

# **GENESIS**

## **A THEOLOGICAL COMMENTARY**

***THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB***

**DR CHARLES VOGAN**

## THE FLOOD: PREPARATION (*GENESIS 6*)

At first glance the Flood in Noah's day seems like no more than a violent footnote in ancient history. All of a sudden the LORD has had enough of man's sin, and he destroys the whole earth, wiping away all humanity – except for one family that he used to start over again. Then history begins anew with the same old problems showing up. So – why did he do this? Particularly when he said just *after* the Flood, “The intention of man's heart is evil from his youth.” (Genesis 8:21) It appears that his “solution” didn't change anything about humanity.

God's long-range intention, however, was made plain in this story in what he did and how he did it. In order to see this, we have to keep two things in mind: the importance of the Creation event, and the overriding theme of the Covenant in Genesis. As far as Creation was concerned it was “very good” in God's eyes, and he was infuriated that man was ruining it. He had to address that problem summarily. And although God didn't make his Covenant with Abraham until later on, he was making preparations for it here in Noah's lifetime.

We can summarize the entire book of Genesis in one short phrase:

### *A new Man for a new Creation*

The story of the Flood shows us what God intends to do to our world: destroy it completely and then bring out of the ruins *a new world* for the righteous to live in. This certainly isn't what we would have expected; our solution would have been to make changes here and there until the world measured up to our standards (which civilizations do all the time). But God sees that this world we live in now can't possibly answer to the needs of the “new Man” that he wants to transform man into. Remember that Genesis is about the Covenant: first God condemned man the sinner, then he made a new world, then he created a Family to live in it. The stories focused on individuals in the immediate situation, but they also show (in the setting of each Patriarch) the greater Covenant themes involved as God worked out the principles, not just with Abraham and his immediate Family but also with the Body of Christ all around the world, all through time.

At Noah's point in the timeline, this world – and corrupt mankind – had to go. Therefore a wholesale destruction was necessary. *This* world had to be destroyed.

**Sons of God** – This passage has caused no end of uncertainty for students of the Bible for millennia. There are two phrases here that nobody has been able to fathom the meaning of: *sons of God* (בני אלהים) and *daughters of man*<sup>1</sup> (האדם)

(בנות). And the union between them produced the *Nephilim*, which is the noun form of a Hebrew verb meaning “to fall.” The Nephilim evidently were either larger or stronger than the average man. And that's as far as we can go without a lot of guessing and filling in

---

<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew is “man”, not “men,” as is usually translated. It may not be significant, but let's

---

keep things as literal as possible while dealing with an inscrutable text!

the blanks on our own – speculations which scholars have provided in abundance over the centuries.

Something made these men above average, and there were only two ways of doing that: *first*, that the “sons of God” were fallen angels who decided to become involved in men’s affairs on earth. Satan (Genesis 3) could have provided the example for them. The problem with this standard interpretation is that angels could not procreate with humans, because the difference between their respective “species” is even further removed than man is from the animals around him. We have no evidence that their bodies were anything other than spiritual. The only way the fallen angels could have done this would have been to “possess” a human being and change it in some way to genetically alter their offspring.

The *second* way of making a special race (suggested by some medieval Jewish scholars) uses the differences between the lines of Seth and Cain. Humanity has degraded since Adam’s day, losing much of its powers and glory that God originally gave mankind. In Seth’s line, however, the degradation would have occurred at a slower rate than in Cain’s line,<sup>2</sup> who would have been indulging in self-destructive activities at a furious rate. But later in history even some of Seth’s descendents would have looked with lust upon some of Cain’s young female descendants and taken them, producing offspring greater than the average degenerate Cainite family member and becoming natural

---

<sup>2</sup> Remember that it was that part of the family tree who “began to call upon the Name of the LORD.” (Genesis 4:26)

leaders among them. This sounds plausible.

An accurate translation of this verse is:

And the sons of God saw the daughters of man, that they were good, and they took to themselves women from all that they chose.

When we compare this translation with the ESV (and others, such as the NIV), translating “good” as “beautiful, attractive” may be just putting a romantic spin on what was simply lust. The phrase “they took to themselves women from all that they chose” sounds more like a Hollywood-style sexual free-for-all rather than the more socially acceptable “each took himself a wife” as some versions render this text.<sup>3</sup>

Sexual sins – adultery, debauchery, homosexuality, orgies, concubines and mistresses, harlotry and whoredom, and the like – always head the list when the Bible describes the lifestyle of the wicked. And of course these sins lead to others – like jealousy and hatred and murder, war, family disintegration, lies and deception, materialism, and many more inevitable outcomes from a licentious lifestyle. Seeing this passage in this light would better explain God’s disgust over the whole situation; it certainly wasn’t an idyllic country scene.

The Hebrew phrase is “strong [mighty] men who were from of old, men of the name” – in other words, the

---

<sup>3</sup> In fact, the “exploits” of the Greek gods and goddesses included sexual licentiousness as well as heroic deeds fighting monsters and armies single-handedly (sound like Hollywood?). Hercules, for example, typically picked up a few women for the night when he came back to town after doing “heroic deeds.”

men of reputation and of stories passed down through time. There's nothing in this description that is necessarily good; it could describe Attila the Hun just as well.

**The Nephilim** – The “sons of God” and the “daughters of man” produced *Nephilim* – supposedly some race of mankind that had extraordinary physical or mental powers, or capabilities resulting in impressive worldly results. Given that people were living for centuries, and the capabilities of mankind had begun on a higher level than we moderns would understand (deriving from the perfection of Adam's state), the Nephilim could have been capable of great things – “great” meaning extraordinary, not necessarily beneficial to the human race.

Nobody really knows what the Nephilim were. Translators have rendered the word “giants,” perhaps because of the description that the Israelites gave of them later on in the book of Numbers when the Israelites were thinking of invading Canaan. “And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.” (Numbers 13:33) But the Hebrew word that it's based on is the verb *naphal* – “to fall.” In other words, “those who have fallen” from their great height (as God's sons) – these have turned to sexual immorality, wars and oppression, building empires and forming their whole lives around power and wealth and the things of this world, with all the inevitable wrongs that go along with that downfall.

Again, the way we choose to translate the words can deaden the real effect that the passage is trying to

convey. They were “mighty men” – but it's because they were men of war, slaughtering thousands, bent on conquest and oppression; they did have “renown” – but it can also be understood as notorious and infamous. We could translate it either way; but what God thought of the whole situation, in verses 5 and 6, was not positive at all but very negative. He determined that it was time to get rid of them all because of the mess they were creating.

My point is that this story about the Nephilim is supposed to add to the dark nature of the entire chapter as God surveyed *all* of mankind and pronounced it a failure.

**God is grieved** – To me this is the most powerful and the most heart-breaking statement in all the Bible about what God thinks of us. It's like a mother saying of her only child, “I wish he had never been born!”

No doubt you've seen a movie where the “good guys” are chasing the “bad guys.” And no doubt you feel good when they catch the bad guys and give them the punishment they deserve. The whole time you're watching this, you have positioned yourself on the side of the good guys – you naturally identify with them.

But here in Genesis 6 the story has taken an unexpected twist. YOU are the evil person. God is talking about *you* here. He is grieved that he made you. And he has plans to do away with you.

Why do we avoid the obvious meaning of this verse? God is the same, and people are the same now as they were before the Flood. God has never liked us; there's nothing in the Bible to support that vanity. There's nothing in us that appeals to him – to claim that

there is is like saying a dead corpse is appealing to someone. *You* may think that you're not too bad (because you don't understand his high standards of holiness and perfection), but God doesn't see anything in you that pleases him.

None is righteous, no, not one;  
no one understands; no one seeks  
for God. All have turned aside;  
together they have become  
worthless; no one does good, not  
even one. (Romans 3:10-12)

If God loved us, he wouldn't have proceeded to kill every man, woman and child on earth *without mercy*, with no hope of their ever being saved or getting back into his good graces. There wasn't a word of warning said here to untold millions of people – just sudden, unexpected destruction.

In those days before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, *and they were unaware* until the Flood came and swept them all away. (Matthew 24:38-39)

In fact, God doesn't value anything of this world anymore. The story of the Flood shows us an angry God who had decided to destroy everything, including us. None of this was his fault. We ruined a perfect opportunity to walk with a good God, to please him, to rule over a world created by him to bring him honor and glory – and we turned our backs on him. The sin is monstrous in his eyes. What he sees now is a corrupt criminal living in a miserable, wretched, broken world that can't possibly be made right. So the only solution is to get rid of the whole thing.

I am not painting the picture blacker than it was – this is in fact what God did during the Flood. He doesn't want this world, and he doesn't want us. We're finished in his eyes.

The fact that he started up again with Noah and "restored" the earth for him doesn't take away from the point. Genesis is a series of stories that not only show what God was doing in those ancient days, but what he intends to do on an eternal, cosmic level at the end of time. To move on to the Covenant, God "reset" the world, cleared the stage and set up the props again, and continued the story line. The "reset" wasn't because he changed his mind about this world. "[*God*] made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly." (2 Peter 2:6)

Destroying the world was a summary judgment against it that is still in force. This is proved by the prophecies all through the Bible that the world still stands under that judgment and it still must be destroyed.

By the same Word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the Day of Judgment and destruction of the ungodly. (2 Peter 3:7)

It's the *lesson* that we have to take away from the Genesis account. We are *not* safe: we are still condemned; this world must be destroyed; God wants none of it anymore. It's just a matter of time when the reality, so terrifyingly illustrated through the Flood, will fall upon our own heads. And when it happens, there won't be a restoration of the world as it is now – that will never be. God is done with the world as it is now; he made that plain with the story of the Flood. And when it happens,

billions upon billions of humans will fall into eternal darkness and misery without a hint of warning, just as it happened in Noah's day with its millions. Because he likes *none* of them; he's grieved that he made them.

So we're learning here that God doesn't intend to leave us alone in our sin, and he certainly isn't going to put up with it forever. At a time yet unannounced he will do away with it for good.

If there was ever a justification in the entire Bible to fear God, this is it.

**120 years** – For some reason many students of the Bible interpret this to mean that, from this point in the story until the Ark was finally finished, was a span of 120 years. As if God was pronouncing a judgment on the world – that it had only 120 more years to live.

But that doesn't square with the facts.

- Noah was 500 years old *before* his three sons were born. (5:32)
- *Then* God addressed Noah, the righteous man who already had three sons. (6:10)
- The Flood came when Noah was 600 years old – *after* his three sons were already born. (7:6)

This means that the time lapse between when God spoke to Noah about the Flood, and when the Flood actually came, was probably considerably less than 100 years.

But there was something else that God intended to change – the average lifespan of man himself. Up until this point we have records of men living for 900+ years (except for Enoch). After the Flood, people began to die at earlier

ages until, by the time of Moses, 120 years was the new limit. Of course people died from many causes before reaching that age; but even in our day with modern medicine and so many health benefits, almost nobody lives past that 120-year limit.

When individual men lived for hundreds of years, they would be patriarchs of their families and would continue to have a huge influence on the affairs of their families during that entire time. Family dynasties would preserve the traditions and values of someone who had been living for the last 500-700 years. History therefore would consist of those long-range dynasties instead of individual deeds. Perhaps God decided that each generation needed to stand on its own feet instead of being burdened (or blessed!) with their ancestors' way of life. By shortening man's lifespan to 120 years, God changed the makeup of history itself. Now every man is judged by his own actions instead of hiding under the umbrella of his ancestors. History is fragmented instead of continuous; thus you have David's heirs making a huge mess of things in the Kingdom of Israel because their forefather wasn't around to make sure they stayed on course with David's Plan.

It's a curse on generations when God takes the righteous out of the world, because then people go back to their sins without the benefit of God's presence among them. But it's a blessing when God takes out the wicked; who can imagine living in a tyranny like Nazi Germany or Stalinist Russia for hundreds of years? God uses our short life spans for his own purposes.

This maximum lifespan reflects our lost status in God's Creation. We're basically just wasting our time now.

“All the toil of man is for his mouth.” (Ecclesiastes 6:7) Man was originally made to rule over and maintain God’s Creation in unfathomable ways, and that would require long (perhaps eternal?) life spans to achieve. But now that we’ve turned our backs on God and life has become a matter of satisfying our lusts, there is nothing that we do in our rebellion that God could possibly be interested in. So now we have a short time (some of us much shorter!), in order to limit the damage that we do, and in order to do the “one thing needful” (Luke 10:42). We usually don’t even take advantage of the time we *do* have to achieve that simple requirement.

**Noah** – One man stood out from all the rest of humanity in God’s eyes. By combining the testimonies of Scripture we can gain some insight into his character. Noah was –

- ***A righteous man*** (Genesis 6:9; Ezekiel 14:14) – “Righteous” means acceptable to God according to his Law – God alone sets the rules. “It will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us.” (Deuteronomy 6:25) Nothing less than legal perfection will do; God cannot abide a sinner in his presence – no exceptions.
- ***An heir of the righteousness that comes by faith*** (Hebrews 11:7) – But there are two ways to righteousness: one is by following the Law to the letter, and the other way is to believe in God who cleanses us by sacrifice and then gives his own righteousness to us as a gift. Search the Scriptures: these are the only two ways into the presence of God. Jesus Christ

was the only man who fulfilled the Law perfectly. But Abel was the first person to blaze the trail to righteousness through faith. So the Apostle assures us that Noah saw this second way to righteousness, by the gift of faith that God gave him, making him a son.

- ***A blameless man*** (Genesis 6:9) – The Hebrew word used here is תמים, which means “whole, sound”. “Blameless” doesn’t really get at the meaning. When we think of being blameless, we think that someone hasn’t done anything wrong. But when it says that he was “whole, sound” that means he had all the necessary aspects of what God is looking for in his people. There may still be sin in the heart, but his special character as God’s son will take care of any problems that arise from sin. See David (2 Samuel 11-12, Psalm 51) as an example. We already saw in the Creation account the kind of son that God wanted to see in man, the seven character traits of the perfect son; evidently he saw these traits in Noah. He was “a man of God ... complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:17) That was enough to move God to spare his son from disaster.
- ***A man who walked with God*** (Genesis 6:9) – To walk with God means that he lived in two worlds at the same time: in this world, and in God’s spiritual world. He could see by faith the true God, his glory, his Law, his mercy and grace. He could see the brokenness of this world and what the wicked were doing to it. He could see his way through the problem areas and he laid hold of the spiritual resources

of his Father in Heaven. In fact he shared the same perspective that God had on things: what was on God's heart, was also on Noah's heart. He was after the glory of God and the building of the Kingdom of God. And so whatever he did, prospered – because he walked in the presence of Life and Light itself. This also showed his true relationship with God – as a son to his Father in Heaven. Since they shared a common life, it was no wonder that God confided in him alone the full details of what he planned to do to the world and what Noah had to do. This information was for the Family only.

- ***A herald of righteousness*** (2 Peter 2:5) – Noah's walk with God was no secret. "The Gentiles ... live in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery." (1 Peter 4:3-4) Anybody who walks with God isn't going to join the world's party, so he/she will be ridiculed and despised by the wicked. It takes courage to stand against the culture; unfortunately many of God's people think they can hide their faith and still remain part of the community. No, there's a reward for being ostracized by the wicked – you will be singled out by God, who looks for true faith, holiness, righteousness, completeness, a life that shines like a star in the darkness in his Heir. God isn't looking for lights under a basket.

- ***A sinner*** – Notwithstanding all the praise given about his righteousness, God does say later on in Genesis 8 that "the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth." This of course includes Noah himself, as we shall see in the account of his getting drunk, as well as in the fact that the entire sinful human race has descended from him. "Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins." (Ecclesiastes 7:20) That's both discouraging and encouraging. The Flood did not change man's heart; and yet God has mercy on his people in spite of their sin – when they walk in faith.

The lesson to glean from this full description of Noah is this: that God will deliver *this* kind of person – none other. Do we have lesser standards for ourselves than these? Then we can expect no deliverance when the final catastrophe comes upon the earth. God has high standards; he loves this kind of person; he rewards those who are passionate about him and those who walk with him. God saved only Noah. He is no respecter of persons, he doesn't bend the rules, he's not playing games, and someday we're all going to find out just how serious he is about people being like Noah. Is this beyond our reach? Is this "perfection" something that we couldn't reasonably expect from the average person? That argument didn't hold in Noah's day and it won't on Judgment Day either.

**An end of all flesh** – The significance of this act of extermination was not so much in what God did as in what it resulted in. When God destroyed all life from the earth (excepting the sea creatures), *the only life left was within*

*the Ark*. It became a seed, if you will, that God would plant in the cleansed earth to give life once again to a new world. The Ark became crucial in importance: outside was death, inside was life.

Our modern protest that “God loves the whole world” is totally missing the point here.<sup>4</sup> He turned his back on the world; the only ones he loved were the ones he drew into the Ark to live. He closed the book on the rest of the world and focused exclusively on the survivors. Life in itself wasn’t sacred, evidently, since he so thoroughly did away with it; it was the life chosen to repopulate the earth that he valued.

We put a high premium on life, especially our own, thinking that even God must respect our lives. Look at the extent we go to in taking care of even our pets here in America! Popular movements such as “save the planet” and “animal rights” take it as a given that life is sacrosanct and must be respected at all costs.

But in God’s view, only the life within the Ark had any value. *Deliverance* now separates the privileged from the rejected: those who are not delivered are of no worth to him; those who are delivered have privilege and are given paradise. God is interested in only those who are within the Ark; he has no more use for those who are not.

Here was *God’s* method of preservation of species and saving the earth!

**The Ark** – The Ark was made of “gopher” wood (Hebrew גֹּפֶר), probably

---

<sup>4</sup> See the Excursus on John 3:16. God *so loved* his world that he *destroyed the wicked* in order to save it.

the cypress tree.<sup>5</sup> God gave Noah the exact dimensions for the Ark; that in itself verifies its historicity because now we can calculate how big it was, and whether or not it had a chance of holding as many animals as the story says. Of course there has always been disagreement over this during the last two or three centuries; but experts not biased against the story’s truth have assured us that it was quite capable of holding the representatives of life on earth. It was huge.

But the real value of the Ark lies in what it provided for Noah: while God destroyed the world and the wicked in it, he provided a means of saving his faithful ones – the ones who walked with him. It didn’t *change* Noah and his family; rather it *saved* them from the general destruction. Noah was already pleasing in God’s sight. And God didn’t put Noah and his family somewhere else in Creation to spare them; he carried them safely *through* the destruction. “In which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.” (1 Peter 3:20) They were there, watching, as the wicked all around them were being

---

<sup>5</sup> The ESV doesn’t translate the word, leaving it with its Hebrew letters; the NIV has “cypress”. Most commentators favor the cypress because of Adam Clarke (1760-1832) who noted the similarity of consonants between *gopher* in Hebrew, and *kuparisson* in Greek. If so, it would most probably have been the *Cupressus sempervirens*, commonly called Italian cypress, an evergreen conifer that is native to southern Europe and western Asia. Also called the “pencil pine” because of its straight, narrow profile (and for that reason easily made into lumber), it is pliable, durable, fire-resistant, and very aromatic. For a long time cypress was used in distilleries as staves to hold mash ferments to make alcohol before the invention of stainless steel, demonstrating its ability to form watertight seams.

destroyed – and yet they rode through the Flood in safety. What was killing others could not harm them. The Ark was *designed* to protect them from the floodwaters.

He is not afraid of bad news;

his heart is firm, trusting in the LORD.

His heart is steady; he will not be afraid,

until he looks in triumph on his adversaries. (Psalms 112:7-8)

Part of the pain of the wicked on Judgment Day will be when the righteous turn to them, as they're sinking into Hell, and say, "I told you this was true!" (Luke 16:25) Judgment will be a very public event.

**Covenant with Noah** – We will discuss this covenant more at length later on in chapter 9. For now, we should note one thing: a "covenant" is nothing more than an agreement, a contract between two parties guaranteeing that something will happen or that goods will be transferred. We all know what a contract is like because we make them, or sign them, for all sorts of legal transactions in ordinary life.

The reason we have to make this clear is that many scholars have forced this ordinary word into a theological principle: "Covenant Theology." They teach that the covenant that God made with Noah was the very same covenant he made with Abraham, and with other people throughout the history of Israel. In fact they believe that the over-arching "covenant" includes an eternal agreement between God the Father and Christ, another one with Adam, one here with Noah, and then more covenants further on with the Israelites, David, and

with the Church. With each person God added a new dimension to the "covenant", and now we have the fully developed agreement in Christ.

The problem is that we can't support this theory from Scripture. There's no record at all of the "agreement" between Father and Son in the Trinity; theologians readily admit this. And there's no substance to an "agreement" between Adam and God beyond the fact that man was directed to rule over the earth and to multiply. David's covenant stated that God would make the house of David great;<sup>6</sup> it doesn't have any direct bearing on the Covenant with Abraham. And of course we could pull any and all of these points together to form an overarching "covenant" throughout the Bible – but what is gained in doing this except confusion? There's no theological backbone pulling all these agreements into line with each other.

The fact is that the covenant that God made with Noah (and the surviving creatures in the Ark) was a simple contract, an agreement, that "never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." (Genesis 9:11) People have been making too much of the word "covenant" as if every single place we see it occur in the Bible must be an additional aspect of the

---

<sup>6</sup> The Covenant with David involved the kind of Kingdom that David was to set up over Israel, involving a detailed plan and procedures, to insure the well-being of God's people. This Kingdom and its structure continued in Israel's history and is now the pattern that Christ uses as he builds his Kingdom in the Church. It was not the Abrahamic Covenant, but it provided a safe environment for it.

eternal Covenant which is our Gospel.<sup>7</sup> Instead we need to back away and see what this occurrence of the word “agreement” means in its context. We will see that the Covenant that God made with Abraham was a *completely different matter*. The entire Bible indeed is based on the Covenant – the one that God made with Abraham.

**Two of each kind** – God was obviously interested in propagation of species. The emphasis is not so much on the individual, but in the continuation of the race.<sup>8</sup> All creatures would die; but with the ability to reproduce, the future of the world-system and of man in particular was guaranteed. God wanted a continuing system, with all the necessary resources, available to man.

Consider this: when all of a particular life form is reduced to two individuals – male and female – one would think that extinction is all but guaranteed! And yet in God’s hands the seed, as precarious as it may appear, *would* grow and prosper and cover the earth. The Creator’s blessing is more powerful than we can imagine. Numbers make no difference to him.

---

<sup>7</sup> That’s like saying that every time you sign a receipt for a credit card purchase, it has something to do with the house you bought. The two have nothing to do with each other except they share the concept of an agreement between two parties.

<sup>8</sup> We see this same principle at work in the Wilderness experience of Israel, as God put to death the entire generation of Israelites whom he brought out of Egypt and then refused to let them enter in the Promised Land. Yet with this massive stroke of condemnation he nevertheless preserved the nation itself, taking their children into Canaan forty years later. So the *Nation* is always preserved; but whether the *individual* survives is another matter.

The fact that God specifically required two of each kind of creature on earth (in the next chapter we learn that there would be seven sets of the “clean” animals) shows the complexity and unity of the system of life on our planet. In order to prosper, *all* the creatures that God made are necessary; each depends on others, and the whole world needs every kind. Scientists are only beginning to understand the interdependency of life forms in the world. And here in the Ark would be the complete set to reproduce the system that God designed at the beginning – none must be missing, all are needed (like the DNA sequence in the body). Again, it’s not the individuals who were important (there would be more as time goes on), but the species that were necessary, for a successful world system. Not just life in general, but what each species would do and provide for the whole system. It all fits together. All this is very functional in God’s eyes. “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.” (1 Corinthians 12:12)

**Food** – The Creator, of course, is concerned that his creatures have the food they need to survive. We have usually seriously underestimated this concern of his. We take food for granted. But without his constant, faithful, generous and abundant supply of food for all creatures we would have terrible problems on our hands. Planet Earth is unique in that way. Ask any retail store how much work is involved in keeping their shelves stocked with all the foodstuffs that consumers require – and then multiply that billions of times over to cover the needs of the planet, every day, without fail. To feed his

creatures is a never-ending concern that God has.

God instructed Noah to “take with you every sort of food,” not only for himself and his family but also for the creatures in the Ark. They would have to have enough food for five months. In other words, the Ark became a self-contained ecosystem. There would be no help from outside during that five months; so God designed the system so that it would be self-sufficient. Everything they would need would be inside the Ark. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 1:3) “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.” (2 Peter 1:3)

**The Point** – The message of this chapter is not designed to flatter us. This is God’s answer to a ruined Creation. Here is the full picture of a terrifying God of wrath.

God does *not* like us – any of us. If we had lived in that day, we too would have been destroyed in the Flood without mercy. God looks at our hearts, not just our actions, and he finds there the inclination to every kind of evil. None of us are concerned with, let alone working on, what he made us to do at Creation. We have become useless to him, dangerous to others around us, destructive of his world, ignorant of his ways and glory. If for nothing else, this story is important as a reality check: our future does not depend on what we think of ourselves, but on what God thinks of us. And it’s not good.

So we *must* be destroyed. God began his “strange work” of destroying his own creation with all the vengeance and alienation of an angry God. We

cannot ignore this side of him – he fully intends to do the same thing with the rest of humanity at the end of time. There’s an irrefutable argument about Hell here: the God of Love kills with no mercy.

The only possible way that someone will escape the wrath to come is if they walk with God. And even then, it’s not their own righteous acts that will save them, but only their coming into the Ark which alone can save them from God’s wrath. Only in the Ark will they find constant provision and protection from danger. They need nothing from the world, because they will draw everything from their God. Of course that’s easy to see in this story, but it’s much more difficult for a person to appreciate what the Father has given those who are with Christ the Son.

But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. (2 Corinthians 2:14-16)

The Ark was designed for the faithful only, for God’s children. As Christ was resurrected from the dead, so are believers.

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 3:21)

But there’s an even bigger lesson in this story. Going back to the Father/Son

theme, we can't miss the fact that God was treating Noah as his own Son – and God has *only one Son*. The whole problem of sin was huge to God; destroying Creation was a heart-breaking necessity for the Creator; and the way of escape was a secret known only to God. And he shared all of this, as one would expect, *only with his own Son* – Noah.

Nobody else knew what was coming – because only the Son need know.

The story of the Flood shows us God's intent to destroy the old and recreate the new world. The nature of the new son who will rule over this new world, however, won't come out in detail until we get to the stories of the Patriarchs.

Copyright © 2018 Charles R. Vogan Jr.  
All rights reserved

Scripture quotations (unless otherwise noted) are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

## **Genesis: A Theological Commentary**

**ISBN 978-1547101634**



**Ravenbrook Publishers**

*A subsidiary of*  
**Shenandoah Bible Ministries**

**[www.Ravenbrook.org](http://www.Ravenbrook.org)**

**[www.Shenbible.org](http://www.Shenbible.org)**