capital in accepting evolutionary and old-earth ideas as truthful that the only position to give must be their adherence to biblical truth. Of course, as conservative evangelicals they cannot admit to disbelief in the Bible, so they have to resort to fuzzy phrases, such as “we need to understand who the book was written for,” or “this book was written for an age that was scientifically illiterate,” and “God had to explain these truths in language that the people would understand.” One must suppose that the language that people would understand must be lies.

This author believes the Flood to have been a real, historical event. The evidence left behind by this event is enormous, and can be seen in the huge quantities of sedimentary rock all over the world. But secular scientists prefer to interpret their observations in the light of their presupposition that the earth is billions of years old and that God had little, if anything, to do with the creation of the rocks.

### **Doubts Predicted by Peter**

Doubts about the Flood were famously prophesied by the Apostle Peter in his second epistle.

Know this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water (2 Peter 3:3–6).

The scoffers “willfully forget” two matters — the historicity of the creation week and the historicity of the Flood. In doing so, they cannot cope with the wealth of evidence available for both these events; because the evidence does not fit into their paradigm, they ignore it.

### **Books about the Flood**

There have been a number of good books about the Flood in the past. Indeed, the modern creationist movement was kick-started by just such a book with the 1961 publication of *The Genesis Flood*, by John Whitcomb and Henry Morris. In recent years, Dr. Andrew Snelling has updated this classic, under a new title — *Earth's Catastrophic Past*. Many of the learned scientific articles in the peer-reviewed creationist journals concentrate on issues to do with the Flood.

There are also very good chapters about aspects to do with the Flood in many of the general creationist books that can be found in local Christian bookstores.

What we seem to lack is a book that is both easy-to-read and comprehensive in its treatment of the subject. This book aims to fill that gap.

## A Fascinating Subject

I have always found the Flood to be a fascinating subject, and I love to talk about it in my seminars. The account of the Flood really has everything. It has drama, relationship issues, theology, science, and the gospel. It is my desire to capture these threads. However, I have indeed seen them as threads. The person wanting to learn some of the theology of the Flood does not necessarily want to get bogged down with the science.

In this book, I have endeavored to clearly label the sort of content that you will find in each chapter. The first section of the book contains chapters that are expositions. Science is kept to a minimum. Great concentration is placed on the *typology* found in the account.

The second section contains historical articles. It focuses on ancient history, in the immediate post-Flood period as well as the history of how old-earth compromises came to be accepted.

After this, we have a section on science. I kept this section separate because the science is, at the same time, both popular and unpopular. For some, the scientific information is what makes the subject interesting. For others, being blinded with technicalities is undesirable, so it should be possible for such people to skip or skim through this section. It should also be pointed out that I have simplified the science as much as is possible. Those who want more detailed science should get Dr. Snelling's book.

I wanted to be able to relate something of the emotional power of God's judgment coming on a wicked pre-Flood world. After much consideration, I decided that the most effective way of achieving this would be to have a fictional section, so the fourth section contains four monologues by pre-Flood characters.

As with most parts of God's Word, this account is really about the gospel of Jesus Christ. When I make such a statement, there will be some who will worry that I am about to treat the account allegorically. I am not. I treat it *typologically*. A *type* is not a metaphor. It is something that is real, but that also has spiritual significance. For example, it is well known that the Passover is a type of the death of Jesus. To say that does not imply that the Passover never happened. Of course it happened. But God designed it to also teach about the necessity of the sacrificial Lamb of God.

So the last paragraph is a long-winded justification for the fact that I have included an article entitled "The Gospel According to Noah" so that the reader can understand how the typology of the Flood relates to the gospel.

Finally, I want people to be able to study the whole subject of the Flood. So the last section is a study guide that can be used for individual study or for small groups. It could be that small groups want to concentrate on a program led by the expositions, rather than chapter by chapter, so it should be possible to mix and match the questions in whatever order you require.

**And Finally . . .**

I have really enjoyed putting this book together. I hope that you will enjoy reading it and learning from it, and maybe graduating to study some of the more technical works about the Flood. In the meantime, watch out for the DVD series that will accompany the book.

May God bless you as you study His Word.

Paul Taylor, BSc MEd

Director of Ministry Development

Creation Today

## Chapter 1

# The World before the Flood

**Genesis 6:1–2**



**J**esus reminded us that before the Flood most people were not expecting it.

But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be (Matthew 24:37–39).

We can, of course, feel quite smug about the level of non-expectation and antediluvian apathy. Yet Jesus was using the account of the Flood as a true-life analogy of what His own Second Coming would be like. He was suggesting to His hearers that they “watch” (Matthew 24:42) and “be ready” (Matthew 24:44), so that, even though they would not know the exact timetable, they would be ready for the most important event in history. Yet we know that the majority of people in the world will be completely oblivious to the coming of Jesus, until it happens. In the same way, the world before the Flood was warned that it was going to happen, and was advised to be ready, but they paid no heed. Learning about the state of the

world immediately before the Flood is, therefore, a good training ground for getting ready for Jesus' Second Coming. His Second Coming will be a one-of-a-kind event, and it hasn't happened yet. But the Flood has already happened and, because Jesus Himself made the comparison, we would do well to study what happened the first time God decided to end the world.

### **Chapter 6 Follows Chapter 4**

Genesis chapter 5 was a brief interlude for Moses to record the promised line of descent, which we now know eventually ended up with the Messiah. So the introductory phrase of the sixth chapter — “Now it came to pass . . .” — is basically a continuation of the thoughts in the last verse of chapter 4.

And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the LORD (Genesis 4:26).

The latter half of Genesis 4 records how the descendants of Cain had sunk to new lows of depravity. Take the case of Lamech, who gleefully compared himself to his great-great-great-grandfather, the world's first murderer.

Then Lamech said to his wives: “Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; wives of Lamech, listen to my speech! For I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold” (Genesis 4:23–24).

Even wicked Cain only married one wife. Lamech's sexual needs ran to two. With an exponentially expanding early population, there was no numerical requirement for Lamech to have two wives. We can only assume, therefore, that his sin of bigamy was itself the result of a deeply sinful heart. This sinful nature is exposed by his self-comparison with Cain. Cain was a murderer, because of his jealousy. He knew that his crime was wrong. Lamech positively boasted about how he killed a man, just for wounding him. This was a “punishment” above and beyond what was appropriate. Note also that Lamech decided that his act of murder was really an act of justice. But God did not, and has not, sanctioned the individual to carry out the execution of murderers on their own behalf, and still less the execution of someone who has merely “wounded” one. As a bunny trail, the above comment should not be seen as an argument against the death penalty. We will return to the death penalty in our studies on Genesis, but for now it can

be stated that I believe Scripture teaches that execution for murder is the correct and appropriate response. However, that execution should be carried out by society, not by the individual.

God promised that Cain would be avenged “sevenfold” if he were harmed (Genesis 4:15). Lamech, on the other hand, had decided that he could do better than God. He decided that he could set his own target (seventy-sevenfold) and that he could carry out the execution of that target himself, whereas, in Cain’s place, the punishment, if required, would have been administered by God.

In summary, Lamech decided that he could disobey God’s command in the following ways: he could set his own number of wives in defiance of God’s plans; he could carry out his own executions rather than leaving them to a society under God; and he could make his own threats about how he would offensively defend himself (if “offensively defend” can be considered to be a proper terminology).

This evil legacy, which had developed among the descendants of Cain, can be contrasted with an alternative legacy that grew among the descendants of Seth.

Then *men* began to call on the name of the LORD (Genesis 4:26).

The context of this verse suggests that it was the descendants of Seth who were calling on the name of the Lord. The Hebrew does not use the word “men,” which is why it is in italics. Therefore, the phrase is really referring to the first half of the verse — that is, the descendants of Seth and Enosh, Seth’s son. In later generations, it would not be inevitable that those in the promised lineage would necessarily be righteous worshipers of God. Indeed, the earth’s population at the time of the Flood must have included many unrighteous sons of Seth. We know, after all, that Noah had brothers and sisters (Genesis 5:30). Even so, in these early years, it is likely that the ones calling on the name of the Lord would be those associated with Seth and the promised lineage. It is likely that the phrase refers to a gathering for worshiping the Lord. There is even a possibility that the phrase really implies that men “were calling themselves by the name of the Lord,” as we might refer to ourselves as Christians — followers of Christ.

### **Sons of God and Daughters of Men**

This brings us to the sons of God and the daughters of men — two concepts that have caused endless amounts of frustration for centuries. The key

to understanding these concepts, however, would appear to be to remember, as I stated before, that the narrative of Genesis 6 follows the narrative of Genesis 4 — Genesis 5 being an interlude when the genealogy of the promised lineage is recorded. In that case, it would seem likely to me that the term “sons of God” is referring to that group of people who were collectively worshiping the Lord — that is, the descendants of Seth. If that is so, then the “daughters of men” refers to descendants of Cain. Remember that Cain and Seth were not the only children of Adam and Eve. There were plenty of “other sons and daughters” (Genesis 5:4) from whom marriages could be contracted. Those who claimed to be worshipers of the Lord, however, should not have been intermarrying with those who were usurping God’s role — which is what Cainite people like Lamech were doing. Therefore, the fact that the marriages between the sons of God and the daughters of men appeared to be problematic, puts one in mind of the New Testament injunction:

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? (2 Cor. 6:14; see Deut. 7:3, Gen. 24:3–4).

This interpretation is not the most common among modern creationists. Many modern creationists see evidence of angelic, or rather demonic, activity at play. It is important to acknowledge two facts about the angelic interpretation. First is that this is not the most important point of doctrine or biblical interpretation, and I would be unlikely to separate myself from someone who believed that the sons of God were fallen angels. Second, we should acknowledge that there is a certain amount of circumstantial biblical support for the demonic hypothesis — the phrase “sons of God” is used elsewhere in Scripture to describe angels; for example, Job 38:7. It would appear, however, that the concept of the Genesis 6 “sons of God” being fallen angels owes its origins not to Genesis 6, which I argue does not support such a view, but to the apocryphal books of Jubilees and Enoch.

In the Book of Jubilees, we read:

And it came to pass when the children of men began to multiply on the face of the earth and daughters were born unto them, that the angels of God saw them on a certain year of this jubilee, that they were beautiful to look upon; and they took themselves wives of all whom they chose, and they bare unto them sons and they were giants. And lawlessness increased on the earth and all

flesh corrupted its way, alike men and cattle and beasts and birds and everything that walks on the earth — all of them corrupted their ways and their orders, and they began to devour each other, and lawlessness increased on the earth and every imagination of the thoughts of all men (was) thus evil continually.<sup>1</sup>

In this passage, we read the idea that the offspring of this unnatural union between demons and humans were the giants. However, I will show in a moment that the giants were something different.

The book of Enoch says:

And they took wives for themselves and everyone chose for himself one each. And they began to go into them and were promiscuous with them. And they taught them charms and spells, and they showed them the cutting of roots and trees. And they became pregnant and bore large giants. And their height was three thousand cubits.<sup>2</sup>

Facts noted in the Bible are factual. These lines from the book of Enoch cannot be factual. For example, how could there be giants “three thousand cubits” tall? We are surprised by the Bible’s description of Goliath as being “six cubits and a span” (1 Samuel 17:4, about 9 feet, 9 inches, or about three meters), but it is not so large as to be unrealistic. Three thousand cubits is simply way over the top. So we should take the non-biblical interpretations that we receive from these apocryphal books with more than a little pinch of salt.

To return to my interpretation of “sons of God” as being the descendants of Seth, let’s see what other major commentators had to say.

John Calvin (1509–1564) said:

It was, therefore, base ingratitude in the posterity of Seth, to mingle themselves with the children of Cain, and with other profane races; because they voluntarily deprived themselves of the inestimable grace of God. For it was an intolerable profanation, to pervert, and to confound, the order appointed by God. It seems at first sight frivolous, that the sons of God should be so severely condemned, for having chosen for themselves beautiful wives from

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1. Jubilees 5:1, Wellesley Internet Archive, <http://www.archive.org/details/bookofjubileesor-00char>, pdf edition, p. 43, accessed 1/10/2012.
  2. 1 Enoch 7:1–2, Wellesley Internet Archive, <http://www.archive.org/details/AllTheBook-OfEnochenoch1Enoch2Enoch3>, pdf edition, p. 5, accessed 1/10/2012.

the daughters of men. But we must know first, that it is not a light crime to violate a distinction established by the Lord; secondly, that for the worshippers of God to be separated from profane nations, was a sacred appointment which ought reverently to have been observed, in order that a Church of God might exist upon earth; thirdly, that the disease was desperate, seeing that men rejected the remedy divinely prescribed for them.<sup>3</sup>

Calvin went on to comment on the idea that the “sons of God” were angels.

That ancient figment, concerning the intercourse of angels with women, is abundantly refuted by its own absurdity; and it is surprising that learned men should formerly have been fascinated by ravings so gross and prodigious. The opinion also of the Chaldean paraphrase is frigid; namely, that promiscuous marriages between the sons of nobles, and the daughters of plebeians, is condemned. Moses, then, does not distinguish the sons of God from the daughters of men, because they were of dissimilar nature, or of different origin; but because they were the sons of God by adoption, whom he had set apart for himself; while the rest remained in their original condition.<sup>4</sup>

John Gill (1697–1771) had this to say:

Those “sons of God” were not angels either good or bad, as many have thought, since they are incorporeal beings, and cannot be affected with fleshly lusts, or marry and be given in marriage, or generate and be generated; nor the sons of judges, magistrates, and great personages, nor they themselves, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra; but this could be no crime in them, to look upon and take in marriage such persons, though they were the daughters of the meaner sort; and supposing they acted a criminal part in looking at them, and lusting after them, and committing fornication with them, and even in marrying irreligious persons; yet this could only be a partial, not an universal corruption, as is after affirmed, though such examples must

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3. John Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis*, comment on Genesis 6, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom01.xii.i.html>, accessed 1/10/2012.

4. *Ibid.*

indeed have great influence upon the populace; but rather this is to be understood of the posterity of Seth, who from the times of Enos, when they began to be called by the name of the Lord, had the title of the sons of God, in distinction from the children of men; these claimed the privilege of divine adoption, and professed to be born of God, and partakers of his grace, and pretended to worship him according to his will, so far as revealed to them, and to fear and serve and glorify him.<sup>5</sup>

Matthew Henry (1662–1714) said:

Mixed marriages (v. 2): *The sons of God* (that is, the professors of religion, who were called by the name of the Lord, and called upon that name), *married the daughters of men*, that is, those that were profane, and strangers to God and godliness. The posterity of Seth did not keep by themselves, as they ought to have done, both for the preservation of their own purity and in detestation of the apostasy. They intermingled themselves with the excommunicated race of Cain: *They took them wives of all that they chose*. But what was amiss in these marriages? (1.) They chose only by the eye: *They saw that they were fair*, which was all they looked at. (2.) They followed the choice which their own corrupt affections made: they took *all that they chose*, without advice and consideration. But, (3.) That which proved of such bad consequence to them was that they *married strange wives, were unequally yoked with unbelievers*.<sup>6</sup>

John Bunyan (1628–1688) had the same teaching.

By this then, I find, that the doctrine of Noah, was, To declare against a sinful communion, or to command the church, in the name of God, that she still maintain a separation from the cursed children of Cain: As he said to the prophet Jeremiah, If thou separate the precious from the vile, “thou shalt be as my mouth” (15:19). Noah therefore had a hard task, when he preached this doctrine among them: for this above all is hard to be borne, for by this he condemned the world. The first great quarrel therefore that God had with his church, it was for their holding unwarrantable communion with others. The

5. John Gill, *Commentary on the Bible*, EWord Today, <http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/genesis/gill/genesis6.htm>, accessed 1/10/2012.

6. Matthew Henry, unabridged *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/henry/mhc1.Gen.vii.html>, accessed 1/10/2012.

church should always “dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations” (Numbers 23:9). The church is “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Peter 2:9). Therefore the work of the church of God, is not to fall in with any sinful fellowship, or receive into their communion the ungodly world, but to shew forth the praises and virtues of him who hath called them out from among such communicants into his marvellous light.<sup>7</sup>

This summary of four respected commentators from earlier times shows that the prevailing view among biblical scholars was that the “sons of God” were the descendants of Seth, and the “daughters of men” were the descendants of Cain. These commentators were aware of the alternative explanation, but rejected it.

### **Summary and Conclusion on Verses 1 and 2**

In closing our comments on verses 1 and 2, we can also note the following. The daughters of men were beautiful. Some have suggested that their beauty was due to having only a few generations of mutations. But why should such beauty apply only to the descendants of Cain, and not any of the rest of the population? I would suggest that their beauty might be of a more base kind—that these were young ladies who flaunted their sexuality to entrap those who professed to be worshipers of the Lord. In turn, the supposed worshipers of the Lord should have been looking for something else in a wife other than just her physical attractiveness.

### **Exposition: Genesis 6:3–12**

In the first part of our exposition of Genesis 6, we learned about the background to chapter 6, and how wickedness and godlessness was beginning to increase dramatically. We also surveyed the comments from senior classical evangelical commentators on the first two verses of the chapter, and saw that the consensus of the ancients was that the phrase “sons of God” referred to the descendants of Seth, while the phrase “daughters of men” referred to descendants of Cain.

We had also discussed how the descendants of Seth had begun to “call on the Name of the LORD,” as described in Genesis 4:26. Thus, the identity of the “sons of God” as the descendants of Seth is reinforced by the beginning of verse 3.

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7. John Bunyan, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Leicester, England: J6D Publications, Kindle Edition), Locations 3053–3065, edition 2010.

### **Prophecy of the Flood**

It was not unknown in this early history of the world for God's voice to be heard directly. This makes it all the more remarkable that the pre-Flood population was so wicked, if they knew what the voice of the Lord was like.

Of course, it is equally possible that the people did not recognize that it was God who was speaking. Even if they did recognize it, they deliberately ignored Him.

Nevertheless, the fact that God is referred to as the Lord in this verse underlines that He expected to be worshiped, following the pattern of the descendants of Seth in Genesis 4:26. We can surmise that even this worship was not completely wholehearted. It is unlikely, after all, that Noah was the only descendant of Seth. If Noah had brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, and cousins, then these people all perished in the Flood. Most of the "sons of God" would have been worshipers of the Lord in "a form of godliness but denying its power" (2 Timothy 3:5).

It is not possible to say exactly how God's words were transmitted. Nevertheless, I think it is safe to assume that His words in verse 3 were available for the whole population to hear and take note of, or, as in the case of the vast majority, who were thus without excuse, to hear and ignore.

My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh;  
yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years (Genesis 6:3).

God starts by referring to His Spirit. This reminds us that, right from the beginning of the Bible, God was and is Trinity. It was His Spirit who gave energy to the newly created world (Genesis 1:2). And it was the breath of God that made the dust into a living, breathing man, Adam.

Man, in his sinful state, is at war with God. There is no getting around this fact. In our sins, we are people who hate God, who shake our fists in His face. The relationship between God and the unregenerate man is therefore one of strife. Some versions, like the ESV, translate this verse as referring to God not abiding in man forever. God's presence is even with the unregenerate, because without His presence, every man would be as evil as it is possible to be, and would be at complete enmity with God. It is only through the salvation that God has wrought, which is illustrated so aptly for us through the history of the Flood, that peace with God is possible.

God declares that He will not strive with man forever. This does not mean that the sin of the wicked will be overlooked. Nor are these words a

prophecy of a mass turning to God in repentance. Rather, it is the sobering recognition that man's war with God is a hopeless war. Man cannot win. God will have the victory, and His name will be glorified. Either a man's sin will be punished on the Cross of Jesus, the sinner saved and God's name glorified, or the man will die in his sins, be judged, found guilty, and sent to hell for everlasting punishment — and God's name will still be glorified. Man is flesh, so every thought of his heart is wicked and a rebellion against God.

Finally, God tells the people that their days are to be 120 years. Some commentators have suggested that this refers to the age that people on average would now live to. However, this does not seem to tie in with facts. It would be many generations after the Flood before the decaying ages of the population would stabilize, and when they did, they would stabilize at an age less than 120 — that is, 70 years.

Therefore, I think it is more likely that God is giving this announcement exactly 120 years before the coming of the Flood. Therefore, those who were prepared to hear (which amounted to only eight people) had 120 years to prepare.

Why did God make this statement? On one level, we do not really know why God would make such a statement. On a human level, it seems as if God is giving the opportunity for people to repent. God is always merciful to those who will repent. Yet we know, in hindsight, that only eight people were saved from the Flood. Did God know that only eight would be saved? If so, then why would He warn people, and wasn't His warning in vain? But if not, then God is not sovereign — whereas Scripture assures us that He is.

I think that God's statement is, in a sense, reiterating a point that God has always made to us, ever since the first sin. There is always the opportunity for salvation for those who believe. Of course, God had planned everything, and knew beforehand who and how many would be saved. The point is that none but the eight on the ark did repent. So those who perished were without excuse, and had only themselves to blame that they perished in the Flood.

### **What about Giants?**

There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown (Genesis 6:4).

We have discussed who the sons of God and daughters of men were in a previous chapter, so we will not repeat that discussion here. What is more pertinent at this point is what is meant by the giants.

We should note that the giants were not necessarily offspring of the sons of God and daughters of men, though they could have been. We are simply told that there were giants at the time of the sin that involved the sons of God and daughters of men. We should also be careful with our use of the term “giants.” It probably does refer to a preponderance of gigantism, but not necessarily. The Hebrew word is *nephilim*. It is possible that super-tall people are being referred to, but it is also possible that this term is simply referring to gigantism before the Flood.

When I lived in South Wales, my garden quickly became overrun with a pernicious weed called horsetail. These little fern-like plants grew about six inches high and were very difficult to remove from the lawn. If I traveled just three hours west, I would come to the Pembrokeshire coast, where it was common to find fossilized horsetails. However, the fossils were slightly different from the live ones, because they were not six inches tall, but six feet. They are not the only example of fossils bearing a close resemblance to modern organisms that are a fraction of the size. For example, we know about fossil dragonflies with enormous wingspans. Perhaps it is this gigantism that is being referred to by *nephilim* — a gigantism that must have been very common before the Flood, but was not unknown after the Flood.

In Numbers 13, we read about the Israelite spies, who went into the Promised Land to report back on whether the land could be conquered. One of the things that so scared 10 of the 12 spies was that they thought some of the people looked like giants, or *nephilim*. They were clearly concerned (due to lack of faith) with the likely outcome of their performance against these giants in battle, but there was more. Look what they got hold of in Numbers 13:23.

Then they came to the Valley of Eshcol, and there cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes; they carried it between two of them on a pole.

How many clusters of grapes were there? Just one! How did they carry it? Two people had to carry it on a pole. This was a big bunch of grapes, if ever I heard of one! So this was gigantism among plant life, and it occurred after the Flood. This is suggested by the following verse in Genesis 6:

There were giants on the earth in those days, *and also afterward* . . . (Genesis 6:4, emphasis added).

Nevertheless, there must have been something a bit special about the offspring of the unholy union. These children were “the mighty men who were of old, men of renown” (Genesis 6:4). They may possibly include some of the characters of legend who are said to possess heroic or godlike qualities. One can certainly suppose that if such people had greater than average strength or abilities, as well as height, they might well have commanded the loyalty, fealty, and even worship of so-called lesser people.

### **Wickedness Before the Flood**

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Genesis 6:5).

The phrase “then the LORD saw” does not imply that He was not able to see humanity’s sins beforehand, nor that He was impotent to do anything. The verse simply indicates that at this point God turned His attention to this particular problem. “The wickedness of man was great.” The Hebrew word for “great” here is *rab*, which indicates an event of major importance. This suggests that mankind’s wickedness in the time a hundred years or so before the Flood was a wickedness of enormous significance. We know that people are wicked, but the context suggests that the general wickedness before the Flood was greatly out of the ordinary.

The question we need to ask at this juncture is this: was the special wickedness that was occurring before the Flood much worse than the wickedness that we have today? In order to answer that question, we need to answer this question: why was the wickedness before the Flood so especially heinous to God?

This verse says “every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” The problem had to do with the motivation of each individual person in the pre-Flood world. These were people who should have known better. Because of their longevity, in spite of the year being A.M. 1545 (Anno Mundi, the “year of the world,” years since creation), there would not have been many generations since the creation. Adam, for example, died in A.M. 930, but Noah’s grandfather, Methusaleh, was born in A.M. 687. It is therefore possible that Methusaleh, as a direct descendant in the promised line, might have conversed with Adam, and surely Methusaleh conversed with

Noah, so there was only one generation removed between the creation and the Flood. We have also stated that there were people around — notably descendants of Seth — who were worshipping the Lord, at least in name, if not in reality. Therefore, these people knew what God had done for them, and somehow had access to His voice, since He was able to address the people in verse 3, so there was no excuse for their rebellion and lawlessness. Let us reiterate — they had the clear knowledge of where they had come from, and whose air it was they were breathing, and they had the word of the Lord, and still every intent of their heart was evil.

How does that compare with today? Romans 1:18–23 tells us this:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man — and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

Let's repeat a key phrase of that passage, just to make sure it sinks in. "What may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them."

"What may be known of God. . . ." What sort of things do you think it is possible to know about God? Is it possible for people to know that He is the Creator? Is it possible to know that He exists and is almighty? Is it possible to know that He is angry and wrathful against sin and the sinners, and that He is also merciful, because He sent His Son to die for sinners? There are some who say that there are people who don't know this, because they weren't brought up that way, and they have never heard. The Bible, in Romans 1, is clearly saying that all these things can be known about God, and therefore they are known, and manifest within people, because "God has shown them." This is a remarkable statement. Noted evolutionist Richard Dawkins knows about God and knows that He is the Almighty Creator, because God has shown him that. God's invisible attributes are no mystery — they are

“clearly seen.” Just because something is invisible does not make it unknown. So everyone today actually knows about God, but they do not acknowledge Him. Does this sound like the people before the Flood? But wait, the people before the Flood heard the voice of God. Nevertheless, several of them refused to recognize Him. We have seen that in the godless reactions of Lamech, the great-grandson of Cain (not the father of Noah). Today, however, we have something even better. We have the complete written works of God, bound together in a book called the Bible! Whenever we don't know something that God taught, we can look it up. In today's Internet age there are wonderful tools, some freely available on the Internet, for us to search through God's Word and find what we need. So, like the pre-Flood people, today's population knows everything that they need to know about God, and they have His words readily available, yet still their every intent is wicked. Do you not believe that last point? Jeremiah said, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9). The passage does not tell us that the heart was desperately wicked before the Flood but now! It says of our status now that the heart is desperately wicked.

The status of people now is therefore no different than it was before the Flood. The wickedness around today is not less wicked than it was before the Flood. Time and again, the Bible has compared the judgment of the Flood to the judgment to come. Jesus did so in Matthew 24.

But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be (Matthew 24:37–39).

Peter made the comparison in 2 Peter 3, reminding us that when scoffers scoff at the idea of a coming judgment, we should remember that God once destroyed the world in a judgment of water, and will destroy it again in a judgment of fire. It therefore follows that the warnings that God gave about a genuine judgment to come before the Flood should give us cause to heed His warnings about a genuine judgment to come, when He returns.

### **Does God Repent?**

And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart (Genesis 6:6)

This is a very sobering verse, and can be difficult to make complete sense of. In the KJV, it reads:

And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

Does this imply that God has changed His mind over something? Could God really repent of an action? In fact, the KJV translators were very careful in their translation. The verse does not say, “God repented that He had made man on the earth.” It says that “it repented the Lord.” This is a different kind of statement. It is the equivalent of what the NKJV says, when it reports that “the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth.”

The fact that this verse cannot be made to imply that God repents and changes his mind is found in 1 Samuel 15:29.

And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent (KJV).

This verse is clearly reminding us that God does not change His mind over what He has done. So Genesis 6:6 must mean something else. What the verse is doing is giving us an insight into the emotions felt by God about the situation. God is grieved to the point of pain. God is wounded that those on whom He has poured such love and mercy reject His love and mercy and have chosen wrath for themselves. John Bunyan says:

Repentance is in us a change of the mind; but in God, a change of his dispensations; for otherwise he repenteth not, neither can he; because it standeth not with the perfection of his nature: In him “is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). Wherefore, it is man, not God, that turns. When men therefore reject the mercy and ways of God, they cast themselves under his wrath and displeasure; which because it is executed according to the nature of his justice, and the severity of his law, they miss of the mercy promised before (Numbers 23:19). Which that we may know, those shall one day feel that shall continue in final impenitency. Therefore, God speaking to their capacity, he tells them, he hath repented of doing them good. “The Lord repented that he had made Saul king” (1 Samuel 15:35). And yet this repentance was only a change of the dispensation, which Saul by his wickedness had put himself

under; otherwise the strength, the eternity of Israel, “will not lie nor repent” (v. 29).<sup>8</sup>

That is why God could also say, in verse 7, that He had made the beasts and the birds — not that the beasts and the birds had displeased Him, because that is not within their capabilities, but because their presence on the earth sustained the human race, which was now an enemy of God. Romans 5:10 reminds us:

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

### **Saved by Grace**

A final reason for these negative comments about the human race, and the whole world, that God had made, is to mark the important contrast with Genesis 6:8.

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

This is such an important verse, that I am going to devote an entire chapter to it at the end of the book. For the moment, let us make a few pertinent comments.

Noah was not saved because he was a man of perfect behavior. Some of his behavior after the Flood demonstrated that. Noah was not even saved because of perfect faith — though it is clear that he was a man of faith. Noah was saved because he found grace in the eyes of the Lord. It has been rightly said that mercy is not receiving what we deserve, whereas grace is receiving what we don't deserve! Noah was saved from the watery judgment of God because of grace. This is precisely the means of salvation today. As the Apostle Paul said:

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast (Ephesians 2:8–9).

It is a beautiful thought that Noah was saved “in the eyes of the Lord.” We know that we are not righteous. God is not fooled. He knows that we are not righteous. But, following our repentance, we are righteous “in the eyes of the Lord.” This is God's decision, to see us as righteous before Him.

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8. John Bunyan (ed. Paul Taylor, 2010), *Genesis: A Commentary* (Leicester, J6D Publications), Kindle Locations 3165–3174.

### Summary and Conclusion

Genesis 6:9–12 forms a neat summary of the situation as it stood before the Flood. Genesis 9 begins with this statement:

This is the genealogy of Noah.

This statement probably concludes a section of the Book of Genesis that was compiled by Noah. There are a number of such sections in Genesis. For example, Adam's section probably concludes with the opening statement of Genesis 5. So, in my opinion, Genesis 6:9a is the last statement of the section written by Noah, while Genesis 6:9b is the first statement of the section jointly written by Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Genesis 10:1a). I have written about this division of Genesis into *toledoths* before,<sup>9</sup> accepting the comments of Henry Morris.<sup>10</sup> Along with the late Dr. Morris, I need to emphasize that this acceptance of the idea of separately written *toledoths* (which is the word translated as *generations*) in no way undermines the concept of Moses being the author of Genesis. Henry Morris says:

It is suggested . . . [in his book *The Genesis Record*] that Moses compiled and edited earlier written records that had been handed down from father to son via the line of the patriarchs listed in Genesis. . . . [Moses] then selected those that were relevant to his own purpose (as guided by the Holy Spirit), added his own explanatory editorial comments and transitional sections, and finally compiled them into the form now known as the Book of Genesis.<sup>11</sup>

If Genesis 6:9a neatly concludes the preceding section, then Genesis 6:9b is a worthy introduction to the new section, in which Noah's sons give a moving testimony to their father.

Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.

It is a lovely testimony to someone to describe them as “just.” How many sons can describe their fathers as “just”? Perhaps a more sobering way of putting it is this — if my sons were writing my biography, would they describe me as a “just” man?

9. Paul F. Taylor, *The Six Days of Genesis* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2007), p. 83–84.

10. Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976), p. 26–30, and 152.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 26–27.

It is also noteworthy that Noah is described as “perfect in his generations.” He was a good man for his times. We know that no one except Christ is absolutely perfect. We also know that perfection is not the means of salvation. But we have also just seen that Noah was not saved by his perfect behavior, but by the grace of God. The fact that he was a good man in evil times was part of his act of worship to God. His good works, therefore, are seen in their proper context, and he was a genuinely good man. Indeed, the Bible later tells us that Noah was one of the three most righteous men in history, along with Daniel and Job (Ezekiel 14:14 and 20). The reason Noah was so righteous was because he took his faith seriously. We read that he “walked with God” — which is, again, one of the most telling tributes that could be paid.

Verses 11 and 12 neatly sum up the problem of the times. Sin is corruption. The word “corrupt” is used three times in these two verses. Corruption implies decay. Sin is being described as something disgusting, like a smelly abscess on the tooth, or a festering, infected wound. There is a tendency today to excuse sin, and minimize the sinfulness of sin. It needs to be seen as something that corrupts, and that spreads, like a nasty disease.

When the Scripture says that “the earth also was corrupt before God,” two things are being implied. The population of the earth is being referred to euphemistically as “the earth.” However, we can also surmise that the state of the planet itself was affected by sin. The fact that the earth was filled with violence probably refers primarily to the violence of human against human. However, it probably also includes the fact that some animals, though created perfect and vegetarian, were now monsters and carnivores, eating meat and killing in seemingly senseless violence in order to do so. The pre-Flood world was a terrible place. The sobering thought is that today’s world is at least equally terrible, corrupt, and violent.