

Moral Causes for the Flood (Part 3)

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[0:00] All right.

And what we've been looking at, if you recall, and it really hasn't been all that long ago, we skipped one Wednesday night and a number of us gathered here and went out and did a little caroling last Wednesday! And I had a good time doing that.

So it's been a couple of weeks, and here we are getting back to where I was there in Genesis chapter 6, in case you don't notice that on your notes. Genesis chapter 6, and what we've been doing is going through that chapter and looking at the moral causes for the flood.

And we're going to get to the flood eventually, and there's a whole lot for us to consider concerning the flood. But as we lead up to it, and that's what we're doing here in Genesis chapter 6, we're looking at the moral causes.

And I have identified three here, because I think they're pretty clear from the chapter. First of all, unrighteous marriages. That's how it begins there in verses 1 and 2.

[1:11] We've already looked at that. Second, the sinful practices of humanity. And not that somehow sin commenced at some point right there before the flood.

It started way back there in the garden, of course, you know, with the fall of Adam and Eve. And the depravity of man became very evident right at the very beginning.

But then the advance of sin and the pollution of sin in the human race didn't take long to flourish.

But it got worse and worse and worse over the 1600 and a few years since the time of Adam to the time that finally God sent the flood.

And so the sinful practices of humanity clearly led to God judging all creation as a result.

And we talked about that. And then the third moral cause, and I call this a moral cause, the supreme cause. And that is that God was the one who set the flood.

[2:21] God was the one that judged the world. And the cause then is the end of God's patience and longsuffering. Now, so that's where we're going to spend our time here tonight and get on into kind of introducing Noah, which figures into this.

The end of God's patience and longsuffering. And we can find that really expressed in a number of different verses in the chapter. And I'm going to go ahead and just read them. Verse 3 to begin with, where the Bible says, And the Lord said, My spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh.

Yet his days shall be of 120 years. And then you skip on down to verses 6 and 7 and 8. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and he was grieved in his heart.

So the Lord said, 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.

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. And then verse 13, and we are going to maybe consider some of these other verses as well along the way. But verse 13, And God said to Noah, The end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them.

[3:45] And behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Them, of course, a reference to man, mankind, of humankind. All right, so those are the verses that highlight for us that at a point in time, a point in earth's history, near the end of this 1600 year period, from Adam to when God finally sent his judgment to flood, there was a point when God's patience and longsuffering came to an end, clearly.

And yet, even with that in mind, that point in time, or that moment when his patience came to an end, that moment was not completely void of grace, was it?

As we're going to see. Now, what was God's response, then, to the wickedness of humanity? More than just simply the flood, there is judgment, certainly, and ultimately it will be, but there is grace

mixed with it.

There are four responses that I think we can identify here in chapter 6. God's responses to the wickedness of humanity. Four of them. And the first one is restraint.

You say, is that a response to the wickedness of man? It certainly is. God showed restraint. Verse 3 says, And the Lord said, My spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh, that is, he's carnal, depraved.

[5:17] That's what God is saying there. He's flesh. Not just that he's flesh and bone, that he's physical. The idea is that he's carnal, depraved. Yet, and this is the all-important phrase, yet his days shall be 120 years.

Now, understand that for 1600 years now, or close to it, God has watched his creation, mankind, the crowning glory of his creation.

He's been watching mankind continue to corrupt itself. Which, by the way, I think is a profound testimony to the patience and long-suffering God.

We're talking about 1600 years that God put up with this. But now, God says, My spirit, and I believe that's a reference to the Holy Spirit, shall not strive with man forever.

What does that phrase mean? Well, it means that spiritual conviction, Holy Spirit conviction, will come to an end. We're not to believe that throughout this 1600 years, that the Holy Spirit was not convicting man of sin.

[6:30] Because this is part of God's grace. But God is saying, that's going to come to an end here. Or we might put it this way, My judgment will not be restrained indefinitely.

Just because they've been rocking along for now 1600 years, people should not get the idea that, well, God just doesn't care then. And, by the way, we could bring that down to a smaller increment of time.

And we understand that there are a lot of people walking this earth today who have lived for 20 or 30 or 40 years in sin and nothing really bad has happened to them. And so they're thinking, Well, God's not going to judge me.

God doesn't really care about this. And this is what mankind was thinking, I think, in their day. That is if they even thought about God at all. And it's likely that they didn't.

But God is saying, My judgment will not be restrained indefinitely. And yet, listen, God's grace is evident here. Though you really have to search the Scriptures to discover this.

[7:39] It's really pretty clear. During these 1600 years of God's restraint, God made sure that two things were happening. He made sure that righteousness was preached.

God made sure of that. And I think He did it in a number of ways, including His creation, as well as a number of key individuals.

And we have two that are highlighted for us in Scripture. I don't think we're to suppose that they were the only ones, or the only way that God conveyed His Gospel.

But we have two highlighted. First, Enoch. Now, how do we know Enoch was a preacher? A preacher of righteousness. Well, Jude 14, 15 tells us that. Go to the New Testament to find that out. It says Enoch prophesied. And the idea behind that word is not that he foretold the future, but rather that he was a foreteller of God's truth.

[8:39] He walked with God. And then eventually, of course, God took him on to heaven without dying. But Enoch was a preacher. And then we know, of course, that Noah was a preacher.

At least for the 120 years. The Bible tells us in 2 Peter 2, 5, that he was a preacher of righteousness. And then we could step back to 1 Peter 3, 18-20, and discover who he preached to. That is, if you understand that text properly. And I think I do. I think he was preaching to those. It was a reference to Noah preaching to the disobedient souls of the day.

In Noah's day, those people who lived prior to the flood. And so, God made sure that righteousness was preached. In this time. And he also made sure that repentance was provided.

That part of his long suffering is that men would repent. Verse 3 says, His days, this is God again speaking, His days shall be 120 years.

[9:45] There's been some confusion about that. What does it mean? There have been those who have supposed that what the passage is talking about is that God is going to reduce the lifespan of man to 120 years.

But we know that can't be the case. For example, Abraham, he lived 175 years. This was after this time when God said this, of course. After the flood. Isaac, Abraham's son, also lived 180 years.

And there were others who lived longer than 120 years. So, the point here is not that God is now saying because of the wickedness of man, his lifespan is going to be greatly reduced to 120 years, even if you consider that as some kind of average.

That's not the idea here. The idea here is that God is giving one last grace period for man. That's going to last 120 years.

What a testimony to his grace. And long suffering. Though there is a limit. Right? And that's the whole idea here. That is the end of God's patience. The end of God's long suffering.

[10:57] But even when he comes to this point, he says, My spirit will not always strive with man. That is, I'm not going to restrain my judgment forever. And yet, still, I'm going to give you another 120 years to repent.

That's a gracious, gracious God. And add to that, all the while, in this 120 years, his preacher of righteousness, Noah, is proclaiming the gospel throughout this time for people to repent.

Alright, so what was God's response to the wickedness of mankind? The first one that we can identify is restraint. A gracious God. The second one is what we might call regret.

Regret. Verse 6 says, And the Lord was sorry. That's the word that, or how it is translated in the New King James Version. He was sorry.

Sorry about what? Sorry that he had made man on the earth. And he was grieved in his heart. Now, the New King James uses the English word repent to translate this.

[12:05] Some of you might have the King James there. But the question is, how could God repent of anything? That's always the question. And this is not the only place in Scripture where the Bible speaks of God repenting.

How could he repent of anything that he's done? Or said he's never done anything wrong. How could you repent of that? Never said anything wrong or sinful. How could you repent? Now, man repents when he's sinned.

Or he should. But God has never sinned, of course. So how could God repent? Well, in first place, and I don't think I included this in your notes, the word here translated in hymn by the King James, and rightly so, the word is not the same word that is generally used in reference to man repenting. There's a different word here. Although the word used does on occasion in Scripture refer to man repenting of sin.

But quite often it is a word used in relation to God repenting. And it doesn't mean repenting of sin. I don't have to tell you that. You know that. So what is the meaning?

[13:17] Well, it means that God lamented. That would be a word that we could insert there. He lamented. He was lamenting. Or if that one is a little confusing, he grieved.

God actually suffered grief that he had created mankind. Or we could put it this way. He was filled with regret. The same word, and I think I have this in your notes, the same word we used of God in 1 Samuel 15, 11, in reference to Saul.

Remember? I heard King Saul who was a miserable king. And the Bible says, God said, I greatly regret or repent that I have set up Saul as king.

Why? For he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments. So what's the idea here? The idea is that as God, Yahweh God, surveyed the universal condition of mankind, he took a look at his man, man that he had created, he was grieved that man was in such a state of depravity.

That's the idea here. Think about it. He created Adam and Eve perfect, without sin, in his image, and provided for him every possible thing you could ever need or want.

[14:56] chief among those needs and wants would be a personal relationship with his creator, God. And man threw all that away and became depraved.

And God is grieved to his very heart. In fact, that's what the Bible says here. He was grieved in his heart. Now, that's what is technically called an anthropomorphism.

I don't know if I put that in your notes. It's an expression, anthropomorphic. That is giving God human qualities or actually like a heart.

Sometimes the Bible speaks of God with hands and feet and ears and eyes. But it's an expression that is supposed to convey to us the actual pain that God experienced when he looked at his creation to see what it had become because of the sin of man.

All right. So, regret is the second response to the wickedness of mankind. The third one is retribution. Retribution.

[16:11] Verse 7. So, the Lord said, 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.

I repent. Here's the same word again. I am sorry that I have made him. And verse 13, he says pretty much the same thing again.

He says this to Noah. God said to Noah, 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.

This is serious. Very serious. So, what's the result of God being grieved in his very heart over the depravity of man?

The result is the severest punishment possible that is going to fall upon the creation. The word destroy, a very strong verb.

[17:15] And it means to wipe away. To completely just wipe away. To blot out totally. The form of the word in the Hebrew text, I mean the way it's spelled in the Hebrew.

We won't get in all the technical side of that. But you know, in Hebrew as well as Greek, the way, because of suffixes, prefixes, and so forth, the way it's spelled in its form give us an indication to its meaning.

And the word here for destroy indicates two things. One, it indicates that God was very determined that He's going to judge all of His creation because of sin.

Very determined. A strong determination. That's the idea behind this word. And He has every right. Right? I mean, He's the Creator. And then the other idea is one of completeness or completion.

A complete destruction of all things. Man, but not just man. Beasts, all creeping things. Vowels of the air. Now, why would they be included?

[18:30] Because whether you realize it or not, or catch it from Scripture or not, man was placed on this earth as sovereign over the creation.

And his sin not only infected and affected himself, but all of the creation. And God is going to destroy it all because of man.

Man, beasts, all creeping things. Vowels of the air. Those that I mentioned here, obviously the flood is going to destroy all vegetation. And so forth. Now, we're talking here about complete destruction. It's universal. And I'll go ahead and make this point here, though we'll get more into this when we look at the flood itself. But we're not talking about some little local flooding that took place here. There are scholars who believe that the flood was not worldwide. That it was just a local kind of flood. And that at this point, possibly, mankind only lived in a certain part of the earth.

[19:37] And so he just destroyed man there and not the entire earth. But that's ridiculous. The Bible is very clear. This was a complete, total destruction.

God said he was going to destroy, he said, man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air from the face of the earth.

And he's a whole earth is involved here. He said in verse 11, the earth also was corrupt. Man said spread out around the entire globe and corrupt this entire planet.

Verse 12 says, all flesh, that's all flesh, had corrupted their way on the earth. He said in verse 13, the end of all flesh has come before me, for earth is filled.

The earth is filled with violence through them, that is man. And behold, I will destroy them with the earth. With the earth. We're talking about the entire planet. Creation on this planet.

[20:37] And so this is a universal thing. And why did God determine to do this? Because, verse 11, corruption. Violence.

Verse 12, God looked upon the earth and indeed it was corrupt. Corrupt. Verse 13, the earth is filled with violence through them, that is through mankind.

And so God is going to send retribution. What is God's response to the weakness of mankind? First, restraint. Second, regret. Third, retribution.

And then fourth, we kind of began with grace and we'll end with grace here. That is fourth, redemption. That's his response. Redemption.

Now, here's God's redeeming grace. The entire human race will not be totally eradicated. Verse 8, but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

[21:41] That's one of those really profound but this kind of sentences, clauses, phrases in the Bible. And what a tremendous thing.

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. You know, it's interesting that there are only two men in all the Old Testament where it is said that they found grace in the eyes of the sight of Yahweh.

It doesn't mean that there were no ones who received grace, but only two men were specifically said to have found grace in the eyes of Yahweh. It was Noah and Moses.

Those two. Now, this grace extended to Noah and his family was for more than just simply to escape judgment. It was a whole lot more.

That was that. But it was a lot more. Noah and his family were recipients of God's salvation. That's what he means here. They were saved.

[22:43] This was God's unmerited favor toward Noah and to his family. And so, you know, the grace bestowed upon Noah in the Old Testament is equivalent to the saving grace bestowed upon all New Testament believers.

It's the same grace. Noah did not work for this grace, for his salvation. He did not earn it.

There's some that confuse, come to a confusion here because of what is said about Noah, that somehow God picked him out because he was better than anybody else or that he had earned the grace of God.

Now, it was not on the basis of merit. It was on the basis of divine favor. Now, that's the only, by the way, only grounds for salvation is God's unmerited faithful.

The only grounds. Otherwise, you would have to earn that grace and you cannot earn grace. If you could earn it, it would not be grace. And it's exactly because God's saving grace, because of God's saving grace, that Noah was the kind of man that he was.

[24:07] See, we sometimes put the cart before the horse. God did not save Noah because he was a good man. Noah was a good man because God gave him grace and favored him.

And that's why we have this description of him that follows. In verses 9 and 10, this is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations.

Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And we'll get to those three guys later. But the point here is that God's redemption of the human race through Noah or coming by way of Noah brought about three spiritual characteristics for Noah in Noah.

And they're really easy to identify. First, the Bible says Noah was a just man. He was a just man.

And the word here means that he was justified.

Justified by God. And again, Noah was not merely less wicked than the other people living on the planet. Noah also had a right relationship with God.

[25:27] The New Testament terminology would be that Noah was saved. Noah was born again. That's how we would call him today. Now, this is further established by the next thing God states about Noah.

Second, the Bible says Noah walked with God. He walked with God. The idea here is not that Noah just had a quiet time with God for maybe 15 minutes or an hour early in the morning or late at night. We're not talking here about an occasional experience. The idea behind Noah walked with God is a consistent lifestyle.

So, walking with God and communing with God, that characterized his life. And it ought to characterize every born-again believer.

We're not just talking about a Sunday thing. We're not just talking about a quiet time in the morning. We're not just talking about certain seasons of time in our lives when we are more needy spiritually.

[26:28] We're talking about a consistent, daily, ongoing communion with God that certainly involved everything about Noah's life.

See, Noah's life was a life of faith. Do you find the word faith here in the text? No. But we have it in the New Testament, don't we?

In Hebrews 11, 7, by faith, Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household.

The third characteristic is revealed about Noah. And that is, third, the Bible says Noah was perfect in his generations. Perfect in his generations.

The Hebrew word here translated perfect, in fact, it may be translated this way in some other versions of the Bible. But it means blameless or unimpeachable.

[27:36] Or morally, he was a man who lived uprightly, morally. And so Noah was blameless in two areas.

In his character. And that's the inside. You know, character really is who you are when nobody's looking. Character, he was blameless in his character and also blameless in his conduct.

That is, on the outside. That's what everyone observes about your life. And I maintain to you that Noah was these three things because of God's favor upon him.

And God's plan was to bring that godly line through the destruction. And in the judgment, he is going to give us a profound illustration of salvation.

Profound representation of Christ, a type of Christ in the ark. And we'll get to that when we get to that portion of the text. But he's going to bring Noah and his family through.

[28 : 47] And through that godly line, eventually the Savior, our Lord and Savior, will come. And God will work his redemption through his son, Jesus Christ.

Thank you.