

Last time we continued the study of the Decline of Civilization with the Corruption of Mankind in general. These verses early in chapter 6 do not have enough information for us to really understand them.

I. The Primeval History	1:1-11:26
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C. Early History of Civilization	4.1-9.29
1. Decline of Civilization	4.1-6.8
a. Cainite Line	4.1-24
b. Sethite Line	4.25-5.32
c. Corruption of Mankind	6.1-8
1) Corrupt Condition	6.1-4
a) Depraved Marriages	6.1-2

We learned of the depraved marriages that are a part of that corrupt condition of mankind at that time. We dealt with the first two Major Issues: Who are the Sons of God?, described in verse 2. And the second major problem: Who are the Daughters of Men? And depending on the view you take of the Sons of God that will dictate your understanding of who the Daughters of Men would be.

Major Issues

1. Sons of God	6.2
2. Daughters of men	
3. 120 years	6.3
4. Nephilim	6.4
5. Mighty men	
6. God sorry	6.6-7

And the passage today mentions 120 years—and it is not clear what it refers to. There are 2 major views that we will look at. And another issue that is not clear are the Nephilim, 6.4. We will discuss the meaning, translations, etc. about them. The NAS version just transliterates, puts down the Hebrew letters without translating the word. Then in verse 5 there is mention of Mighty men with the issue of whether they are the same as the Nephilim; I take it that it is a further description of them.

And then we have a theological issue of God being *sorry*; what does that mean? Does not God know of all that is going on around Him? Did He think He made a mistake in creating mankind? These and other issues are very difficult because the passages are short and there are very very few cross references and very few references that are direct and clear. The text itself is not a difficult passage; it's just that we are not familiar with many of the things in it.

6.1 Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them,
2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.

In the context of the outworking of the population, referring to the 2 genealogies that we saw in chapters 4 and 5, in that timeframe when men began to multiply, we have the Sons of God:

Sons of God

1. Intermarriage of Lines
2. Demon Possessed Despots
3. Fallen Angels

One prominent view and perhaps maybe even the most common view today is that it is the intermarrying of the 2 lines, the line of Seth being the godly line merging with the ungodly line

of Cain corrupting all of the culture and thus leading to the Genesis Flood as a judgment.

One of the major problems we talked about is that such an intermarriage is not good, but it doesn't seem to match the drasticness of the judgment that we will see in 6-8.

Another view is that demon possessed despots intermarried with the daughters of men. This viewpoint sees the daughters of men coming from either of the lines.

The view that is most difficult by far, and the reason the first 2 have come about, because of the difficulty of envisioning fallen angels intermarrying and having sexual relations with human beings—the daughters of men. And because of the difficulty of that concept—of which we see nothing like it anywhere else—people have created the first 2 views.

But in terms of the details and some NT passages seem to support this viewpoint of fallen angels intermarrying.

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2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.

So these Sons of God took human wives for themselves as they wished. That is a problem since they had children—a drastic corruption of the human race, so drastic that God brought the flood.

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a) Depraved Marriages	6.1-2
b) Displeasure of God	6.3

Obviously that brought about the displeasure of God

6.3 Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”

LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever. That little phrase is not crystal clear. The NAS takes the Hebrew word (without modifier) ‘spirit’ to mean the Holy Spirit, and translates it as My Spirit. We have seen the two divine persons: Yahweh = Lord and the Holy Spirit. What does He mean with ‘not *strive*’? We will start a list of terms with this word ‘strive’.

Key Terms

1. Strive *diyn* or *doon* - protector, shield, remain
contend, judge, plead

It is used in different contexts: this one ‘protector’ or ‘shield’ do not seem to be the concept. The spirit will not ‘remain’ working with man forever, probably is the sense here. The reason for that is perhaps the corruption of humanity; there are limits and we see it throughout the OT when He judges. The word here perhaps gives a little hint from God’s perspective: He is going to intervene. One of the first things that happens is that God removes the Holy Spirit—which could be what is in view here.

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because he also is flesh, kind of indicating the material aspect of mankind, the residing of the old nature in the flesh.

6.3 Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”

Then the last phrase nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years. Here, of course his ‘days’ would be years. I take that literally as we did all the ages we have seen so far.

120 Years

1. Shortened lifespans
2. Time to judgment

There are 2 major views as to the meaning of ‘120 years’ here. A very common view is the shortening of the lifespans, and we do have a *drop*, an exponential K curve. The problem is that we do have people like Moses who live 120 years and we also have in chapter 11, after the Genesis Flood, that live considerable more than 120 years, and there are even examples in the secular world of people living somewhat over 120 years.

Again, we don’t have a timeframe, except for the phrase that God is restraining the HS until the Genesis Flood which will be that topic in the beginning of the next passage, verse 9. This whole passage kind of introduces us to the Genesis flood.

And one of the viewpoints is that this is the period of grace, specifically 120 years. Estimates have been made that perhaps the building of the Ark may have taken over a 100 years to build,

considering the structure and man-power, essentially Noah and his family.

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b) Displeasure of God	6.3
c) Descendants	6.4

Then, probably the most difficult passage of all is verse 4, with the descendants and these Nephilim who:

6.4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

... were on the earth in those days. In this timeframe of intermarriage and further on it seems to indicate specifically when the Sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. The indicator of that little dependent clause there, the ‘when’ clause, seems to relate to the Nephilim and they seem to be the descendants of the very strange Fallen Angels or those of the other viewpoints. So these Nephilim are certainly strange. Let’s look at the word itself:

Key Terms

25f

1. Strive *diyn* or *doon* - protector, shield, remain; contend, judge, plead
2. Nephilim *nefilim* - giants or tyrants

Some translations make it ‘giants’ which is probably the best viewpoint. There is a popular and very common attempt to take the Hebrew letters and relate them to a verb that means to ‘fall’ and to make it perhaps a participle in this context, and if you do that, you can come to the conclusion that the Nephilim refers to the ‘fallen ones’, possibly in a spiritual sense.

Support - lexicons, LXX and Vulgate translate it ‘giants’
Numbers 13.32-33 adds another element:

32 So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, “The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size.

33 “There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.

Those are the only occurrences of the word; there is a description of being very large. Some scholars think that the sons of Anak are a whole clan that existed. Part of the problem is that they occur during the Conquest—so are there Canaanite giants from the tribes of Anak. One of the views is that the Genesis Flood came because of this cross-breeding between fallen angels and daughters of men. It seems that something happened later on also, because no one survived except Noah and his family—who were godly, so not infected by that cross breeding.

So the best view is that these were men with interesting DNA, a distorted DNA that caused some sort of massive growth, and there were several of them. There are other passages that seem to refer to giants as well.

25g

6.4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

Notice: also afterward; it’s not clear what is referred to with ‘afterward’. Based on the Numbers passage, maybe it is referring to Nephilim that existed *after* the Genesis Flood. That is the only major event that would be in view in this timeframe.

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We know that these mighty men were ‘renown’...

Key Terms

1. Strive *diyn* or *doon* - protector, shield, remain; contend, judge, plead
2. Nephilim *nefilim* - giants or tyrants
3. Mighty men *guiborim* - men of name, notoriety
used of military men, wealth, power

This word is used in several contexts in the OT, and sometimes it refers to men of notoriety or of name, in a kind of neutral sense. It is also used in a sense of military men, or of wealth or power. By the way, David is called a *guiborim* in 2nd Samuel:

2Samuel 10.7 *When David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army, the mighty men.*

Joshua 10.2 *that he feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty.*

So that is the Corrupt Condition and now God intervenes to condemn the situation and these verses transition to the Genesis Flood.

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2) Condemnation of God	6.5-8

Certainly demonic things happening is the most strange aspect of this whole passage and the 3rd viewpoint is the *possibility* of that happening. That is very, very difficult; that is the biggest problem I see with the 3rd view. The question is: Did it happen again after the Genesis Flood? because the only ones that survived the Genesis Flood would be the 8 people on the Ark.

6.5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

The condemnation begins. In verse 5 we have perhaps one of the clearest passages in all of Scripture that describes the depravity and wickedness of men. This is describing men before

the Flood, but that doesn't mean that after the Flood men aren't degenerating to the same state. In fact the Hebrew text almost calls attention to the wicked condition that the Lord 'saw'. Man created in the image of God was designed and intended to glorify Him, but man degenerates to the point where the wickedness of man was great, the very opposite of God's design, and in that verse I describe this as God's Perception. Not that He needed to 'see' it; He was aware, being omnipresent, knowing all things at all times.

Condemnation

6.5 - Perception

6.5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Then notice that not only was the wickedness great, but every intent of the the thoughts of his heart was only evil....

6.5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

You have the outward sickness of man that is observable and we have support for the idea that where the outward man ends up is the heart attitude that works itself out in this wickedness. And that is basically typical of all wickedness. Remember when Jesus is talking about man being defiled, it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles, but what comes out of the heart. Jesus may be reflecting the same principle that we have in 6.5.

Notice the alliteration of Hebrew words relating to the Depravity:

6.5 -Depravity

> Wickedness -	<i>raat</i>	(noun)
> Was Great -	<i>rahbah</i>	(adjective)
> Every -	<i>kol</i>	(adjective)
> Only -	<i>raq</i>	(adverb)
> Evil -	<i>ra'</i>	(noun)

These are nearly all starting with the same letters—ra. The middle word, ‘every’ is making it general, about ‘all’. The writer is selecting words to call attention to the depravity and evilness that is going on at this time. That is why we say that Genesis 6.5 is one of the clearest descriptions of the depravity and the emphasis on *man*’s depravity.

When we get to the Flood I will try to summarize some of the main themes, using these slides. The reason for the Genesis Flood is this universal corruption.

Genesis 6-9

1. Universal Corruption

And I am going to build a case, when we get into the text itself for a universal flood, that is, a world-wide flood. That is the minority view amongst believers today, even conservative, Bible-teaching churches. Most of them have been intimidated by science or at least the ideas of some scientists, and they have developed what they think solves the problem with a local flood. But I am going to point to a universal flood, based on universal corruption which begins in Genesis 6.5.

God has made two evaluations: The first: Elohim or God *saw that the creation was very good*. That is God’s evaluation of *His* work.

God’s Evaluation

> 1.31 - Elohim saw...it was very good

Progress of Sin

> 6.5 - YHWH saw ... wickedness of man was great

And now, in 6.5, we see the progress of sin and its corrupting effects on mankind. Now it is ‘Yahweh’ saw. This is the personal name for God, the more intimate and relational name for God. He sees ‘the wickedness of man was great’. And as a result of that we see the *sorrow* of God, so it is an interesting contrast that we can draw.

6.6 The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

So in verse 6 The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth. Some translations translate ‘sorry’ as ‘repented’.

Key Terms

1. Strive *diyn* or *doon* - protector, shield, remain; contend, judge, plead
2. Nephilim *nefilim* - giants or tyrants
3. Mighty men *guiborim* - men of name, notoriety
4. Sorry *nawkham* - regret, sorry, anthropopathism

and He was grieved. There are some issues: Is God caught off guard? Did He not expect this? Certainly it is a sad condition and theologians have a difficult time sorting this out and I guess the average Christian would as well.

6.6 The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

He was sorry, and the next phrase expands it: He was grieved in His heart. There are lots of passages, and this is one of them, both OT and NT, that give us the sense that God *has* emotion. And in fact we are created in His image and part of the image is that He has put within *us* emotion. So there is a sense in which God feels the pain of sorrow.

I think the word ‘repent’ distorts a little bit the nature of God. God does not *change*, so it raises the issue of God changing, so the Hebrew word *nawkam* is better translated ‘regret’ or ‘is sorry’. One of the ways we can view this is from literature; there is a figure of speech described as anthropopathism which is like anthropomorphism which is portraying God in human terms for our benefit so that we can better understand Him. God is consistent and does not change—the situation may change.

Similarly, in terms of emotions, some writers of literature have come up with a figure of speech, anthropopathism, in which God experiences emotions. I think He is actually pained, he was grieved in his heart. Two different Hebrew words to convey the feelings/emotions of God.

Condemnation

6.5 - Perception

6.6 - Pain

We might summarize verse 5 as giving us what God *perceives* and verse 6, the *pain* that God experiences when He makes the observations.

God Repents? or, is He

IMMUTABLE = unchanging in essence, decrees and works

I think the idea of ‘repenting’ or ‘changing’ goes against the *immutability* of God. So I believe in the immutability of God; **He is unchanging in His essence. Nor does He change His decrees. And I would say that He does not change His plans and works.**

There are passages that seem to indicate differently, but I think they can be explained because of the immutability of God, based on verses like:

Malachi 3.6 *For I, the Lord, do not change...*

Psalm 62.2 *He only is my rock...* (stable, unchanging, like a rock). This includes the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Hebrew 13.8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Unchanging in His Essence. Throughout the life of Christ He is fully God. He never changed His Deity; He *set aside* the voluntary use of some of the attributes like omniscience and omnipresence obviously and omnipotence, but he never relinquished or gave up any of them because He is immutable—which also applies to the Father and the Holy Spirit.

And then in verse 7 we will see how God is going to respond; this was the Plan.

6.7 The LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.”

We will talk about the ‘blotting out of man’ and then He repeats, ‘I am sorry that I have made them’. It is not that God is caught off guard, but more the idea that this causes God *pain*. ‘I am *pained*’, it causes me *sorrow* that I have made man.’

Then in verse 8 we will see the Provision or Preservation.

6.8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

There are things in the spiritual realm that we just do not understand!

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2. Nephilim *nefilim* - giants or tyrants
3. Mighty men *guiborim* - men of name, notoriety
4. Sorry *nawkham* - regret, sorry, anthropopathism
5. Blot out *mahkhaw* - erase from a book, rub out, remove

Genesis 6-9

1. Universal Corruption
2. God's Determination
 - 6.7 The LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land,...
 - 6.17 "Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh...

Condemnation

- 6.5 - Perception
- 6.6 - Pain
- 6.7 - Plan

There are things in the spiritual realm that we just do not understand!