

NOON BIBLE STUDY: GENESIS 6

GENESIS 6:1-4

V. 3 - 120 YEARS - THIS IS LIKELY A GENERALIZATION ABOUT THE DECLINING LENGTH OF HUMAN'S LIFESPAN. WE READ IN GENESIS 5 HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE LIVING FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS. FROM THE TIME AFTER THE FLOOD, THESE NUMBERS WILL *SHARPLY* DECLINE. ADAM LIVED 930 YEARS. NOAH 950. SHEM, NOAH'S SON WILL LIVE 600 AND BY THE TIME YOU ARE AT ABRAHAM (9 GENERATIONS LATER) HE WILL LIVE TO 175 AND HIS GRANDSON JACOB, 147. SOME COMMENTARIES ALSO SUGGEST THAT THE TIME LEFT UNTIL THE FLOOD (WHEN MOST OF HUMANITY WOULD DIE) WAS 120 YEARS. IT SEEMS THAT EITHER WAY, THE POINT IS HUMANS AREN'T LIVING FOREVER ANYMORE BECAUSE OF SIN.

HUMANS ARE FILLING THE EARTH, JUST AS THE LORD INSTRUCTED THEM TO IN GENESIS 1:28 BUT WITH THEIR POPULATION MULTIPLYING, SO IS THEIR EVIL.

SONS OF GOD, DAUGHTERS OF MEN & NEPHILIM, OH MY!

A BRIEF WORD ABOUT THIS INTERESTING SECTION. HERE ARE THE TWO MAIN THOUGHTS ON INTERPRETATION OF THIS SECTION. FIRST, THE WORD "NEPHILIM" IS A HEBREW TRANSLITERATION BECAUSE IT'S UNCLEAR EXACTLY WHAT THE TERM MEANS. SOME BELIEVE THE WORD MEANS "FALLEN ONES" AND OTHERS BELIEVE IT IS A WORD FOR "GIANTS", BASING IT ON THE GREEK TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES. IT IS ONLY USED ONE OTHER TIME IN SCRIPTURE (NUMBERS 13:33) WHICH IS THE RECORD OF THE SPIES GOING INTO THE LAND OF CANAAN AND FEELING LIKE "GRASSHOPPERS".

WITH THAT IN MIND, LET'S LOOK AT THE TWO IDEAS:

1 - "SONS OF GOD" IS ANOTHER WAY TO REFER TO ANGELIC BEINGS AND THESE ANGELS HAD IMPROPER SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH "DAUGHTERS OF MEN" AKA HUMAN WOMEN. THE RESULT OF THIS WAS THAT THE WOMEN HAD HALF HUMAN-HALF ANGEL BABIES WHO BECAME A SPECIAL BREED OF CREATURE CALLED "NEPHILIM". THE IDEA THAT THEY WERE ON THE EARTH "AND ALSO AFTERWARDS" EITHER IMPLIES THESE ANGEL-HUMANS SURVIVED THE FLOOD OR THAT THERE WERE OTHER INCIDENTS OF THIS AFTER THE FLOOD THUS ALLOWING FOR NEPHILIM TO BE PRESENT IN NUMBERS 13 AS WELL. THIS VIEW WOULD THEN MAKE SENSE VERSES LIKE 2 PETER 2:4 AND JUDE 1:6.

2 - "SONS OF GOD" AND "DAUGHTERS OF MEN" ARE TERMS USED FOR HUMAN MEN AND WOMEN. MEN AND WOMEN WERE GETTING MARRIED, HAVING CHILDREN DURING THIS TIME. THE NEPHILIM WERE "MEN OF RENOWN" AKA FAMOUS MEN. SOMETHING ABOUT THIS UNIQUE GROUP OF PEOPLE WAS SPECIAL AND THERE WERE MEN LIKE THIS (FAMOUS, RENOWNED, ETC) BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER THE FLOOD. SO WHEN NUMBERS 13 USES "NEPHILIM" IT'S TALKING ABOUT THESE FAMOUS AND NOTABLE FIGURES AS WELL. THESE WEREN'T A CLASS OF PEOPLE WHO SURVIVED THE FLOOD (WHICH SEEMS IMPROBABLE DUE TO THE SPECIFIC WORDS GOD USES LIKE "I WILL DESTROY ALL FLESH IN WHICH IS THE BREATH OF LIFE..." (6:17) ETC

IN TRUTH, WE COULD LIKELY MAKE AN IMPASSIONED CASE FOR EITHER VIEW. HOWEVER, WE YET AGAIN IN OUR JOURNEY THROUGH GENESIS FIND OURSELVES WITH OUT ALL THE FACTS (REMEMBER WHEN WE COULDN'T CONCLUDE THE ORIGIN OF THE SERPENT FROM GENESIS ALONE?!). YET WE CAN GET A SENSE OF THE STORY TO UNDERSTAND THAT SOMETHING FISHY IS GOING ON. WHETHER THESE VERSES SPEAK OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HUMANS AND HUMANS OR HUMANS AND ANGELS, SOMETHING SEEMS TO BE COMING TO A HEAD.

GENESIS 6:5-7 - STATE OF HUMANITY

WICKEDNESS → "GREAT". EVERY INTENT OF THE THOUGHTS OF PEOPLE'S HEARTS → "ONLY EVIL CONTINUALLY" HOW WE HAVE FALLEN FROM "VERY GOOD". IN FACT THE TEXT TELLS US THAT GOD'S HEART WAS "GRIEVED" AND HE WAS "SORRY" THAT HE HAD MADE HUMANS. (MORE ON THIS LATER). AS A RESULT, GOD IS GOING TO DESTROY ALL THAT HE HAS MADE.

WOW.

GENESIS 6:8-10 - NOAH

AFTER THE DESCRIPTION OF THE EVIL UPON THE EARTH AND GOD'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF IT'S IMPENDING DESTRUCTION, GOD INSERTS A SHORT BUT POWERFUL VERSE - "BUT NOAH FOUND FAVOR (GRACE) IN GOD'S EYES (V. 8)". THIS IS THE FIRST USAGE OF THE WORD "FAVOR" (KJV: GRACE) IN THE ENTIRE BIBLE AND HOW APPROPRIATE IT'S PLACEMENT IS. THE WHOLE WORLD IS A MESS AND GOD SHOWS FAVOR TO NOAH, A SINNER HIMSELF. WE DON'T LEARN MUCH ABOUT THE LIFE OF NOAH BEFORE THIS MOMENT BUT WE SEE GOD'S FAVOR UPON HIM AND A RESPONSE WHICH WILL RESOUND THROUGHOUT TIME.

THE LITTLE WE DO KNOW ABOUT NOAH IS PRETTY SPECIAL: HE WAS RIGHTEOUS, HE WAS BLAMELESS IN HIS TIME AND HE "WALKED WITH GOD" (THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WE LEARNED ABOUT WITH ENOCH IN GENESIS 5).

GENESIS 6:11-16 - GOD CALLS NOAH TO BUILD AN ARK

NOAH AND HIS SONS (SHEM, HAM AND JAPHETH) ARE COMMISSIONED TO BUILD AN ARK IN THE MIDST OF A WORLD TEEMING WITH EVIL (AND YOU THOUGHT YOUR WORKPLACE WAS TOUGH!). THIS WILL BE QUITE THE PROJECT.

ESV STUDY BIBLE: "IN MODERN MEASUREMENTS, THE ARK WOULD HAVE BEEN AROUND 450 FEET (140 M) LONG, 75 FEET (23 M) WIDE, AND 45 FEET (14 M) HIGH, YIELDING A DISPLACEMENT OF ABOUT 43,000 TONS (ABOUT 39 MILLION KG). THE INSIDE CAPACITY WOULD HAVE BEEN 1.4 MILLION CUBIC FEET (39,644 CUBIC M), WITH AN APPROXIMATE TOTAL DECK AREA OF 95,700 SQUARE FEET (8,891 SQUARE M)."

GENESIS 6:17-22 - WHAT NOAH WILL FILL ARK WITH

IN ADDITION TO BUILDING THE ARK, NOAH IS CHARGED WITH FILLING THE ARK WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM EVERY ANIMAL SPECIES AND PLENTY OF FOOD FOR HIS FAMILY AND THE ANIMALS. THE TEXT TELLS US THAT AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME THE ANIMALS "WILL COME TO YOU..." (V. 20), THUS EXPLAINING HOW THIS ALL WOULD HAVE WORKED OUT. THAT'S PRETTY COOL.

TWO OTHER IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL POINTS ARE MADE IN THIS SECTION:

V. 17 - "I, EVEN I" - MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT WHO WAS BRINGING THIS FLOOD UPON THE EARTH. SOME HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE DEVIL WAS THE CAUSE OF THE FLOOD AND THAT GOD "ALLOWED" HIM TO DO IT. HOWEVER, THE TEXT CLEARLY SAYS THAT GOD IS THE ORIGINATOR OF THIS ACT OF JUDGEMENT.

IN MANY WAYS THIS IS THE CULMINATION OF THE FIRST SIN OF GENESIS 3. GOD HAS LET HIS CREATION MAKE THEIR OWN CHOICES AND AS A RESULT THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF EVIL CONTINUES. AND AT LAST, EVERYONE HAS CHOSEN EVIL, ALL THE TIME. THIS IS NOT THE WORLD GOD ORIGINALLY INTENDED AND HIS DESIRE AND PLAN WILL NOT BE THWARTED BY THE FOOLISHNESS OF HUMANS. GOD IS DESIGNER AND CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE AND HE IS ENTITLED TO HAVE THINGS HIS WAY.

V. 18 - **COVENANT** - THIS IS THE FIRST USAGE IN SCRIPTURE OF AN INCREDIBLE IMPORTANT WORD: "COVENANT". A COVENANT IS A SOLEMN AND BINDING AGREEMENT BETWEEN TWO OR MORE PARTIES TO DO OR NOT DO CERTAIN THINGS. COVENANT (HEBREW: *BERIT*) IS THE PRIMARY WAY THAT THE LORD WILL WORK AND INTERACT WITH HUMANS IN SCRIPTURE AND HIS COVENANT WITH NOAH, HIS FAMILY AND THE CREATION ITSELF IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND AFTER THE DOWNFALL OF HUMANITY.

THE BASIC PATTERN OF A BIBLICAL COVENANT IS THIS: I (THE LORD) WILL DO (THIS) FOR YOU IF YOU, (HUMAN), AGREE TO DO/NOT DO (THIS). THINGS WILL BE GOOD IF YOU OBEY, AND THINGS WILL NOT GO WELL IF YOU BREAK THE TERMS. A UNIQUE ELEMENT TO MAKING A COVENANT WITH GOD IS THAT HE IS ALWAYS ABLE TO KEEP HIS END OF THE AGREEMENT!

THERE IS NO RECORD OF HOW NOAH RESPONDED OTHER THAN "THUS NOAH DID..." (V. 22). THAT'S A PRETTY GOOD RESPONSE. NOAH RESPONDED TO GRACE, TRUSTED GOD AND OBEYED IN LIGHT OF HIS FAITH. WE SHOULD MODEL THAT IN OUR LIVES. NOAH DIDN'T KNOW HOW EVERY DAY OR SITUATION OR STEP IN THIS COVENANT JOURNEY WAS GOING TO TURN OUT, BUT HE TRUSTED THE FAITHFUL GOD!

SOMETHING THAT IS NOT OFTEN HIGHLIGHTED FROM THIS SECTION IS THE INTERESTING WINDOW IN THE CHARACTER OF GOD. THOUGH WE HIGHLIGHTED THAT THE LORD WAS BRINGING THIS FLOOD (I, EVEN I FROM VERSE 17), WE ALSO SHOULD NOTE ANOTHER POINT THIS CHAPTER ADDRESSES.

GENESIS 6:6 SAYS THAT GOD WAS "GRIEVED IN HIS HEART". THIS TELLS US THAT THE CHOICES OF HUMANITY AFFECT THE HEART OF OUR CREATOR. THIS ATTRIBUTE DOESN'T MAKE HIM WEAK, IT MAKES HIM PERSONAL. THE ANCIENT GREEKS AND ROMANS, AS WELL AS THE PRIMITIVE CULTURES BEFORE THEM CREATED GODS THAT DID NOT FEEL, THAT WERE UNAFFECTED BY THE CHOICES OF THEIR HUMAN SUBJECTS. THE GODS LIVED IN THEIR REALM AND DID THEIR GOD-THING, AND HOW THE GOD'S LIVED AFFECTED LIFE ON EARTH (EX: IF THE GODS FOUGHT, THAT'S WHAT LEAD TO NATURAL DISASTERS OR WAR. IF THE GODS WERE HAPPY, THAT'S WHY THERE WAS A GOOD HARVEST THAT YEAR ETC.). THE GODS HUMANS INVENT ARE FICKLE AND TEMPERAMENTAL AND UNPREDICTABLE, LIKE HUMANS. BUT YAHWEH IS NOT LIKE THE HUMANS HE MADE. HE IS FAITHFUL, RELIABLE AND HAS INTEGRITY. HE IS THE ONLY AND EVERLASTING GOD!

AND KNOWING HOW OUR CHOICES AFFECT GOD SHOULD INSPIRE US TO TAKE SERIOUSLY THE CHOICES WE MAKE. THOUGH GOD WILL NEVER BE FOUND SULKING IN A CORNER WITH HURT FEELINGS - THE CHOICES YOU AND I MAKE MEAN SOMETHING TO HIM. WHEN WE CHOOSE FREELY TO SIN (WHICH HE FREELY LETS US CHOOSE!), HIS HEART IS HURT AND IN CONTRAST WHEN WE CHOOSE TO BE FAITHFUL AND OBEY (WHICH HE ALSO FREELY LETS US CHOOSE!), IMAGINE HOW THIS MUST BRING JOY TO HIS HEART!

YES GOD IS SOVEREIGN AND RULES OVER ALL - BUT HE INTERACTS WITH HIS CREATION BECAUSE HE LOVES THEM. HE IS PERSONAL AND RELATIONAL - AND WE SHOULD REJOICE IN THIS TRUTH AND BE INSPIRED TO BRING JOY TO HEAVEN AS WE LIVE FOR HIM EVERY DAY!