

## Lesson 6 - NOAH FOUND GRACE

## *Genesis 6:1-10*

(*Gen. 6:1-5*) - From *Genesis 3* up to this point, we find that man has not improved spiritually but has grown worse. God saw nothing but evil (*cf. Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Rom. 3:9-18*). We need to understand that this includes all people without exception, from what men judge to be the worst to what men judge to be the best (*Psalm 39:5; Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 3:23*). “*The sons of God*” began to marry “*the daughters of men*.” Some claim the “*sons of God*” were angels intermarrying humans, but this is not the case. The previous chapter shows where God separated the line of Seth from the line of Cain. God separated the sons of Seth from the sons of Cain to use them as His instruments through whom He would send Christ into the world. It was forbidden for them to corrupt that line by intermarrying with the descendants of Cain. Here we see where many of them disobeyed by marrying into the ungodly line of Cain. This showed they had no fear of God and no value for God’s promise. As the sinful history of man continues, we see that God sovereignly preserved His appointed line in spite of their unbelief.

*Genesis 6:3* shows us that the time of God’s longsuffering with that generation had reached its conclusion, and in 120 years, God would exercise His just wrath against sinful men. We will see that during the 120 years, the Gospel was preached and the warning was given. This does not mean that God tried to save people, but they would not let Him. It is simply a testimony to the longsuffering of God and the sinfulness of men - “*What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction*” (*Rom. 9:22*).

The word “*giants*” in *verse 4* comes from a word that signifies “*to fall*.” It describes “violent, oppressive, fallen men.” These were powerful men who were feared and admired by people. People began to hold them up as heroes. Throughout the history of man, it has always been the physically strong, not the spiritually strong, who gain the public’s respect, admiration, and loyalty. *Verse 5* shows how God views sin, not only in act, but also in thought - “*every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*.” We see early on how sin and depravity are inward matters of the heart and how that simply cleaning the outside will not cure the disease (*Jer. 17:9-10; Matt. 23:25*). This is why human religion cannot cure of the problem of sin. Only God can change the heart.

(*Gen. 6:6-7*) - This speaks of God repenting and grieving. We know that repentance and grief refer to a change of mind and emotion. Elsewhere, the Scripture tells us that God will not and cannot change or repent (*Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Mal. 3:6*). We also know that change cannot be attributed to a perfect God. Change must be for the better or the worse, and God is perfect in His being, His thoughts and actions. So, how do we interpret such verses? Do we deny what the Scriptures say elsewhere about God? Do we admit to a contradiction in the Bible? Do we dishonor God by giving Him human qualities? Obviously, this is an expression that attributes human qualities to God only for our understanding. In our view, there are times that God seems to alter the course of His actions in providence, but we always find out later that what appeared to be change to us was always God’s eternal, sovereign purpose. God alone decrees the end from the beginning. The point here is not that God changed. It is simply a way of describing in human terms God’s hatred and justice against sin so that we can have some idea, even though inadequate, of how terrible sin is in God’s eyes. We see here how God is holy and just. He must punish sin, yet we also know that God is gracious and merciful. He had already promised to redeem mankind through the promised seed, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the salvation of His elect whom He chose in Christ before the foundation of the world. So, God’s purpose was to preserve the line of Seth, and here we see this line preserved by His power and grace in the salvation of a sinner named Noah.

**(Gen. 6:8)** - “BUT NOAH FOUND GRACE IN THE EYES OF THE LORD” - Even though God’s grace has already been revealed, this is the first time the word “grace” is used in the Bible. It means God’s free, unmerited favor and blessing in salvation by Christ. Salvation has always been by grace, not of works. What does this tell us about Noah? It tells us that, by nature, Noah was no different than the rest of fallen, sinful, spiritually dead humanity. Notice, it does not say, “God found grace in the eyes of Noah.” It says, “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” There was nothing in Noah, or done by Noah, to earn or deserve God’s blessings. Salvation by grace begins with God, not with man. Grace is not the result of something man does or wills to do. It is a sovereign act of, and gift from, God to unworthy sinners. Noah was a sinner whom God sovereignly chose to save by His grace based on the merits of Christ. Noah was no more worthy or deserving of God’s grace than any other sinner in his generation. The name “Noah” means comfort or rest. So, in the midst of pending judgment against all mankind for sin, there was hope, comfort, and rest in the grace of God.

**(Gen. 6:9)** - “*Noah was a just man*” - No man is justified in God’s sight by the deeds of the law (*Rom. 3:20*). So how was Noah a just man? He was justified (forgiven of all his sins and declared righteous in God’s sight) by God’s grace based on the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ Whom Noah knew as the promised Messiah (Savior). This refers to Noah’s standing before God in Christ and in the grace of God which was given to Noah “*in Christ Jesus before the world began*” (*2 Tim. 1:9*). Noah’s sins had already been imputed to Christ, and Christ’s righteousness had already been imputed to Noah. Christ would come in time and redeem Noah (as well as all of God’s elect) by His death on the cross and be raised again because of Noah’s (as well as all of God’s elect) justification.

Noah was “*perfect in his generation*” - Does this mean that Noah was not a sinner and had no sin? If this were true, Noah would not have needed grace. The word translated “*perfect*” is elsewhere translated “*without blemish*” 44 times. It also means “*sincere and upright*.” This refers to Noah’s completeness in Christ (*Col. 2:9-10*). Noah was not sinlessly perfect in his conduct. But Noah kept himself unblemished and unaffected by the sinfulness around him in that, by God’s grace and power, he believed God and obeyed God. Again, by God’s grace and power, Noah continued to look to Christ as the Author and Finisher of his faith (*Heb. 11:7; 12:1-2*). God did not impute sin to Noah because of Noah’s Surety and Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ (*Rom. 4:6-8; 8:33-34*).

INoah “*walked with God*” - Just like Enoch before him, Noah was reconciled to God by the merits of Christ. He had been given the gifts of faith and repentance to believe God, love God’s Word, and enjoy fellowship with God in Christ. Noah believed and obeyed God’s Word as proven by the fact that, based on God’s Word, he “*moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith*” (*Heb. 11:7*). Noah acted with reverent respect and regard for the glory of God. He believed God’s way of salvation, both physically in the ark, and spiritually in Christ Who is every saved sinner’s Ark of salvation and refuge from the wrath of God against sin. He inherited (not earned) the righteousness which is by faith,” i.e. the imputed righteousness of Christ which all believer’s receive by God-given faith (*Rom. 10:4-10*). All who refuse Christ are condemned with the world (*John 3:36*). Also, for the entire 120 years that Noah was building the ark, he was also preaching the Gospel of God’s grace wherein the righteousness of God is revealed (*2 Pet. 2:5; cf. Rom. 1:16-17*). How do we know that the righteousness Noah preached was the righteousness of Christ? It is because Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and God’s grace always reigns “*through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord*” (*Rom. 5:21*).