

Scripture Reading

Genesis 6:11–14 ESV

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch.

Genesis 7:11–24 ESV

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, they and every beast, according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, according to its kind, and every bird,

according to its kind, every winged creature. They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in. The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

The Artist's right over his art

An artist has the right to what with their art as they wish. Some of you may have heard about the restoration of Elias Garcias Martinez's painting Ecce Homo, where an 81-year

old amateur attempted to restore the painting to its original glory. This is what happened.

Now if Elias were still alive to see it, no one would complain if Elias decided to destroy the botched restoration and remake it himself. An artist has the right to do with his art what he sees fit, especially if someone else comes along and corrupts it.

But this is the same principle we come to today. Over the past few weeks, we have heard how God is the Creator of the universe who created humanity in His Image and likeness. How a deceiver led humanity into willful disobedience and sin entered the world. And we have seen how sin corrupts, like graffiti or unskilled brushstrokes upon a masterpiece. Humanity, God's masterpiece in creation devolves into chaos, violence, and corruption.

The wicked departure of man

Genesis 6:1–8 **ESV**

When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years." The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the

daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown. 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. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. 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." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

Last week we concluded with the genealogies of Cain and Seth. Cain's genealogy departs from God and focuses on self-sufficiency and the glorification of man. While Seth's genealogy proclaims the name of YHWH and worships God. Cain, the man, has sons and daughters who abandon the God of creation to worship the creature. Seth, born in the likeness and image of his father, the son of God, has a lineage of faithfulness to the Creator, marked by many who walk with God. Within this immediate context, we come to these verses: the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive, and they took as their wives any they chose."

At this point, it seems most likely that the sons of God are the children of Seth who remained faithful to YHWH, while the daughters of man refer to the children of Cain who had rejected YHWH. The result is that just as Eve saw with her eyes the beauty of the tree, took and ate of the forbidden

fruit, the sons of God see with their eyes the beauty of the pagan daughters of Cain and they take them for their wives.

Now, throughout the Torah, God commands Israel to remain holy and not to marry outside of the twelve tribes in order to remain covenantally faithful. The purpose of those laws was not to say that these other people are inferior, but that they do not worship God and will lead you astray into idolatry. And we see that here, the children of Seth are led astray, outside of the lineage from Seth to Noah, into idolatry and evil.

And God has suffered this rebellion and corruption long enough, and proclaims that in 120 years, I will bring this corruption to an end. What is clear is that the moral decline of humanity is what evokes God's wrath here.

Which brings us to the Nephilim.

Two readings of Nephilim

The Mighty Men - Angelic Watchers with the daughters of man

I feel the need to address a difficulty in this text regarding the identities of the Nephilim or if you use the KJV, the giants. To be fair, outside of this context, every time the

phrase bene ha'elohim is used, it refers to heavenly hosts or angels. So within a Canaanite context, this would refer to spiritual beings, lesser gods, or angels. And in Judaism after the return from exile, this view becomes very popular with the writing of 1 Enoch sometime between 300 and 100 BC in which the Second Temple Jewish understanding of angels and demons is developed.

In this view, the sons of God, being spiritual beings, took on corporeal form and created hybrid creatures with the daughters of man, a race of giants known as the Nephilim. While this is the majority view of the first two centuries in the Church, I believe it to be wrong for a few reasons, but first let's look at the view I take.

The Fallen Ones - Sethite Descendants

Nephilim seems to come from the verb naphal meaning to fall. As I have already laid out, the sons of God are the righteous lineage of Seth who intermarried with the unfaithful and unrighteous lineage of Cain to fall from their relationship with God into wickedness and corruption.

As one NT scholar explains,

Genesis 1–11:26 (1) Sons of God and Daughters of Men (6:1–4)

Old Testament history illustrates all too well how interreligious unions spelled disaster for Israel. This Sethite

incident of intermarriage with the ungodly leads to the deterioration of the godly family; as a forewarning it alerts the holy seed of Israel not to neglect God's prohibition

What this understanding highlights is that sin is deserving of God's wrath. Humanity gave itself over to idolatry and abandoned God. It wasn't that angels entered the picture and victimized human women creating a hybrid species breaking down the boundaries and order of God's creation. It is that sin corrupted and expanded, and the wickedness of humanity reached a point that God would no longer remain silent. Humanity was not the victim of God's wrath and the coming flood. Humanity in their cosmic rebellion against the Creator and sustainer of the universe warranted their own destruction.

The Nephilim are warriors of great renown and brutality, and they may even have been giants, but they are still men. Wicked, cruel, vicious men. But we must remain humble when reading this passage as each interpretation carries its own issues. But whether this be supernatural giants or children of Seth pursuing unrighteous spouses, the point is evident.

And God sees how far humanity has fallen. God looks on the corruption of His masterpiece, and He says, it needs to be remade, but God does not forget his promised seed.

Which brings us to Noah.

Noah as a herald of righteousness

Genesis 6:11–14 **ESV**

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch.

The lineage of Seth reflects a righteous line from Seth to Noah, and Peter later calls Noah a "herald of righteousness" (2 Pe 2:5).

God is fed up with his creation. Returning to Genesis 6:3 "Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not abide among man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years."" What does that mean? It means that the Spirit of God has endured the wickedness of man long enough. Man, being flesh reflects his mortality but being of the flesh is contrasted to being of the spirit. In some sense, God is saying mankind has been corrupted by the world, and I will give them 120 years to repent.

So, enters Noah. Noah walked with God and was blameless

in his generation (Gen 6:9). And God gives Noah a command, build a boat of gopher wood because I am going to destroy the earth with a flood.

But in the midst of these instructions is the mercy of God revealed.

Genesis 6:18 ESV

But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you.

God makes a covenant with Noah. Build this ark and you and your family will live.

So sometime between God's declaration of his wrath and his execution of his wrath, God calls Noah to come into covenant relationship with him. And Jewish history, which is referenced by Peter in 2 Peter teaches that Noah became a herald of righteousness calling his neighbors to repent before the coming floods. As Noah built the ark according to God's instructions, he proclaimed the wrath of God in the hope that some may see their unrighteousness and repent.

And we see that in response to God's instructions,

Genesis 6:22 ESV

Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

The Coming Flood and Destruction

So, Noah builds the ark, he organizes the animals, he stocks up on food for his family and the animals, and he waits on the Lord. Then the day comes.

Genesis 7:1–5 ESV

Then the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, and seven pairs of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.” And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him.

It begins to rain. It’ll rain for 40 days and 40 nights. Noah shepherds his wife, his three sons, and their wives onto the ark. He leads the animals onto the ark and organizes them in their proper place, and then one of the most important lines of the story:

Genesis 7:16 ESV

And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in.

God seals up the ark, and the rains turn into a flood. The water from heaven is unleashed upon the earth, and we must remember the importance of water within the creation account.

Genesis 1:6 ESV

And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.”

The waters that God had separated in Creation, God brings back together. God uncreates, pouring his wrath out upon the earth in the form of water, flooding the earth.

Genesis 7:23–24 ESV

He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

The significance of the Ark

Here, I want to point out what the Ark points to. The Ark is a foreshadow of something far greater that is to come. The

Ark is a foreshadow of the Church, the body of Christ!
Because it is into Christ whom we are received by faith and in baptism.

Peter tells us, 1 Pe 3:21

1 Peter 3:21 ESV

Baptism, which corresponds to [the flood of Noah], now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

It is not baptism that saves, but that which baptism signifies which saves, for we are baptized into Christ Jesus and his death (Romans 6:3-4), the body of Christ is the ark in which the Holy Spirit seals us against the raging waters of judgment.

For we have been received into the Church, which is the body of Christ by faith, and we look forward to His return. The promised seed whom Adam, Eve, and Noah looked forward to, we have received, but we continue to look forward to His return. Yet many will mock us as we remain within the ark of Christ, saying

2 Peter 3:4–7 ESV

They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.” For they deliberately

overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

But we have no need to fear the coming judgment, no need to fear the waters of wrath or the coming fire, because like Noah we are sealed within the Ark of Christ by faith in who He is, awaiting the new creation. Just as Noah and his family awaited a new creation.

A New Creation

Genesis 8:1 **ESV**

But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided.

God remembered Noah, and made a wind, or literally, a Spirit (His Spirit) blow over the earth. Hear the echo back to Genesis 1.

Genesis 1:2 **ESV**

And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

God's Spirit who hovered over the waters to calm the raging seas of chaos in creation once again calms the raging seas and separates the water, separates the sky above and the land below, and separates the land from the sea.

And after the land dries God tells Noah to lead his family and all the living creatures on the ark back out onto the dry land.

God has created all things new and wiped away the corruption of old, and like with Adam, God makes his covenant with Noah.

The Covenant with Noah

Genesis 8:20–22 **ESV**

Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease."

God has preserved Noah and his family, and the promised seed is still to come. But human nature is still corrupted by

sin and in need of a Savior.

God has not abandoned his plan of redemption but instructs Noah to be fruitful and multiply, reiterated his command to Adam. And God marks his covenant with the sign of his bow in the sky. A covenant sign to point forward to the mercy of God, to the promise that He will not destroy creation with a flood, but it also serves as a reminder of what He has done in the flood.

The wrath, mercy, and promise of God

Noah and his family survive because Noah found favor with God.

The author of Hebrews highlights Noah's faith as a reverent fear.

Hebrews 11:7 **ESV**

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.

Noah responded to the grace and favor of God with faith and

obedience. God showed mercy through Noah, and Noah is remembered as a herald of righteousness, reminding us that we follow a merciful God who desires for us to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to all.

And for those who fear that God found pleasure in his judgment, hear the words of Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 18:32 ESV

For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live.”

God does not desire that any reject him, but the contrary,

1 Timothy 2:4 ESV

who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Yet the reality is that many are called and few are chosen.

So What?

So where does this leave us? For those who believe in the resurrection power of Jesus Christ, live in the reality of your baptism. Examine yourself through the light of God’s Word to confess your sins to God and to one another, love God and love neighbor, and remember that you have been bought with a price and are no longer your own. You have

been sealed by the Holy Spirit as Noah and his family were sealed into the ark.

For those who have never been baptized into Christ, get baptized and be received into the body of Christ through communion with His body. Whether it be this church or another, find a place to grow and be known by other Christians.

And for those who do not know or profess Jesus Christ to be the Son of God who bore the sins of the world, died and rose again. Ask him to make himself known to you. For Jesus said John 10:37-39

John 10:37–38 ESV

If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.”

John 10:30 ESV

I and the Father are one.”

Look to Jesus and see for yourself! And let’s talk some more.

But do not live in fear of judgment or wrath, for Christ came to bear the punishment of sin. So live in the freedom of Jesus Christ, enter the ark!