

Genesis 6:5-8 "Noah Saved from Wrath" (p.4)
Ajax Alliance Church. Sunday March 3rd, 2024.

Genesis 6:5-8. [5] The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually [6] And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. [7] So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." [8] But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. (ESV)

For anyone who has eyes to see, there is no doubt that the Reformed doctrine of total or radical depravity is found throughout Scripture. But of the many passages that teach it, hardly any are as clear or comprehensive as **Genesis 6:5**: "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" This verse had a profound effect on **Martin Luther** and was used by him with devastating force in his battles against Erasmus of Rotterdam. **Erasmus** had argued on behalf of free will, maintaining that, although men and women are sinners, there is nevertheless a certain amount of good within them through which they can turn from sin and believe on Christ unto salvation. **Luther maintained** that of themselves people can do nothing but sin and that, if any do turn to Christ, it is only because God was already there beforehand enabling and moving them to do it. **Some years after this, in writing on Genesis, Luther referred to the earlier exchange and reiterated his position: "Without the Holy Spirit and without grace man can do nothing but sin and so goes on endlessly from sin to sin."** But "this knowledge of our sin is the beginning of our salvation" in that "we completely despair of ourselves and give to God alone the glory for our righteousness." This despair should be the effect of our study also. **Instead** of congratulating ourselves on how good we are or how good we are becoming, we should turn from ourselves and lean on Christ alone for salvation. (Boice, J. M. (1998). *Genesis: an expositional commentary* (pp. 312–313). Baker Books.)

The basic question must be in salvation, what are we saved from? The answer from scripture is that those who repent of sin and trust in God alone for eternal life are saved from the wrath of God. **Genesis 6** is a picture of salvation from wrath. **With the pre-Flood world**, the world from Adam to Noah, that world perished, that world was judged, that world was destroyed, that world was flooded. This history is recorded in the Bible, interestingly enough, there are histories of floods in the writings of many, many ancient cultures. There is also evidence for the worldwide flood in the geology of the earth, in the stratification of the earth and in the fossils that are found. **The Grand Canyon** is one great evidence of the universal flood that covered the earth. But **sinful humanity** conveniently ignores what the Bible says and conveniently ignores what the evidence indicates to deceive themselves into thinking that there never will be judgment because there never has been judgment. **The Flood** then is very important because **the Flood signals to all of humanity that everything doesn't go along from creation the same, it only went along for about 1600 years and then God literally drowned the billions of people that populated the earth and they were catapulted into a godless eternity by His judgment. What God did in the past is essentially what He's going to do in the future. The only difference is the medium won't be water, it will be fire. Now because we want to understand what will bring the judgment in the future, it's important for us to know what brought the judgment in the past.** So, let's go back to **Genesis chapter 6.**

Why did God **destroy** the world then? Understanding this will give us some insight into why His wrath will come to destroy it in the future. Wrath comes because of four things: 1) Great Wickedness (Genesis 6:5), which results in: 2) Great Sorrow (Genesis 6:6), which brings: 3) Great Collateral Damage (Genesis 6:7) yet it also promises: 4) Great Redemption (Genesis 6:8).

God's Wrath comes because of:

1) Great Wickedness (Genesis 6:5)

Genesis 6:5. [5] The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (ESV)

God is omniscient. **Nothing** escapes His knowledge. Everything that exists He knows fully and completely. When it says the Lord saw, it has the idea of the fact that He was aware of, fully aware of, completely aware of at all times. It **isn't** that as He was moving along one day, or as His eyes were scanning the planet He found something that He had **not** prior seen. That is **not** the idea. It is that everything was exposed to His omniscience. Hebrews 4:13 says: Hebrews 4:13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (ESV) There is **nothing** that escapes His gaze, or His knowledge. This is **not** the seeing of sudden perception. This is the seeing of constant awareness. There **never** was a moment, there **never** was a split second that He was **not fully, completely aware of everything**. Verse 5 records the consequence of vv. 1-4: the LORD "saw" and condemned the unprecedented **corruption** of the human family. What God saw was both the extensiveness of sin and the intensiveness of sin. Geographically, the problem is an infested earth. Note that in Genesis 6:5-13, the earth (*hā 'āreṣ*) is mentioned eight times. Thus, the description has all the appearances of a universal condition rather than a local one (Hamilton, V. P. (1990). *The Book of Genesis. Chapters 1-17*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (273). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.).

The wording in vv. 2 and 5 contrasts this **deplorable** scene with the pristine setting of creation. God "saw" his creation and evaluated his handiwork as "very good" (*tôb mē'ôd*, 1:31), but here the sons of God have taken the "good" ("beautiful") and defiled it. There is also an intentional play between man's "great (*rabbâ*) wickedness" (v. 5) and the great human "increase in number" (*lārôb*; v. 2). It serves as a sad commentary on the divine command at creation to "increase in number" (*rābû*, 1:28). The blessing of reproduction is realized in v. 2 by the grace of God, but humanity has distorted God's plan and reaped along with their progeny a harvest of sin. A cautionary tale from this narrative is the deadly deception of having "safety in numbers". We are **not** at all the more safe for having many on our side. Logically, it repents the "fallacy or popular opinion" to justify a proposition. Morally, people tend to take their cues on right and wrong from common practice. The next time someone says that "well everyone's like that" in justifying their actions, remember and recall to that person the state of the earth before the flood (Simeon, C. (1832-63). *Horae Homileticae Vol. 1: Genesis to Leviticus* (74). London.).

How **great** was this sin? The wickedness includes also what we saw in verses 1 to 4. The people at that time were so wicked as to have engaged themselves in perverse unions with demons. Demons were coming down and possessing, dwelling in men, and welcomed as well by women who embraced the demons, we learned last time, probably because they believed Satan's lies, that if you follow him you will **not** die and you will become like God. **Rather** than wanting to connect with God, he wants to connect with

demons, that's how far he has sunk. Verse 5 therefore accentuates the decadence of the period: "how great humanity's wickedness," "every intention or inclination," and "only evil continually/all the time." Verse 5 spells out the doctrine of human depravity with frightening bluntness, but similar views are expressed by psalmists, prophets, Jesus and Paul (Ps. 51:3–6; Je. 17:9–10; Mk. 7:15; Rom. 1:18–3:20) (Carson, D. A. (1994). *New Bible commentary : 21st century edition* (4th ed.) (Ge 6:1–8). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press.).

Please turn to Mark 7 (p.791)

This is **not** to say that everyone is equally as vicious, every once is as equally murderous, every once is equally as proud, every once is equally as angry, every once is as equally violent, every once is as equally as vengeful as to every other once. But it is to say that every human being to some degree only relative within the framework of their depravity, every human being is at heart a sinner, unable to form, or shape, or conceive, or design anything in himself that is not wicked. Even common philanthropy is conceived as a way to pacify guilt or to demonstrate that one is better than others for the purposes of pride. As we had previously seen that the Holy "Sprit shall not abide in man forever" (Gen. 6:3) the true nature of humanity, when deprived of the grace of the Spirit, is clearly exhibited (Calvin, J., & King, J. (2010). *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis* (Ge 6:5). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.).

Mark 7 describes the nature of this defilement:

Mark 7:14-23. [14] And he called the people to him again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand: [15] There is **nothing outside a person** that by going into him can defile him, but the **things that come out of a person are what defile him.**" [17] And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. [18] And he said to them, "Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, [19] since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?" (Thus, he declared all foods clean.) [20] And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. [21] For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, [22] coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. [23] All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person." (ESV) (cf. James 1:14)

The explanation of this depravity in Genesis 6:5, is wickedness. Wickedness is an inner compulsion that dominates their thoughts and is not just overt action; they plot evil as a matter of lifestyle. "Intention" or "Inclination" (yēšer) is probably is a play on 2:7, where God "formed" (yāšar) the first man (also animals, 2:19). The good which God created has been transformed by mankind's evil inclination, over which God greatly anguishes (6:6; cf. Jer 18:11). Such "evil" (ra') plans are the continuing aftermath of humanity's first partaking of "good (tôb) and evil (ra')" (2:17; 3:5–6, 22). The LORD looked at the people of the earth, and what was evil was not just their behavior, but behind it was their thought. Although created good in Genesis 1:31, the situation now wasn't that they were really good people. As some think that they were well-intentioned, just kind of fumbling and stumbling and being messed up by their environment, that's the modern definition of humanity that people are basically good and noble, just crippled by the people who are around and the debilitating circumstances. And if we can get people enough money and enough education and take off the pressure from those people who want to hold him to strict moral laws and free him up a bit, he'll become noble all on his own. But that's not the Bible definition of humanity. The Bible definition of humanity is that what's wrong with people is not really their behavior, that's only a symptom. What's wrong with people is their

nature. **Their depravity** was **not** a temporary state. There were **no** relentings, **no** repentances, **no** hesitations. **Lust** was their medium, **violence** their method. This was total, habitual depravity (Hughes, R. K. (2004). *Genesis: beginning and blessing* (p. 128). Crossway Books.).

- **The key to controlling our actions** or training the heart of a child is to **deal with the thought life**. This is **no** accidental thing. **We must first admit that we need God** to transform our thought lives. If we think that **everything is fine**, there is **no** room for God. **Secondly, we must confess our sin**. Unless the sin comes out, there is **no** room for holiness. **Third, we must study** the word of God. There needs to be something in there for the Holy Spirit to work with. **Finally, we must renew our minds and meditate** on the word. This is a process of **conforming our lives to the divine standard** and continuing to check to ensure that we are focusing on the right things, and heading in the right direction.

Human motivations are here attributed to the “**heart**” since **in Hebrew anthropology** the **heart** is the center of a human’s cognitive processes (e.g., Gen 31:20; Ps 33:11; 1 Sam 10:26). **Judgment of the human heart** is the exclusive domain of the Lord (Jer 9:9–10; cf. 1 Cor 4:3–5). The “**evil**” is used to describe not only sin but its **consequences** (e.g., 31:29). Whereas **human society** deems these violent *gibbōrīm* as “men of renown,” **God’s response** is **repulsion** at their wickedness. **So monstrous becomes the sin of Noah’s generation** that the gravest of measures is the only proper response from heaven. The recurring phrase “**in**” or “**on the earth**” (vv. 5–7) anticipates the necessary purging of the now-polluted land by the waters of the flood (v. 13), and it also is **reminiscent of the ground stained by Abel’s blood**, which resulted in Cain’s life as a vagabond “**on the earth**” (4:12). But there would be **no** mercy for the murdering *gibbōrīm* as there had been for evil Cain. This disaster affects the individual **heart** of course, but not just the individual. **The problem goes beyond any individual, driving to the center of the community’s conscious living.** (Roop, E. F. (1987). *Genesis* (p. 62). Herald Press.)

Illustration: **Imagine a thirsty person**, who is in a doctor’s office, **picking up a glass** and going over to a cooler containing sterilized water and filling the glass in order to take a drink. **The glass begins to foam a bit, so he asks the doctor** if something has been in the glass. “Yes,” the doctor says, “**diphtheria solution!**” Our thirsty patient **puts the glass back down in a hurry**. Why? Wasn’t the water pure? Yes, **the water was pure**, but the glass was **dirty**. **Everything that came in contact with the glass was contaminated** (Boice, J. M. (1998). *Genesis: An expositional commentary* (315). Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books.).

- When we say that men and women are “**totally depraved**” we do **not** mean to say that they never do anything that we would call good or that they never have aspirations in the direction of real good. **We mean rather** that **apart from salvation in Christ**, even their best is always spoiled by their essentially sinful nature.

Wrath results in:

2) **Great Sorrow** (Genesis 6:6)

Genesis 6:6. [6] And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. (ESV)

In **verse six**, **our narrator owes his insight into God’s great sorrow** to the disclosures lamented by the Lord himself (cf. v. 7). Whereas antediluvian **humanity plots evil** in their “heart,” **God’s response to their imaginations is a wounded “heart” filled with pain**. In this latter case “**heart**” conveys the emotional response of God. That the LORD

was “**sorry/grieved**” (*yinnāhem*), is a much better understanding than the older translation that God “**repented of His action**” in the KJV which has troubled many expositors since **elsewhere Scripture says God does not “repent”** (Num 23:19; 1 Sam 15:29; Ps 110:4) because **He does not sin. God’s policy towards humanity will now be different not because God has changed but because humanity has changed** (Butler, J. G. (2008). *Analytical Bible Expositor: Genesis* (51). Clinton, IA: LBC Publications.).

There is **no contradiction** between this verse and passages teaching the changelessness (**immutability**) of God (Mal. 3:6; James 1:17) and that God does **not change His mind** (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Ps. 33:11; Is. 46:10). Remembering that **this description is anthropopathic** (**God is depicted here in terms of the human experience of knowledge and emotion**), we must also recognize that **the immutable and sovereign God deals appropriately with changes in human behavior**. When they sin or repent of sin, **He “changes His mind”** with regard to the blessing or punishment appropriate to the situation (Ex. 32:12, 14; 1 Sam. 15:11; 2 Sam. 24:16; Jer. 18:11; Amos 7:3, 6)—**all in accordance with His sovereign and eternal purposes**. Because **God is changeless in His being**, and **eternally loyal to His covenant promises**, we can have firm confidence in Him who is “**the same yesterday, today, and forever**” (**Heb. 13:8**) (Whitlock, L. G., Sproul, R. C., Waltke, B. K., & Silva, M. (1995). *Reformation study Bible, the : Bringing the light of the Reformation to Scripture : New King James Version* (Ge 6:6). Nashville: T. Nelson.).

How can a **God who never makes mistakes** be **sorry** over something he did? **When we say that we are sorry** about something, what we usually mean is: “**I wish it never happened.**” But there are times when we may do what is best and yet be sorrowful about doing it—such as when we discipline our children or confront a brother or sister in sin. Most of us are sorry that we sometimes have to do these things. But, at the same time, we know that they are the right things to do. **My emotions** may be sorry for having to discipline my children. But **my mind and will know** it is the right thing to do. So I do it sorrowfully, but with **no regrets** (Strassner, K. (2009). *Opening up Genesis* (44). Leominster: Day One Publications.). **Genesis 6:6–7** is describing **the emotional anguish of God**; our verse does **not** present an abstract statement about God’s decision making. This would be altogether out of place for the intention of the passage, which depicts **God as wronged by the presumptuous sin of humanity**. This is **not** a comment on the nature of God’s sovereignty or promises. **God’s response of grief** over the making of humanity, however, is **not** remorse in the sense of sorrow over a mistaken creation; our verse shows that **God’s pain has its source in the perversion of human sin**. It was a sad thing to have to judge the world the way it would have to be judged. And **part of that sorrow** is not just over the condition of man, but listen to this, it is **over the fact that God must do what He must do**. There is **no ambivalence**. There is **no indecision**.

There is **no alternative**. **God’s holiness necessitated judgment** (Eph. 4:30). Cf. Ex. 32:14; 1 Sam. 15:11; Jer. 26:3 (MacArthur, J. J. (1997). *The MacArthur Study Bible* (electronic ed.) (Ge 6:6). Nashville: Word Pub.).

The making of humanity is **no error**; it is what “**man**” has made himself. **By recurring reference to mankind (*‘ādām*) in 6:5–7**, the passage focuses on the source of His grief. **God is grieving** because this sinful “**man**” is **not** the pristine mankind whom he has made to bear His image. But His is **not** regret over **destroying humanity; paradoxically**, so foul has become mankind that it is the **necessary step to salvage him**. **Describing the nature of God and judgement Ezekiel says: Ezekiel 33:11**. [11] Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have **no pleasure in the death of the wicked**, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel? (ESV). **God is no robot**. We know him as a

personal, living God, **not** a static principle, who **while having** transcendent purposes to be sure **also engages intimately** with his creation. **Our God is** incomparably affected by, even **pained by**, the sinner's rebellion. **Acknowledging the passibility (emotions) of God** does **not** diminish the immutability of His promissory purposes (G. R. Lewis, "God, Attributes of" and "Impassibility of God," in *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 453–54, 553–54.)

Rather, **his feelings and actions** toward men, such as **judgment or forgiveness**, are always **inherently consistent** with His essential person and **just and gracious resolve** (Jas 1:17). **When we consider God as a feeling person** who loves, is angry, and **grieves**, the aim of the figure is to **point to a mitigated correspondence** between human experience and God. This does **not** say that the emotions of humans and God are equivalent in their entirety either in intensity or in quality, for **God does not** grieve in the same way as men and women. **Nor** is He angry in the same fashion as sinful mortals. **People often act** out of sinful, irrational, or uncontrolled emotion, but **God's emotion** is always consistent with His righteous character and eternal purposes (cp. **2 Th 2:13**). A close reading of the passage shows that **God's disappointment** was **not** with human creation **but with** human sin. God is **not** indifferent to sin's effects, but **His grief** is **not** a feeling of helplessness. **Coupled with His pained heart** is **the just recompense of His anger** (cp. Ps 78:40–41; Is 63:10). **In Christ** we see God so moved by grief and love that he chooses to take upon himself the very suffering of our sins. **God is not** a dispassionate accountant overseeing the books of human endeavor; rather **He makes a personal decision** out of sorrowful loss to judge Noah's wicked generation. **God looks on our world, what does He see? Depravity** everywhere...everywhere. **What does He feel? Sadness...sadness. Were God a man** and when He was a man He wept. He finds **no** pleasure in the death of the wicked...never has and never will. But He has **no** choice. **Imagine a world of billions of people** and **no** one would acknowledge Him, **no** one would turn from sin and embrace the righteous God. As we learned last time in **verse 3, God graciously gave 120 years before the Flood came.** And for that 120 years, **Noah preached**, that he was a preacher of righteousness and he preached how a sinner could become righteous by the same way any sinner in any age becomes righteous, the confession of sin and crying out to God for forgiveness and mercy. And **for 120 years** that dear preacher preached. And for 120 years, **nobody** heard, **only his wife, three sons, their three wives, eight people believed.** **For 120 years everyone else rejected** and rejected and rejected and **God had to do what He had to do.** (Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (16). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.)

Poem: (5850 He Knows): **The great sorrow that God experienced over sin** was expressed **this ways by an anonymous author:** **"He knows the bitter, weary way; He knows the endless striving day by day; He knows how hard the fight has been; The clouds that come our lives between, The wounds** the world hath never seen, He knows. **He knows!** O thought so full of bliss! For though our joys on earth we miss, **We still can bear it, feeling this, HE KNOWS!"** (Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*. Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.)

Wrath brings:

3) Great Collateral Damage (Genesis 6:7)

Genesis 6:7. [7] So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." (ESV)

God's second speech in verse seven ("so the LORD said") in this narrative epilogue **makes explicit** what is only intimated in the former utterance (v. 3). **God's new policy toward human life** is the radical **undoing** of his creative acts in **Genesis 1**. Here "**blot/wipe out**" is a sound play with the earlier "grieved" (*nāham*; 6:6). The word bears the sense of "**removal**". **At the conclusion of creation** God declared all is "very good" (1:31), **now** the created order is distorted by **violence** beyond repair. **The punishment extends to humanity's environment as well**—just as God had **curled** the "ground" for Adam's sin (3:17–19), **the living creatures will suffer** for human sin. **With the flood**, God literally **blot/wiped out** the entire civilization of the world **except** for those in the ark. It was **the most devastating judgment** ever upon this earth and **will only be succeeded by the final judgment yet to come** in which **the earth will be burned up** (II Peter 3:10). The Lord perceives that **the whole "earth"** ("ground," *ādāmā*), is **polluted** by the **wickedness** of humanity, which is an extension of Cain's sin (4:10–12; cf. 3:17–19; 5:29). (Butler, J. G. (2008). *Analytical Bible Expositor: Genesis* (52). Clinton, IA: LBC Publications.)

- **The greatest lie of sin** is that it is just a private, personal choice. **Marriages, families, extended families, congregations, other friends, and workplaces** all suffer because of individual's choices. Not only must we **realize** how God feels about our sin, but we should **continually have the other relationships in consideration** with our choices.

Please turn to Romans 8 (p.888)

Genesis 6:7 shows the trickle-down effect of the sin, descending from "**man**" to "**animals**" to "**creeping things/crawling creatures**" and finally "**birds**." **The Omission of "fish,"** unlike 1:28, is due transparently to their innate properties to survive the imminent waters. **In this judgement, we must understand that God ... never acts arbitrarily;** he does **not** run his world amorally...**God is moved to anger** by humanity's deliberate **violations** of the code by which God wills His world to live. **The only innocuous bystanders** are the animals (Hamilton, V. P. (1990). *The Book of Genesis. Chapters 1-17*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (273). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.).

He will yet deliver a remnant of the earthly band (8:18–19) and **will finally relieve creation's plight**. This is **the great promise and longing** that the Apostle Paul explains in **Romans 8:**

Romans 8:19-21. [19] For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. [20] For the creation was **subjected to futility**, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, **in hope** [21] that **the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption** and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (ESV)

- **Besides** those in our immediate circle that **suffer** because of **our sin**, are the **many others**, perhaps even future generations. **The effects of sin** will always be wider, and more severe than we imagine.

The closing words of **Genesis 6:7** hear the divine Judge **reiterate those of v. 6**, "**For I am sorry/grieved that I have made them**" (v. 7b). **It underscores God's sorrow** at what his special creation (*imago Dei*) has become. His irrevocable action against humanity is **the just deserts** for so debased a people. **God's grief at having made humanity** stems from having provided everything for the good of humanity only to **see them reject** His good gifts and **drift** further and further away from his purposes for them. **The divine pain at the sight of such grievous rebellion** by the creatures he made is an important **biblical theme** which leads ultimately to the cross (Kissling, P. J. (2004–). *Genesis* (p. 270). College Press Pub. Co.).

Quote: Sin always has an effect greater than our intentions. An unknown author accurately summarized that "Sin will take you further than you want to go, Keep you longer than you want to stay, and, Cost you more than you want to pay".

Finally, Wrath also promises:

4) Great Redemption (Genesis 6:8)

Genesis 6:8. [8] But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. (ESV)

This divine anguish finds immediate relief, however, when God "eyes" Noah. "But" distinguishes Noah from those who caught God's former attention—because of their corruption (v. 5). The term "**favor**" (*hēn*), also translated "**grace**,". God makes it clear that **Noah** was a man who believed in God as Creator, Sovereign, and the only Savior from sin. He found **favor/grace** for himself, because **he humbled himself and sought it** (cf. 4:26) (MacArthur, J. J. (1997). *The MacArthur Study Bible* (electronic ed.) (Ge 6:8). Nashville: Word Pub.)

Please turn to Ezekiel 14 (p.656)

Faith is being a herald of righteousness, even in a time oblivious to the coming wrath of God. For decades everyone through Noah was foolish, until it started to Rain. Hebrews 11 summarizes his faith: Hebrews 11:7. [7] By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. (ESV)

In the context of the coming judgement upon Jerusalem, in Ezekiel 14, he cites Noah as an example of a righteous man, but his righteousness alone will not redeem a people who will not head the message of repentance and faith. Ezekiel proclaims:

Ezekiel 14:12–20. ¹² And the word of the LORD came to me: ¹³ "Son of man, when a land sins against me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it and break its supply of bread and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast, ¹⁴ even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, declares the Lord GOD. ¹⁵ "If I cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they ravage it, and it be made desolate, so that no one may pass through because of the beasts, ¹⁶ even if these three men were in it, as I live, declares the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither sons nor daughters. They alone would be delivered, but the land would be desolate. ¹⁷ "Or if I bring a sword upon that land and say, Let a sword pass through the land, and I cut off from it man and beast, ¹⁸ though these three men were in it, as I live, declares the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they alone would be delivered. ¹⁹ "Or if I send a pestilence into that land and pour out my wrath upon it with blood, to cut off from it man and beast, ²⁰ even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, declares the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither son nor daughter. They would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness. (ESV)

- **Ezekiel recognized that it was Noah's character that distinguished him from his peers (Ezek 14:14, 20). The contrast in v. 8 is how Noah looked in God's "eyes" versus how God "saw" his contemporaries (6:5). This infers that Noah's conduct is related in some way to God's bestowal of gracious favor. This does not mean that Noah's character automatically secures divine favor, for God is under no obligation to bestow his favor. It presupposes a relationship. Noah did not find favour in the eyes of men; they hated and persecuted him, because both by his life and preaching he condemned the world: but he found grace in**

the eyes of the Lord, and this made him more truly honourable than the men of renown. Let this be our chief desire, let us labour that we may (please God). When the rest of the world was wicked, Noah kept his integrity. God's good-will towards Noah produced this good work in him (Henry, M., & Scott, T. (1997). *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary* (Ge 6:8). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems.)

The reason Noah “found favor” because of his faith in God, was seen in his “righteous” conduct (v. 9). Believers do **not** need to fear the wrath of God. The very promise of salvation is being saved from the wrath of God (**Rom. 5**). But being a true believer will result in actions in accordance with that belief. The account of Noah's finding favor with God is a beautiful foreshadowing of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel says that humanity is still as sinful as it ever was—“there is **none** righteous, not even one” (**Rom. 3:10**). The gospel says that, one day, God is going to destroy all flesh again—this time by fire (2 Peter 3:10). But the gospel also says that, just as he did in the days of Noah, God has provided us with a way of escape—an ark—in the person of Jesus Christ. In Jesus—who lived a sinless life, died in our place, and rose on the third day—we, like Noah, may find “favor in the eyes of the LORD.” While Noah preached to his contemporaries (2 Peter 2:5), they had opportunity to climb aboard the ark and be saved. But they **missed** the opportunity of grace. Let us be sure not to imitate them. Let us rather imitate Noah in trusting God and doing “according to all that God had commanded him” (6:22). Let us climb aboard the security and safety of Jesus Christ, our ark! (Strassner, K. (2009). *Opening up Genesis* (47–48). Leominster: Day One Publications.)

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