

What Was Meant to Be Given

Genesis 6:1–9 · North Summit Church · *In the Beginning* · Oct 26, 2026 · @Eris

We fall by taking for ourselves what only God can give. We live by receiving what he gives. In a world of men who seized, Noah received grace, and that road is still open to us.

The passage

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.

These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.

Genesis 6:1–9 (ESV)

Where we are in the story

The series *In the Beginning* walks through Genesis 1–11, the deep grammar of the whole Bible. The chapters just before this passage follow two family trees out of Eden. One line builds a name for itself: Cain names a city after his son. The other line calls on the name of the LORD (Genesis 4:26). Both lines built things. The difference was whom they worshiped.

Genesis 5 ends with Lamech naming his son Noah, a name that sounds like *rest*, given in hope (Genesis 5:29). Genesis 6 shows the world Noah was born into. By now one line has nearly swallowed the other. The name-builders have filled the earth, and the line that calls on the Name is down to one man.

Underneath the whole passage runs one question. Everything we take, we take to make sure something of us outlasts us. The only question is whose name we are planting in the future. We know our time is short, so we grasp at whatever might outlast us. The question is whose name: ours, or Christ's, the name above every name (Philippians 2:9). Jesus said the Scriptures "bear witness about me" (John 5:39), so the aim in a hard passage like this is to see Christ more clearly, and in him the Father (John 14:9).

The passage moves in four steps: the men of renown (vv. 1–4), only evil continually (v. 5), the God who grieves and judges (vv. 6–7), and two words, *but Noah* (vv. 8–9).

1. Men of Renown (vv. 1–4)

Saw, judged good, took

Verse 2 tells us what the sons of God did: "The sons of God *saw* that the daughters of man were attractive. And they *took*." We have heard that sequence before. "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food... she took" (Genesis 3:6). In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, the echo is even plainer: the same words for *saw*, *good* and *took* appear in both places. Genesis 6 is the fall happening again, on a grand scale.

Notice what they took. In Genesis 2:22, God *brought* the woman to the man. Marriage was given. Genesis 2:21 adds a telling detail: "the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man." He received his wife while he slept; he did nothing to seize her. Proverbs says it this way: "He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD" (Proverbs 18:22). He finds; he receives. In Genesis 6, they "took as their wives any they chose." What God means to give, they seized.

Who are the sons of God?

The Church has read this phrase in two ways. Many of the earliest teachers saw fallen angels behind it. Later teachers such as John Chrysostom and Augustine assumed that meant angels physically fathering children, which they believed Jesus ruled out, so they read it as the godly line of Seth falling away.

Both readings take Scripture seriously. The first hears Peter and Jude, who speak of angels who sinned and left their proper dwelling (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). The second hears Jesus, who says that in the resurrection we will not marry but will be "like angels in heaven" (Matthew 22:30). Faithful Christians have landed in both places, and some look for a way to honor both, seeing fallen powers at work through men.

Whichever way you land, the text tells you exactly what happened: they saw, they judged good, and they took. And Genesis puts the weight on man: "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever" (v. 3). Whoever started it, people carried it, and people answer for it.

A limit, with mercy in it (v. 3)

"My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years." The word for *spirit* here is the same word Genesis uses for the "breath of life" in every living thing (Genesis 6:17). This is not about the Holy Spirit leaving believers. God is saying that the life he lends will not go on forever in people who live like this.

Some read the 120 years as a new limit on how long people would live; others read it as a countdown to the flood, a window to repent. The New Testament helps here: "God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared" (1 Peter 3:20). Either way, God sets a limit on how far man can stretch himself into the future, and even the limit has mercy in it. It is the same mercy as in Eden. After the fall, God sent man out of the garden "lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever" (Genesis 3:22). A fallen life without end would be no gift. The limit keeps evil from becoming immortal.

Three questions for a hard passage

When a passage is this hard, three questions keep our interpretive, even speculative, instincts accountable to what we actually know:

1. What does the text actually say?
2. What did the first readers already know?
3. What is the text correcting?

What does the text say? They saw, and they took. Verse 4 names who was on the earth in those days: the Nephilim. No one is completely sure what the Hebrew word means; most connect it to the word for "fall," the fallen ones or the ones who fall on others. The old Greek translation called them "giants," and to Greek ears giants were not just big. They were the earth-born rebels who went to war against heaven. The word appears only once more, when Israel's spies return from Canaan: "we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers" (Numbers 13:33).

Then verse 4 says, "These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown." In Hebrew, *renown* is simply "a name," as in being famous. In Genesis 4, one line called on the name of the LORD (Genesis 4:26). These are the other kind: men with a name of their own. At Babel they will say it out loud: "Let us make a name for ourselves" (Genesis 11:4). So the passage keeps asking one question: whose name are you living for?

What did the first readers already know? They knew who had a name in their world. Genesis tells this story in four verses and never stops to explain who the sons of God or the Nephilim were. It doesn't have to. Nobody needs to be told who Hercules is; thousands of years later, we still know his name.

Israel's neighbors told stories about men who were part god. To the east was Mesopotamia, the land Abraham came from; Gilgamesh, they said, was two-thirds god. To the southwest was Egypt, the land Israel came out of; Queen Hatshepsut had it carved on her temple walls that the god Amun fathered her through the king. As an Albanian, I grew up on such stories too: our hero Muji got his strength because the zanas, the mountain spirits, nursed him with their milk. Every people has its heroes made great by the spirits, and the greatest were those born of gods and women.

Whatever you make of how those stories worked, they all claim the same thing: a son of the gods, born of a woman.

What is Genesis correcting? Genesis takes those proud stories and says: these were not heroes. This was corruption. The men the nations sang about were the men who filled the earth with evil. Israel kept telling the story that way, and so did the apostles. Peter writes that God "did not spare angels when they sinned," and in the same breath that he "preserved Noah" (2 Peter 2:4–5). Jude speaks of "the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling" (Jude 6). Behind the heroes of the nations stood rebels.

Genesis is guarding something here: there is only one Son of God born of a woman. There has always been competition for that name. Before the true Son came, the enemy flooded the world with counterfeits. So when someone says Jesus is just one more son-of-a-god story, they have it backwards. The counterfeits came first because the real thing was coming. On this point, readers who hold either view of the sons of God can agree.

2. Only Evil Continually (v. 5)

Evil has no life of its own

How does this corruption work? The Church Fathers offer help. St. Basil put it simply: evil is the privation of good. It isn't a thing God made. It is the absence of good where good should be, the way darkness is the absence of light.

Evil has no life of its own. It can't create; it can only take. It lives like a virus: it can't reproduce by itself, so it gets inside something living, twists that life out of its true shape, and when the host is spent, it looks for another. Jesus describes unclean spirits the same way, wandering through dry places, seeking rest, until they find a house to enter (Matthew 12:43–44). That is Genesis 6. The powers cannot make life, so they took it.

The giant is not first a body

Evil does not create life; it corrupts it. When verse 4 describes these men, it never mentions size. It says "mighty men... men of renown." *Mighty* is a word about power and reputation. Genesis uses it again for Nimrod (Genesis 10:8), and Scripture later uses it for David's warriors (2 Samuel 23:8). The nations told these stories as tales of superheroes. Genesis doesn't. The giant in Genesis is not first a body. It is a way of being human grown grotesque: power and fame out of all proportion. I grew up under communism in Albania. Statues of the dictator Enver Hoxha stood over the country; the one in Tirana's main square was 30 feet tall, and we were expected to venerate him. That is a giant in the sense Genesis means: a man grown grotesque.

Recall the curse on the serpent: "Dust you shall eat all the days of your life" (Genesis 3:14). And what are we? "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). The evil one has nothing of his own to feed on. His only food is us.

Anyone who has loved someone through addiction, to alcohol or pills, has watched this up close. It promises life, then it takes, and takes, and lives by destroying the very life it promised. It creates nothing. It hollows a person out and reaches for the next one. That is not just a picture of evil; in many ways *it is* how evil works. But what evil hollows out, grace can fill. That is where this passage is headed.

Every, only, continually

"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" (v. 5). Listen to how total that is. *Every* intention. *Only* evil. *Continually*. Genesis doesn't stop at what people did. It goes underneath, to what they wanted and imagined: the thoughts of the heart.

We tend to think of evil as something out there: a crime, a headline. Genesis says it starts in here. The violence on the street began as an intention in a heart.

How evil spreads

Whatever happened with those sons of God, the evil didn't stay with them. It spread through people. That is how the powers usually work. Their main weapon isn't force; it is temptation. Even Christ was tempted this way: "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me" (Matthew 4:9). Suggest. Plant a thought. Then it takes a human being to pick that thought up and make it real.

Evil embeds itself in the future through what we give it room to do.

That is sobering, because of who we were made to be. God made us in his image and likeness (Genesis 1:26), and being his image isn't only something we *have*; it is something we *do*. We were made to bring God's works into the world, to fill the earth with life and put it in order, as God did (Genesis 1:28). We were made to be the way God's goodness gets into creation.

By Genesis 6, humanity had become the way something else got in. The same hands made to tend the garden were carrying the evil one's work into the world. John puts it this way: "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). Those works come into the world through people, which is why the remedy has to come for people too.

What came of it was humanity robbed of what it means to be human, hollowed out by evil as rust eats steel (rust has no existence of its own; there is none until there is steel for it to eat), until every intention of the heart was only evil continually. That is what grieved God.

3. The God Who Grieves and Judges (vv. 6–7)

A Father's heart

"And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart" (v. 6). This is not a God caught off guard. Scripture is clear that God knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). This is the language of a Father's heart. God is not indifferent to what we do with his world. He made us for glory, and what he sees grieves him.

Not a tantrum

The first readers of Genesis knew another version of this story. Almost every ancient culture remembered a great flood. In one Babylonian telling, the *Epic of Atrahasis*, the gods decide to wipe out humanity because people have become too many and too noisy, and the gods can't sleep. Then one god, behind the others' backs, secretly warns his favorite human to build a boat.

The difference is stark. In their story the gods are the problem: petty, irritable, fighting each other. In Genesis the problem is human wickedness, and there is one God. The God who judges is the same God who saves. God's judgment is not a tantrum. It is a just God answering a world that has been ruined.

What judgment is

In Scripture, justice is everything in its right place, working the way God made it to work. Injustice is when that order is broken. Judgment is God putting things back in order.

That is why Israel could long for it. Isaiah says, "The LORD is our judge... he will save us" (Isaiah 33:22). When he judges, "they shall beat their swords into plowshares" (Isaiah 2:4). Israel wasn't asking for another flood. They were asking God to set the world right.

Blot out

Then God says, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land" (v. 7). The Hebrew word means to wipe something clean, the way you wipe a dish (2 Kings 21:13). Listen to the wordplay: man, *adam*, is wiped from the face of the ground, *adamah*. The one God formed from the ground is wiped off it. The God who made us is undoing what he made. That is how serious this is.

The same word is the one Scripture uses for names: "You have made the wicked perish; you have blotted out their name forever and ever" (Psalm 9:5). These famous men wanted their name to outlast them. Genesis never even tells us what they were called.

The New Testament picks up that word, *blot out*, and turns it around. Peter says, "Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19). In Christ, God still wipes something away. Not the sinner. The sin.

Text	What is blotted out
Genesis 6:7	"man whom I have created"
Psalm 9:5	"their name forever and ever"
Acts 3:19	"your sins"

We were made to be the crown of creation, and we became its blight. Sin has an impact point and a blast zone. When we fall, the whole creation groans with us (Romans 8:22). That is the world God looked at. The name-builders had filled it. Evil had filled every room. God grieved, and God would judge.

4. But Noah (vv. 8–9)

Two words

"But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD" (v. 8). The Greek translation says it simply: Noah found *charis*. Grace. It is the first time the word for grace (Hebrew *chen*) appears in the Bible. Everything in this passage turns on that sentence. The earth is full, the hearts are evil, God is grieved, judgment is coming. *But Noah*.

Whose eyes decide

Notice where that favor comes from: the eyes of the LORD. Genesis has been teaching us to watch who is doing the seeing.

Verse	Who sees	What follows
Genesis 1:31	God	"behold, it was very good"
Genesis 3:6	the woman	she took
Genesis 6:2	the sons of God	they took
Genesis 6:5	the LORD	the wickedness of man
Genesis 6:8	the LORD	Noah found favor in his eyes

Genesis doesn't tell us why Noah found favor. It tells us whose eyes decide. John Chrysostom, a pastor in the fourth century, said Noah cared about one thing: "to be praised by that eye that never sleeps or rests." Everyone else lived for each other's eyes. Noah lived before God's.

A bookmark

Verse 9 begins, "These are the generations of Noah." That phrase appears about ten times in Genesis, and each time it works like a bookmark: a new section begins. The Hebrew word means "what came from" someone, their children and their story. So the old world closes at verse 8, and a new story opens with Noah. The famous men are gone, nameless. The man who received? His generations go on.

Walking with God

"Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God" (v. 9). Enoch "walked with God" (Genesis 5:24), the way God walked in the garden (Genesis 3:8). Genesis says that of only one other man before the flood: Noah. And Enoch was Noah's great-grandfather.

Noah didn't come from nowhere. He stood in a line of people who knew they were dust and called on the Name. That is God's faithfulness, generation after generation, the grace that teaches us to walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8). In the garden, God set the table: "You may surely eat of every tree" (Genesis 2:16). God gives, and we respond. God sets the table, and we taste.

God does his best work through ordinary, faithful people nobody writes books about. Noah wasn't famous; the famous ones were the men of renown. Noah was simply the man who did the good he knew, in a world that had stopped.

Blameless in his generation

"Blameless *in his generation*" uses a different word from verse 9's "generations." It means the people of his time. Noah's righteousness is measured against the world around him.

Paul uses almost the same picture for us:

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure... that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." (Philippians 2:12–15)

God works in you; you work it out. Grace first, then a life that answers it, just like Noah.

The one who would not seize

A few verses earlier, Paul shows where this road leads. Christ Jesus, "though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped" (Philippians 2:6). He didn't take. He took a towel and washed his disciples' feet (John 13:4–5), went to the cross, and gave his body for us. The bread of life cannot be seized; he gives himself (John 6:35). "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name" (Philippians 2:9).

The men of renown seized, and they were blotted out. The true Son would not seize, and God gave him the Name. That word *bestowed* is a grace word, from the same family as the *charis* Noah found.

God has looked across the whole earth and found one man in his generation. What God does with him is the next part of the story.

Conclusion: Be Filled

An empty room

If evil has no life of its own, it doesn't need you to do something terrible. It only needs an empty room. James puts it in everyday terms: "whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin" (James 4:17). Noah found grace, and in a world where evil filled every room, he did the good he knew. That is the calling: not only to resist the bad, but to fill your life with the good, so there is no room left for evil to move in. So work it out where God has placed you (Philippians 2:12): as a father or mother, as a son or daughter, in the work you are paid for. Passivity leaves a room empty.

There is no neutral position. Either you assign your will to the situation, or another will is assigned to it. Jesus told of a spirit that came back to a house and found it "empty, swept, and put in order" (Matthew 12:44). Nothing bad was in it; nothing was in it at all, and that is exactly what the spirit was looking for. That is why Paul doesn't only say "don't get drunk." He says, "be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). An empty house doesn't stay empty.

The good news

In one way, evil isn't like a virus at all. You can't wish a virus away. But evil is only an absence, and an absence is undone when it is filled. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5). Every time you do the good you know to do, you are doing in a small way what God does when he judges: you are putting something back in order. "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

The pattern, inverted

Genesis has been teaching a pattern. In Genesis 1, God makes, God sees that it is good, and God names. He gave us a share in that: Adam named the animals (Genesis 2:19). Fallen, we run it backwards. We see what is good in our own eyes, we take it, and we make a name for ourselves.

	First	Then	Then
God	makes	sees it is good	names
We, fallen	see what is good in our own eyes	take	make a name for ourselves

That builds Babel: "a tower with its top in the heavens... let us make a name for ourselves" (Genesis 11:4). But see rightly, and you receive. Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. Right after Babel, God says to Abram, "I will make your name great" (Genesis 12:2). The Bible ends with a city that isn't built up from the earth; it comes "down out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21:2). And Jesus promises, "I will write on him the name of my God" (Revelation 3:12).

Three questions to carry

- **Whose name is on it?** Look at what you are building, your work, your home, your reputation, and ask whether it is a city named after yourself.
- **Where are the empty rooms?** The places in your life where good is being left undone. That is where evil moves in.

- **What good do you know to do?** Not the good you wish you knew. The good you already know. Do that.

The road Noah walked is still open. You don't have to be famous or impressive. Receive the grace God offers, and walk with him in it. What only God can give is sonship and glory, and he gives it through his Son, "in bringing many sons to glory" (Hebrews 2:10).

We fall by taking for ourselves what only God can give. We live by receiving what he gives.

Every time we come to the Lord's table, we hear Jesus say, "Take, eat" (Matthew 26:26). In the garden, the woman took and ate what wasn't given. At his table, we take and eat what he gives. "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!" (Psalm 34:8)

"Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." (Jude 24–25)

Small group discussion questions

1. **The men of renown (Genesis 6:1–4).** The sons of God saw, judged good, and took, and the "men of renown" came of it. The Church has read "sons of God" in more than one way, but every reading agrees on what happened. Where do you see that pattern of seeing, wanting, and taking in your own life?
2. **Only evil continually (Genesis 6:5).** Every intention of the heart was only evil continually. If evil is the absence of good, it only needs an empty room. What "empty rooms" in your week leave you most vulnerable?
3. **But Noah (Genesis 6:8–9).** Noah found grace and did the good he knew in a world that had stopped. What is one good thing you know to do this week that you've been leaving undone (James 4:17)?

For further study

4. Read Genesis 3:6 and 6:2 side by side. What words repeat? What does Genesis 2:22 and Proverbs 18:22 add about how a gift is meant to be received?
5. Read Isaiah 33:22 and 2:4. Why could Israel *long* for God's judgment? How does that change the way you read Genesis 6:6–7?
6. Read Philippians 2:5–15. Where do you see the contrast between seizing and receiving? What does it mean to "shine as lights" in your own generation?

Research notes and sources

These notes support the reading above. Scripture is quoted from the ESV; Septuagint (LXX) text is from the Blue Letter Bible.

Hebrew and Greek

- **Saw, good, took (Genesis 3:6; 6:2).** LXX 3:6: καὶ εἶδεν ἡ γυνὴ ὅτι καλὸν τὸ ξύλον εἰς βρώσιν... καὶ λαβοῦσα. LXX 6:2: ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ τὰς θυγατέρας τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὅτι καλαὶ εἰσιν ἔλαβον. Same verbs and adjective, different forms. Some LXX manuscripts read ἄγγελοι ("angels") for υἱοὶ at 6:2.
- **"He who finds a wife" (Proverbs 18:22).** ESV "obtains favor from the LORD"; CEV "she is a gift from the LORD"; NET "receives a pleasurable gift."
- **"My Spirit" (6:3).** Hebrew *ruach*, the same word as the "breath of life" in every living thing (6:17).
- **Nephilim (6:4).** Meaning uncertain; most link it to *naphal*, "fall." Elsewhere only Numbers 13:33. The LXX renders it γίγαντες, "giants," and uses the same word for the "mighty men" in the same verse.
- **Giants to Greek ears.** In Greek myth the *Gigantes* were "earth-born" (*gēgeneis*), born of Earth (Hesiod, *Theogony*, from line 176). Their defining story is the Gigantomachy, a war against the Olympian gods. Early Greek art shows them man-sized; great size and snake legs appear only from about the 4th century BC. The LXX also calls Nimrod a γίγας "before the Lord" (Genesis 10:8–9). Peter's "cast them into hell" (2 Peter 2:4) is *tartarōsas*, "sent to Tartarus."
- **"Men of renown" (6:4).** Hebrew *anshei ha-shem*, literally "men of the name"; LXX οἱ ἄνθρωποι οἱ ὀνομαστοί, "the named men." (In later Jewish usage *ha-Shem*, "the Name," also refers to God, which is why this study says "men of renown.")
- **"Mighty men" (6:4).** Hebrew *gibborim*; used of Nimrod (Genesis 10:8) and David's warriors (2 Samuel 23:8). A word about power and reputation, not size.
- **"Blot out" (6:7).** Hebrew *machah*, "wipe clean," as a dish (2 Kings 21:13); also Genesis 7:4, 7:23 and Psalm 9:5. LXX 6:7 ἀπαλείψω; LXX 7:4 and 7:23 use *exaleiphō*, the verb of Acts 3:19 (εἰς τὸ ἐξαλειφθῆναι ὑμῶν τὰς ἁμαρτίας). This is a different word from "forgiveness" or "remission" of sins in Acts 2:38 (*aphesis*, release).
- **"Found favor" (6:8).** Hebrew *chen*, grace or favor. Genesis 6:8 is the first time the word appears in the Bible (Blue Letter Bible concordance, H2580). LXX: Νῶε δὲ εὗρεν χάριν ἐναντίον κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ.
- **"Generations" (6:9).** Two different words. "These are the generations (*toledot*) of Noah" is the heading formula that opens about ten sections of Genesis (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; 36:9; 37:2), meaning "what came from" someone. "Blameless in his generation" (*dor*) means the people of his time.
- **"Bestowed" (Philippians 2:9).** Greek *echarisato*, from the same root as *charis*, grace.

Church Fathers

- **Evil as privation.** St. Basil the Great, homily *That God Is Not the Cause of Evil* (PG 31, 329–354): evil is the deprivation (*sterēsis*) of good.

- **The two readings of "sons of God."** Many early writers read fallen angels (compare 1 Enoch 6–11; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). John Chrysostom (*Homilies on Genesis* 22) and Augustine (*City of God* XV.23) read the line of Seth, partly on the strength of Matthew 22:30. The first Christian Sethite proposal is Julius Africanus, *Chronography* (early 3rd century), who also acknowledged the angelic reading.
- **Counterfeits before the true Son.** Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 54 (c. AD 150): the demons, having heard the prophets announce Christ, put forward many "sons of Jupiter" so that the gospel would seem one more poets' tale; his example is Hercules.
- **Noah before God's eye.** John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis* 23.4 (trans. Robert C. Hill, *Fathers of the Church* 82): Noah's concern was "to be praised by that eye that never sleeps or rests. He had no care for human glory or scorn or irreverence." Quoted in Andrew Louth, ed., *Genesis 1–11*, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Old Testament 1* (InterVarsity Press, 2001), p. 129. Greek (PG 53, Homily 23, on Genesis 6:9): ἤρεσε τῷ ἀκοιμήτῳ ἐκείνῳ ὀφθαλμῷ, "he pleased that sleepless Eye," explaining τῷ Θεῷ εὐηρέστησε Νῶε, the Septuagint's "Noah pleased God"; just before, his virtue drew "the praise from God" (τὸν παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἔπαινον).
- **A limit that is mercy.** Gregory the Theologian, *Oration* 38.12: God set death as a limit "in order that evil may not be immortal." The source of the study's line on the 120 years (6:3) and the tree of life (Genesis 3:22): "The limit keeps evil from becoming immortal."

The ancient world

- **Gilgamesh, two-thirds god.** *Epic of Gilgamesh*, Standard Babylonian version, Tablet I and Tablet IX (Andrew George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Penguin, 1999).
- **Hatshepsut's divine birth.** Birth reliefs at her temple at Deir el-Bahari: Amun visits Queen Ahmose in the form of Thutmose I. J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, vol. II, §§187–212.
- **Hercules, son of Zeus and a woman.** Pseudo-Hesiod, *Shield of Heracles* 1–56.
- **Muji and the zanas.** Robert Elsie and Janice Mathie-Heck, eds., *Songs of the Frontier Warriors / Këngë Kreshnikësh* (Bolchazy-Carducci, 2004).
- **The Babylonian flood.** *Epic of Atrahasis*, Tablets I–III: the gods are kept awake by human noise and decree a flood; Enki secretly warns Atrahasis. W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atrahasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford, 1969). See also Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "What the Babylonian Flood Stories Can and Cannot Teach Us About the Genesis Flood," *Biblical Archaeology Review* (Nov–Dec 1978).