

# Genesis & A Biblical Worldview

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, September 9, 2012

## Introduction

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## God

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## Creation

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## Man

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## Sin

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## Grace

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## Culture

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## Purpose

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## A God of Judgment and Grace

In chapter three, we learned of how sin made its entry into humanity. In chapter four, we learned that sin has spread throughout all of humanity, and has brought ruin on creation. And in chapter five, we learned that--just as God warned in the second chapter--death resulted from sin; and that sin now affects all of humanity. As we come to chapters six to eight, we learn something else about sin that is truly dreadful in its display--God judges it. He not only judged sin with respect to the first man and woman; but after a time, He brought dreadful judgment on the whole of the human family throughout which sin had spread. What man sows, he also surely reaps!

But the same story of this judgment also tells us of God's provision of grace. The fact that our God is a God *both* of judgment and of grace gives us one of the most important characteristics of the biblical/theistic worldview; and stands behind the message of the Gospel we preach. We see these two elements together . . .

### I. IN THE INTENTION OF GOD TO BRING JUDGMENT (6:1-9).

- A. We're told in 6:1 that "men began to multiply on the face of the earth . . ." Calculated from the genealogies of chapter 5, mankind would have had nearly two-thousand years of history to populate the earth. Humankind may have been quite a bit more technologically advanced that we tend to think it would have been (as may be suggested by the remarkable construction of the ark). But we're also told when "daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose" (v. 2). Some interpret this to mean that the sons of the lineage of Cain took daughters for themselves of the lineage of Seth. Others see it as a reference to evil angelic beings who entered into relations with human women and attempted to corrupt humanity (see Jude 6)--and with it, the promise of a Redeemer (and thus possibly explaining the 'giants' of verse 4). However we understand this, it's clear that this act was something that prompted the Lord to say, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years" (v. 3)--thus either indicating the much-reduced life-span that man would ordinarily experience; or the time at which God planned to bring the flood. Verses 5-6 tell us the depth of man's wickedness; and that "the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart." People today often blaspheme the God of the Bible for the flood. But in doing so, they ignore the justice of it because of man's sin. God looked; and indeed it was so! (vv. 9-11).
- B. But note how judgment is coupled with grace. In verse 7, God says, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." We may marvel that God was "sorry". But we also must note what verse 8 tells us: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." Mankind would not be completely obliterated. God would show mercy, and preserve one man and his family--and thus humanity, and the hope of a Redeemer!

### II. IN THE COMMAND TO BUILD THE ARK (6:10-22).

- A. When God gave the command to Noah to build the ark, he said, "The end

of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold I will destroy them with the earth” (6:13). What a dreadful thing it must have been for Noah to know what was to come!

1 Peter 3:18-20 tells us that some were preached to by the Holy Spirit, “who formerly were disobedient when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved” (v. 20). And no doubt Noah--agonizing for the souls of men as he built the ark--would himself have urged others to repentance.

- B. But note again the grace of God to Noah. God said, “Make yourself an ark of gopherwood . . .” (6:14). And thus proceeded the instructions for the building of an ark that would hold Noah and his family--with sufficient room to preserve animal life for both repopulation and for sacrifice. God said, “And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will established My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark--you, your sons, your wife and your son’s wives with you (vv. 17-18). In doing as God commanded (v. 22), Noah showed himself to be a man of the kind of faith that God responded to savingly. As Hebrews 11:7-8 puts it; “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.” God is gracious toward the faithful.

### **III. IN THE DESTRUCTION OF ALL LIFE OUTSIDE THE ARK (7:1-8:22).**

- A. Judgment finally came. We won’t go into the details here; but the dreadfulness of what followed truly staggers the imagination. All life on the surface of the earth was exterminated (7:4)--except that which was in the ark. We’re told that after Noah built the ark, and he and his family and every beast after its kind were safely inside; and after the rains began to pour and the flood waters began to rise, “the LORD shut him in” (7:16). There was a door; but God--not Noah--closed it. As some have pointed out, this may be because Noah himself simply couldn’t bring himself to close the door on the rest of humanity. Only God--the just Judge of mankind’s sin--could. “And all flesh died that moved on the earth” (7:21). “Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive” (v. 23).
- B. But the dreadful judgment of chapter 7 gives way to the words that begin chapter 8--“Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark.” The waters receded, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat; and soon--one year and ten days after the heavens were opened and the flood waters poured down (7:11; 8:14), the Lord spoke to Noah, saying, “Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth” (8:16-17). It’s no wonder that the first act of Noah was to build an altar to the Lord and offer burnt offerings from out of sufficient number of the ‘clean’ animals that were in the ark (8:20). This was a “soothing aroma” to the Lord (v. 21).

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The relevance of all this to our world view is shown clearly in 2 Peter 3. God is indeed a God who judges sin; “. . . knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.’ For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men”(2 Peter 3:3-7).

But God is also a God of great grace. As Peter goes on to say; “But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (vv. 8-9). We proclaim, then, a God who has established that He judges sin; but that He also shows grace to those who have faith in Him. This proclamation is fully expressed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ that we proclaim to this world.

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<sup>1</sup>All Scripture readings are taken from *the Holy Bible, New King James Version*; copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.