

The Plan from the Beginning  
Daily Bible Reading Plan  
Class Notes for Week 2: Genesis Chapters 6-11

For this week's class, there are at least 5 spiritual lessons we can learn from our reading:

1. Trying to blend the sacred with the worldly produces ruin and destruction.
  2. God will save the righteous from destruction.
  3. We are expected to be obedient to God even though everyone else may not.
  4. We should not put ourselves in a position to cause others to stumble into sin.
  5. Interfering with God's plans and workings will not result in success.
- I. Genesis 6:1-7: The people of God must stay separate from evil and unrighteousness.
- These verses contain a heavily debated narrative about the "sons of God" and "daughters of men". The sons of God (Hebrew "ben elohim") see the daughters of men (Hebrew "bath adam"), recognize their beauty and take them as wives. The children produced are reported to be mighty men. The Nephilim, sometimes translated "giants" (see also Numbers 13:31-33), are in the land both before and after these relationships start (v. 4). The Hebrew root word is "naphal", meaning fallen. Some speculate that Goliath came from this race, but that does not agree with the fact that all but Noah's family are wiped out in the flood.
  - Some possible explanations of this passage from Jewish scholarship:
    1. The sons of God are indeed angels who mate with human women and produce offspring. This would be similar to the demi-gods of mythology (Achilles, Hercules and Perseus, for example), where the "gods" mated with human women and produced children with superhuman abilities. The idea of fallen angels is foreign to Genesis, but the chance of humans having sex with divine beings in human form is not (Genesis 19:1-11). The concept of fallen or sinful angels is, however, seen in the New Testament (I Corinthians 6:3, Jude 6; II Peter 2:4).
    2. The sons of God referred to here are the righteous and obedient descendants of Seth and the daughters of men are female descendants of Cain. Enoch and Noah are examples of Seth's God fearing descendants (Genesis 5). Lamech, the last of Cain's descendants discussed in Genesis 4 is portrayed as less than Godly. This mixing of good people with the ungodly produces the evil world Noah lives in. The children are said to be mighty and renowned. This does not necessarily mean they had superhuman powers. The Nephilim existed before and after this time and obviously, giant men came about long after the flood of Noah, based on the report of the spies in Numbers 13 and the story of Goliath in I Samuel 17.
  - The Bible does not give us an absolutely clear explanation of this narrative. Some scholars have even speculated that it was added to the Scripture later to make the story compare to other near Eastern mythology, but we cannot accept that it is not the Word of God. Knowing the answer to this mystery has no bearing on our salvation, but the narrative can be used to teach a good lesson:
  - Intertwining Godly beings with the depravity of the Godless damages and destroys the Godly. The remainder of the Torah and Old Testament show God's desire that His people not associate or intermarry with heathen people. The practice is expressly forbidden in the Torah, it ruined the wise king Solomon, and the returning exiles realized it was wrong in Ezra 10. We cannot allow ourselves, the royal priesthood of God and the Body of Christ, to be contaminated with the things of this world which are contrary to God (John 15:18, 19; James 4:4; I Corinthians 6:12-20)
- II. Genesis 6:8-9:18: The Flood
- The Lord says that his Spirit will not strive with man any longer—timeline for the flood is set at 120 years. We see that proclamation was made by Christ through the Spirit to those disobedient people in Noah's time (I Peter 3:18-20) while the ark was being built.
  - Noah is described as righteous and blameless (Hebrew means just, complete, sound) in his generation. The only one (we are not told the nature of his wife, sons and daughter-in-laws) among all the people. It is interesting that Noah silently accepts the fate God tells him about for mankind and obediently goes to work building the ark, obedience being something practiced his entire life. This is in contrast to Abram, who pleads for Sodom and Gomorrah. Does this lessen Noah's righteousness because of the apparent lack of compassion? Not according to II Peter 2:5, where he is described as a herald of righteousness. It seems that Noah did try to preach repentance to people, with no success.

- Build an ark....God gives Noah specific dimensions to the ark. Converted to today's familiar measurements (based on a cubit being 18 inches), the ark was 450 ft. long, 75 ft. wide and 45 ft. tall. To give it scale, imagine a 5 story building, as long as 1.5 football fields and half as wide as a football field. The volume taken up by this size boat would be equivalent to over 11,300,000 gallons of water or 434 18-wheeler trailers.
  - Noah is instructed to enter the ark along with one pair of all animals (chapter 6) and seven pairs of clean (sacrificially clean?) animals (chapter 7). He is also told to take enough food for his family and the animals. Were all animals exclusively herbivores like people were?
  - A timeline of the flood (Noah is 600 when the flood comes on the Earth)
    - Rain begins to fall on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the second month (lunar calendar).
    - After 40 days, the waters are deep enough to lift the ark off of the ground (7:17).
    - During the next 110 days, the waters increase, covering the mountains with over 22 ft. (7: 19, 20) of water.
    - God remembers the animals and people in the ark and closes up the sources of water (8:1, 2), causing the water to recede for the next 150 days.
    - On the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month, the ark comes to rest on top of the mountains of Ararat (no specific mountain is named).
    - The waters continued to decrease for 2.5 more months until the tops of the mountains are visible (1<sup>st</sup> day of tenth month)
    - Noah sends out birds to see if the land was dried up and when the dove does not return, he knows that the ground is dried up (1<sup>st</sup> day of 1<sup>st</sup> month). Noah, now 601 years old, removes the covering of the ark after 10.5 months.
    - It is over another month and a half before the boggy and marshy ground is dry enough to unload the ark (27<sup>th</sup> day of second month). They are on the ark for 12 lunar months plus 10 days (about 365 days, or one solar year).
  - Noah offers a pleasing sacrifice to God of each of the clean animals. God promises not to interrupt the cycle of nature as long as the Earth exists. He also makes a covenant with Noah and his sons to never destroy flesh by flood again and marks that promise by the sign of the rainbow.
  - He commands them to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. He also prohibits murder and proscribes the punishment. Jewish tradition holds that at this time, God established the Noahide laws that all hold for all mankind, establishing righteousness for Gentiles who are not under the law. Refrain from blasphemy, idolatry, sexual perversion, bloodshed, robbery, eating meat with blood in it and to establish courts of justice. Noah is viewed as a righteous Gentile, since Abraham was not yet the father of the Hebrews.
- III. Genesis 9:20-29: Do not allow your carelessness to allow cause others to sin:
- Noah plants a vineyard and either by intention or accident, learns the art of fermentation and winemaking. He becomes drunk and passes out naked in his tent. Ham intrudes into his father's tent, sees his father naked and disrespectfully informs his brothers, Shem and Japeth. These two sons walk in backwards and place a towel over their drunken father without looking at him.
  - When Noah realizes the disrespect shown to him by Ham, he curses (for whatever reason) Ham's son, Canaan while blessing the descendants of his two other sons. Disrespect of parents is forbidden and sinful in the remainder of the Torah and displeasing to God (Exodus 20:12; Leviticus 19:3; Deut. 5:16; 27:16).
  - No punishment or chastisement is listed for Noah, but we can learn a lesson that our choices and example can sometimes cause less mature brothers or sisters to stumble (Matthew 18:6; I Corinthians 8:9-13)
- IV. Genesis 11:1-9: We cannot reach God by our own plans.
- The story of the tower of Babel is an interesting story and its meaning is not completely understood. The people are of the same tongue and upon congregating in Shinar (later the land of Babylon) they decide to build a city and a tower to the heavens.
  - Their reason is clear: They need to make a name for themselves and be united or else they will be scattered across the earth, which is precisely what God commanded Noah's descendants to do. The tower is designed to reach the sky. God comes down to inspect the construction and determines that a united mankind will be able to come up with just about anything.
  - He confuses their language, confounding their construction project and the Lord disbands them over the earth.
  - If we want to reach God, there is only one way, through Christ. If we want to succeed in any project, we must abide in God's will and not resist what direction He gives us.