

“Divine Intervention” (Genesis 6:1-8)

Have you noticed that we have become specialists at shirking responsibility and blaming others for our actions? If I overextend myself financially, it's not my fault; it's the fault of easy credit. If I get lung cancer, it isn't my fault that I chose to begin smoking; it's the fault of the tobacco company. If a man in a rage shoots and kills his neighbor, it isn't his fault; it's the gun manufacturers. If a drunk driver goes the wrong way on the highway, hits a school bus and a number of people are killed, the Ford Motor Company is sued for making an unsafe bus. We've even got “no fault” divorces now, so that if a marriage doesn't work out, no one has to take the blame. And people aren't guilty of perverted behavior anymore; it's in their genes. We blame heredity, environment, chemical imbalance, temporary insanity, job pressures, poverty, prejudice, and abuse. Now certainly those things can contribute to who we are and can cause problems for us, but we have taken it to an extreme that says that no one is accountable for their behavior anymore.

The message of the Bible runs contrary to our societal views. The Bible states that mankind is sinful. As a result, God must judge man's sin. Yet, although God must judge sin, the Bible also teaches that He loves mankind and invites man to enter into a relationship with Him. Genesis 6:1-8 shares this tension.

1. Prepare for God's Judgment (6:1-4). In 6:1-2, Moses writes, “**Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.**” These two verses teach that there was a population explosion (cf. 1:28) and men were marrying women.¹ For a brief moment we see a snapshot of everyday life.² We would call it “business as usual.” Yet, we also will see that this is the calm before the storm (Matt 24:38-39; Luke 17:26-27).

Few texts in the history of biblical interpretation have aroused more curiosity and divergence of opinion than Genesis 6:1-4. It is at once tantalizing and deeply puzzling. The three most popular positions may be labeled “the cosmologically mixed races view” (angels and humans),³ “the religiously mixed races view” (godly Sethites and worldly Cainites), and “the sociologically mixed races view” (despotic male aristocrats and beautiful female commoners). Each of these views has its own unique problems. The key to discerning which interpretation is best is determining which has the fewest problems, and most accurately reflects the context of this passage and the whole of Scripture. If you are interested in studying these views out in detail, please see the charts at the conclusion of this sermon.

Genesis 6 begins by naming two opposing groups: “**the sons of God**” and “**the daughters of men.**” It is no coincidence that Genesis 4-5 also describes two groups, the descendants of Cain and Seth. In 4:1-24, we find that Cainites lacked positive spiritual attributes. They were earthly, selfish, sensual, and an authority unto themselves. Sethites, however, had qualities of consecration, devotion, communion, service, and righteousness toward God (4:25). Knowing this context, we can identify Sethites as “**the sons of God.**”⁴ They were His chosen people in the pre-flood era. The Cainites, however, had separated themselves from God. Sadly, this passage teaches that the descendants of Seth intermarried with the descendants of Cain. Through these spiritually mixed marriages, Sethites failed to remain pure and true to their mission. They jeopardized God's plan of salvation (3:15), leaving Noah the only righteous one among them (6:9). God preserved the Messianic line by sending a great flood to save Noah and his family, and to judge unrepentant souls (1 Pet 3:20).

Let me be clear: The world became so wicked that believing men began marrying unbelieving women.⁵ The Hebrew literally reads, “saw...good...took.” Their sin repeats the pattern (“saw...good...took”) of the original sin in 3:6. They are driven by lust, not spiritual discernment.⁶

The concern to marry well is an important theme that is repeated throughout Genesis (24:1-4; 28:1; cf. 19:14; 26:34-35; 27:46).⁷ When you look at the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, there are numerous warnings given by Moses against intermarriage of believers and unbelievers (see esp. Gen 26 and 34). What's the unremitting command of God concerning marriage, throughout Scripture, to those who are called by His name? To marry only in the faith. Moses warned the Israelites not to marry the idolatrous inhabitants of the land, because, Exodus 34:16, "when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same." In Ezra 9, Ezra is livid with rage when he's told that the people of Israel have intermarried with pagan women. He writes, "For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy race has intermingled with the peoples of the lands" (Ezra 9:2a). Paul warned the Corinthian widows, 1 Corinthians 7:39, to marry only in the Lord. Do not, he said, be yoked together with unbelievers. Why? Because, 2 Corinthians 6:14 says, "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?"

Why is it so important to marry a Christian? Because of what had happened to Solomon, the king of Israel, when he married foreign women. Solomon's sad story is recorded in 1 Kings 11:1-4: "Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel, 'You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you, for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods.' Solomon held fast to these in love. He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away. For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been."

Please do not think you are wiser than the most brilliant man that has ever lived. You will not be the exception. Never, ever marry an unbeliever! Nothing will drag you down faster; nothing will destroy your family quicker than a wife or a husband who constantly pulls you and your children away from the Lord. And nothing will make you lonelier. And we all know this, and we all nod our heads, and yet it happens to our young people time and time again! Why? What does the text say? They saw, and then they took! Young men, make a covenant with your eyes not to fall in love with an image of beauty. Make a promise to yourself and to God, to look beyond the eyeliner, beyond the lip gloss, beyond all of the phony externals, and to fall in love instead with a gentle and quiet spirit, with an inner beauty that will last, with a woman who will faithfully love and serve the Lord alongside of you. Young women, do not say that your Non-Christian boyfriend treats you better than Christian boys do. That is not the issue. God is far more concerned with your holiness than your happiness.

In 6:3, Moses continues this narrative with these words: "**Then the LORD said, 'My Spirit shall not strive⁸ with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.'**" There are two interpretations of the phrase "**nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.**" One possibility is that the 120 years may signify the new age limit for people.⁹ It can be argued that 6:3 should be contrasted with 3:22 where eating of the Tree of Life would produce immortality. There seems to be ample evidence that after the flood the recorded ages steadily decline. While only Joseph lived less than 120 years in Genesis (50:26), by the end of the Pentateuch, Moses dies at 120 (Deut 34:7).¹⁰ Another view is that the 120 years refers to the time remaining between this announcement of judgment and the coming of the flood. Reference to the Lord's patience in 1 Pet 3:20 seems to confirm this option. This verse reminds us of the truth of Exodus 34:6: "The LORD God [is] compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth." Yet, eventually it is possible for man to reach the point of no return and judgment becomes inevitable.¹¹

Another issue that needs to be resolved is: Who are the “**Nephilim**”? In 6:4, Moses writes, “**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.**” Before answering this question it is critical to understand that 6:4 is a parenthetical statement. This verse does not state the Nephilim are the offspring of the sons of God and daughters of men. Rather, they are merely contemporaries of the sons of God and daughters of men that were on earth when the sons of God sinned.¹² Moses is careful to record that “**The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward.**” With that said, the word Nephilim occurs only here and in Numbers 13:33, where it refers to the sons of Anak, who were people of great stature.¹³ However, in Genesis 6:4, a term is included that further defines who the Nephilim are. The Hebrew word is *Gibborim*. The word *gibborim* comes from *gibbor*, meaning “a mighty man of valor, strength, wealth, or power.”¹⁴ In Genesis 10:8, Nimrod was such a *gibbor*. He also was clearly a king in the land of Shinar. Hence, the meaning of *Nephilim-Gibborim* is not “giants,” but something more like “princes,” “aristocrats,” or “great men” (i.e., fierce warriors, heroes, or mighty men).¹⁵ These characters are the famous men on the earth. In our society today, this would include all the hot musicians, actors, actresses, and athletes.

[The main point of these verses and the ones to come is that mankind deteriorates morally and spiritually.¹⁶ This incurs God’s wrath, therefore, we must prepare for God’s judgment. We must also...]

2. Perceive God’s ways (6:5-8). How does God respond to mankind’s sinfulness? In 6:5-8, Moses shares four ways.¹⁷ **First, God notices sin.** In 6:5, Moses writes, “**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.**” Genesis 6:5 may be the most strongly worded verse in the entire Bible!¹⁸ The first half of the verse reveals how *extensively* human evil had spread around the world: “**Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth**” (6:5a). The last half emphasizes that sin had permeated *intensively*, deep into the heart of every single human: “**...and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually**” (6:5b).¹⁹ This passage states that sin pervades every pore of the human being.²⁰ The key word in this verse is the word “**intent**” (*yesser*). The noun form of this word is used in 2:7 for the formation of man—God had made human beings by design (*vasar*), but they had taken their God-given capacities and devised evil continually.²¹ This word comes from the verb that describes a potter in the act of forming and molding his vessel (Isa 29:16). There is an emphasis on mankind’s wickedness. The words “**every**,” “**only**,” and “**continually**” point to the all-consuming depravity of man. Later, in 8:21, Moses quotes a portion of 6:5 and observes that the phrase “**only evil continually**” or “all the time” (NIV) means “from childhood” on. Original sin among human beings began with Adam and Eve, but each of us participates in original sin in another sense as we begin to exhibit sinful traits after we are born. David confessed that fact after he had committed adultery with Bathsheba: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” (Ps 51:5; see also 58:3).²²

Can you imagine a world where every member of a family would fight over the biggest piece of pie? Where no one would allow anyone else to merge into a line of traffic? Where abortion would be as accepted as a tooth extraction? Where the killing of the elderly and the infirm would be honored as an act of mercy? Where lawsuits would be as common as traffic tickets?²³ Oh, of course, you can imagine such a world...you’re living in it! Our world has excluded God and is focused on self.²⁴

Second, God grieves over sin. In 6:6, Moses writes, “**The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.**” Note the contrast between the heart of the wicked and the heart of God.²⁵ This is no heartless regret, but the reaction of someone who loves deeply.²⁶ This terminology is love language; it in no way suggests that God is not immutable (Mal 3:6).

The word translated “**grieved**” means “indignant rage.” The word is used to express the most intense form of human emotion, a mixture of rage and bitter anguish. Dinah’s brothers felt this way after she was raped; so did Jonathan when he heard Saul planned to kill David, and David reacted similarly when he heard of Absalom’s death (34:7; 1 Sam 20:34; 2 Sam 19:3). A deserted wife feels this way (Isa 54:6). The word is used of God’s feelings in two other passages (Ps 78:40; Isa 63:10). Only here is the verb supplemented by the phrase “**in His heart,**” underlying the strength of God’s reaction to human sinfulness.²⁷ Fortunately, Christ’s sacrifice will pacify God’s bitter indignation against sin (see 8:21).²⁸

Many are legitimately startled when they read that the Lord “**was grieved**” or “repented” that He had ever made man and woman upon the earth. How can both the immutability and the changeableness of God be taught in the same canon of Scripture? Scriptures frequently use the phrase “God repented.”²⁹ The Hebrew root (*nacham*) behind all the words variously translated as “relent,” “repent,” “be sorry,” and “grieve.” In its origins the root may well have reflected the idea of breathing or sighing deeply. It suggests a physical display of one’s feelings—sorrow, compassion, or comfort. When the Bible says that God repented, the idea is that His feelings toward some person or group of persons changed, in response to some change on the part of the objects of His action or some mediator who intervened (often by God’s own direction and plan). Often in the very same passages that announce God’s repentance there is a firm denial of any alteration in God’s plan, purpose, or character.³⁰ From our human perspective, then, it appears that the use of this word indicates that God changed His purpose. But the expression “to repent,” when used of God, is anthropopathic (i.e., a description of our Lord in human terms).

All of this is to say: Ultimately, God’s sorrow means action must be taken, not that a great cosmic mistake has been made.³¹ God is a living person and, as such, He can and does change when the occasion demands it. He does not change in His character, person, or plan. But He can and does respond to our changes.³² Our heavenly Father’s heart breaks when we disobey Him. To cause Him such grief in light of all that He has done for us in Christ is the height of ingratitude (see Eph 4:30).³³

Third, God judges sin. In 6:7, Moses writes, “**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.’**” As the ground must endure the consequences of its ruler’s sin, so also must the animals (see 3:17). God’s judgment would involve a complete erasure of man and all accompanying creatures from existence. The destruction of everything from man to animals has to do with man’s given sovereignty over the earth, for the irrational creatures were created for Him and therefore were involved in the fall. There would be no half-measures in dealing with sin.³⁴ Depravity requires God’s judgment. God’s pain over sin, especially idolatrous activities, prompts Him to blot out the wicked. The Bible tells us God watches our world with patience “not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Pet 3:9b). But don’t mistake His patience for toleration; or His love for acceptance; or His grief for weakness. There is a limit to God’s patience with the world, but He never sneaks up and delivers His judgment by surprise.³⁵

If our world, like Noah’s, is provoking the judgment of God, how is He warning us today? In the Old Testament, when a nation slipped so far away from God that its people no longer read His Word or heeded the prophets, He warned them of impending judgment through national or natural disasters such as an invading army or a locust plague. Today, He warns us in the same ways. When we hear of a nation invading another nation or a country self-destructing into civil war or a volcano erupting or a tidal wave sweeping villages away or an earthquake leveling entire cities or a forest fire devouring hundreds of thousands of acres of woodlands or a drought shriveling millions of acres of farmland or an epidemic threatening to wipe out a nation’s entire population, are we hearing the warning of the Creator demand, “Repent! Judgment is coming! I am holding you accountable for your wicked, willful ways?”³⁶

Finally, God grants grace. The narrative concludes in 6:8 with this powerful statement: “**But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.**” Often in biblical passages, the last word is one of hope.³⁷ Such is the case here. The word translated “**favor**” (*chen*) is also the word translated “**grace**.”³⁸ It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word comes from a root meaning “to bend or stoop”; thus, the condescending or unmerited favor of a superior person to an inferior one is implied.³⁹ So grace means, “God’s unmerited favor.” Grace gives us what we don’t deserve and sustains us through all of life.

This is the first mention of one of the most beautiful words in the Bible—grace, though we have seen many examples of God’s grace thus far. This word is likely first used here because Moses wants us to understand that Noah’s righteousness is not his own but a gift of God’s grace.⁴⁰ It was God’s grace that saved him. In the same way, it is only by God’s grace that we can escape His judgment on the wicked.

Why are we saved? Paul tells us in Titus 3:5: “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.”

Man still deteriorates. Society still runs down unless God intervenes. There will be an end to our world as there was to Noah’s world. A savior was chosen then; a Savior is available now: Jesus Christ. Jesus has provided a way of salvation, as Noah provided an ark. Men and women are invited to go in. Jesus died on the cross, and paid a price for our sins. They had to trust Noah’s ark. We have to trust in Jesus’ cross. They had to get inside the ark. We have to get inside Jesus’ cross. Jesus will be to us what Noah was to those in the ancient world. When we go in to Jesus He will keep us safe (1 Pet 3:18-22).⁴¹ If you’re looking for safety from the consequences of your sins, ask Jesus to rescue you today. When you trust Jesus as your Deliverer, you will be saved from the penalty of your sin.

FOUR VIEWS OF GENESIS 6:1-4

Position	Fallen Angels	Ungodly Sethites
Identity	Fallen angels marry beautiful women	Ungodly Sethites marry depraved Cainites
Sin	Perversion (warped marriages)	Pollution (mixed marriages)
Offspring	Monstrous giants	Wicked tyrants
Strengths	<p>Elsewhere in the OT, the phrase “sons of God” consistently refers to angels (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7).</p> <p>Jude 6-7 and 2 Pet 2:4-6 refer to the angels sinning, but no other reference seems to fit except Gen 6:1-4.</p> <p>Jude parallels the sin of angels (Jude 6-7) with the sexual sin of Sodom and Gomorrah.</p> <p>The angels of Matt 22:30 are good angels not fallen angles. Fallen angels are not said to be incapable of sexual union.</p> <p>This view is the oldest known Jewish interpretation and the view of the early church (LXX; Josephus; the Book of Enoch, 200 B.C.).</p> <p>Such an abnormal sexual relationship would give warrant to the great flood judgment because it would corrupt the line of Christ.</p>	<p>The Hebrew indicates continuity from Gen 5:1-32.</p> <p>The thematic development of Gen 4-5.</p> <p>The clear emphasis on “men” in the context.</p> <p>The basis for human sin as the reason for the flood.</p> <p>The aversion in Genesis and the OT to mixed marriages (godly and ungodly).</p> <p>The sin of intermarriage becomes common throughout the Pentateuch.</p> <p>The contextual clues for the clashing of two lines (the offspring of the woman and the offspring of the serpent) is prominent all the way through Genesis (Cain/Abel, Ham [Canaan]/Shem, Abraham/Lot’s offspring), Ishmael/Isaac, Jacob/Esau, etc.</p> <p>This has been the traditional Christian interpretation since the third century and is supported by both Luther and Calvin.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Angels were not previously mentioned and Moses did not use the regular word for “angel,” which he later employs at least 28 times in the Pentateuch</p> <p>In the account, there is no mention of angelic judgment, only human judgment.</p> <p>A brief paragraph about angels would be an abrupt interruption in the flow of the story.</p> <p>When Christ speaks of the sin in Noah’s day, He does not mention angels but only men (Matt 24:37-38; Luke 17:26-27).</p> <p>If angels are the villains, then why is God’s anger directed against man rather than against angels?</p> <p>This was not an unnatural sexual union, for the phrase “took wives for themselves” refers to a marriage relationship, never to an act of illicit sexual relationship.</p> <p>The offspring of this union are called “Nephilim” (6:4), a term which also occurs later (Num 13:33) when no angels are involved.</p> <p>The NT support is questionable.</p>	<p>The problem is making “men” of 6:1 different from “men” in 6:2.</p> <p>The narrator never mentions any daughters in Cain’s line but he mentions that Seth had daughters nine times (Gen 5:4ff.).</p> <p>Should we believe that only Cain’s daughters were good looking? Isn’t it also likely that godly women married ungodly men as well?</p> <p>The absence of the phrase “sons of God” to describe OT believers.</p> <p>Failure to explain the origin of the mighty men through simply religiously mixed marriages</p> <p>In Noah’s day, he alone was holy.</p> <p>God has not yet begun working through one line.</p>

FOUR VIEWS OF GENESIS 6:1-4 Continued...

Position	Kings/Rulers	Adamic Descendants
Identity	Kings marry a plurality of wives	Adam's children ("sons of God") marry "daughters of men"
Sin	Polygamy	No sin associated with the union
Offspring	Dynastic rulers	Adam's sons and daughters
Strengths	<p>Rulers and judges are often called gods (Exod 21:6; 22:8; 1 Sam 2:25; Ps 82:1).</p> <p>Humans are also referred to in the OT as God's "sons" (Isa 43:6).</p> <p>"Mighty men" (6:4) is a word, which is used 20 times in the OT and always refers to human men.</p> <p>Cain established a city (4:17) where dynasties could naturally stem.</p> <p>Lamech did have two wives (4:19), which marks the initiation of polygamy.</p> <p>The "daughters of God" are more naturally interpreted as womankind.</p> <p>Like the fallen angels view, this view also has antiquity on its side (Aramaic Targums).</p>	<p>Parallels Jesus' Flood commentary in Matt 24:38-39.</p> <p>Fits well contextually (5:4-32) and understands the passage in a natural sense.</p> <p>Forms an epilogue to 5:1-32</p> <p>"Nephilim" are understood as Adam's 10 great descendants ("men of name").</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Kings/Rulers are not specifically called "sons of God."</p> <p>There is little evidence that these kings/rulers came from the line of Cain.</p> <p>This view seems to disturb the flow of the passage.</p>	<p>This is an unfamiliar interpretation</p> <p>The above interpretation of "Nephilim" appears to conflict with Num 13:33.</p>

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Notes

¹ The phrase “they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose” includes a verb that is a technical expression to designate marriage, the act of entering into a legal and binding relationship between a man and a woman (Gen 4:19; 11:29; 12:19; 20:2, 3).

² John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis: EBC* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), Electronic ed.

³ Kaiser writes, “Some, however, will appeal to the New Testament passages of 1 Peter 3:18-20, 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6-7 for further support of the angel theory. But these passages do not say anything about angelic marriages. To argue from the phrase ‘in a similar way’ in Jude 7 that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is the same as the sin of Genesis 6:1-4 claims too much, for the sin of sodomy is not the same thing as marrying a wife from another part of the universe! In fact, ‘in a similar way’ does not compare the sin of the angels with the sin of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah; instead, it compares the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah with the sins of ‘the cities about them’ (that is, Admah and Zeboiim; see Deut 29:23 and Hos 11:8). Thus the sins of Jude’s angels (Jude 6) and the sins of the five cities of the plain (Jude 7) are held up as warnings of the judgment that could come to others. The fall of the angels that Jude mentions is that which took place when Lucifer fell. To connect this fall with the time of the flood because of the proximity of the references in Jude 4-7 would demand that we connect the flood with the overthrow of the five cities of the plain. But the events listed in Jude are successive, not simultaneous: (1) the fall in eternity of Satan (Jude 4), (2) the preaching of Noah prior to the flood (Jude 5) and (3) the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah (Jude 6).” Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, Electronic ed.

⁴ While the technical phrase “the sons of God” is not used in the Old Testament of men, there are several passages that use equivalent expressions. Youngblood remarks, “In Deuteronomy 14:1 Moses said to the people of Israel, ‘You are the children (lit. “sons”) of the LORD your God.’ Due to their sin the text says that they are ‘no longer his children (lit. “sons”)’ (Deut. 32:5). Elsewhere the psalmist says to God that under certain circumstances he ‘would have betrayed this generation of your children (lit. “sons”)’ (Ps. 73:15). Isaiah 43:6 quotes God as saying, ‘Bring my sons from afar.’ And in Hosea 1:10 the people of Israel are called ‘sons of the living God.’ The NT evidence is, if anything, even stronger. In Luke 3:38 Adam is called ‘the son of God.’ Christians are referred to as ‘children of God’ (1 John 3:1, 2, 10). But the most impressive passage is the section of Luke 20 that we quoted earlier. There we read that people who are considered worthy of taking part ‘in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels.’ They are God’s children (lit. “sons of God”) (Luke 20:34-36). The text itself tells us that people, though not angels, are nevertheless ‘sons of God.’” See Ronald F. Youngblood, *The Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 82. See also Matt 5:9; Rom 8:14, 19; Gal 3:26.

⁵ This is not the sin that caused the Flood, it serves as just one illustration of ungodly human behavior.

⁶ Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 117.

⁷ Paul Wright, ed., *Genesis: Shepherd’s Notes* (Nashville: Broadman, 1997), 27.

⁸ The verb “strive” (*yadon*) only occurs here in the Hebrew OT. Other English translations render it “contend” (NIV) “abide” (ESV, NRSV), “remain” (NET), and “put up with” (NLT).

⁹ Walton points out: “Of nearly one hundred occurrences of the plural ‘days’ with a pronominal suffix, almost all refer to life span. The exceptions that offer the greatest deviation from that pattern are references like Deut 12:19, which pertain to Israel’s tenure in the land. It should also be noted that the refrain of ch. 5 is ‘All the days of X were Y years, and he died,’ so the reader is used to seeing the lifespan formula.” John H. Walton, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 296.

¹⁰ Sailhamer observes, “It is interesting to notice that this is the first time the Lord has spoken since 5:2, where, after creating man male and female, he ‘called them man [Adam].’ In that context the term ‘man’ (Adam) clearly had a wider scope (‘mankind’) than the personal individual (‘Adam’) of chapter 4. In the remainder of chapter 5, the focus of the author was on the lives of individual men again, and thus in 5:3 he turned immediately to the genealogy of Adam, the individual. So it is only in v. 3, as God speaks a second time, that the focus of the term ‘man’ (Adam) is again on ‘mankind’ as a whole. The point is that between these two statements of God about mankind, the author has put the list of ten great individual men, men whose length of life stands in stark contrast to the ‘one hundred and twenty years’ of the life of ‘mankind.’ The inference of such an arrangement of the narrative is that it was God’s Spirit dwelling (*yadon*) with these men that gave them their long lives and not their own ‘flesh.’ The sad reality of the narrative, however, is that such long lives do not belong to mankind as a whole but belonged to another age.

The long lives of the ten great men in chapter 5 are thus shown to be exceptions rather than the rule. Henceforth man's life would be 'a hundred and twenty years' only. Such a short life, in comparison with the long lives of the previous chapter, marks man's fall and separation from his Creator." Sailhamer, *Genesis*, Electronic ed.

¹¹ Youngblood, *The Book of Genesis*, 83.

¹² Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), Electronic Ed.

¹³ The KJV, NKJV, and NLT translate the Hebrew word *nephilim*, as "giants." However, it should be rendered *nephilim*. The normal word for a huge man is *rapha*. Thus, men like Og and Goliath were described by the word *rapha* (see Deut 3:11; 1 Chron 20:6).

¹⁴ "Men of renown" means "men of reputation" and describes a person with a good character (1 Chron 12:30), and also individuals who use their influence for evil purposes (Num 16:2, 3; 1 Chron 5:24, 25). Here the context seems to require a negative interpretation of that terminology.

¹⁵ Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, Electronic ed.

¹⁶ Michael Eaton, *Preaching Through the Bible: Genesis 1-11* (Kent, England: Sovereign World, 1997), 124.

¹⁷ These four sub points have been revised from Eaton, *Genesis 1-11*, 124.

¹⁸ Bill T. Arnold, *Encountering the Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 58.

¹⁹ Arnold, *Encountering the Book of Genesis*, 58.

²⁰ Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 68.

²¹ Allen P. Ross, *Creation & Blessing* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002 [1988]), 184.

²² Youngblood, *The Book of Genesis*, 84.

²³ Anne Graham Lotz, *God's Story* (Nashville: Word, 1999 [1997]), 158.

²⁴ One of the other vivid descriptions of human evil in the Bible is found in Isaiah 59. The chapter begins with the well-known affirmation, that sin separates us from God. Through the rest of the chapter, there are specific definitions of sin: dishonesty, violence, oppression, and revolt. But in the middle of this chapter, there is this statement in 59:7: "Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity." The sin they do, finds its original power in the sin they think about. Minds not governed by the truth of God, but filled with thoughts of iniquity - cause a flood of horrible outcome. Jesus said "from within" come the common evils in human behavior (Mark 7:20-23). To avoid this, "keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life" (Prov 4:23). It is my responsibility to protect my mind, by using the truth of God to protect myself against the assaults of the Devil.

²⁵ Ross, *Creation & Blessing*, 184.

²⁶ Arnold, *Encountering the Book of Genesis*, 58.

²⁷ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 144-145.

²⁸ Waltke, *Genesis*, 119.

²⁹ E.g., Exod 32:14; 1 Sam 15:11; Jer 26:3, 13, 19; Jon 3:10.

³⁰ As Kaiser observes, "Thus 1 Samuel 15:29 reminds us that "he who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind." Yet Samuel made that statement the day after the Lord told him that he was *grieved* he had made Saul king (1 Sam 15:11, author's italics)." Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, Electronic ed.

³¹ Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 1-15: WBC* (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 144.

³² Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, Electronic ed.

³³ Youngblood, *The Book of Genesis*, 84.

³⁴ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning & Blessing* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 128.

³⁵ Lotz, *God's Story*, 160.

³⁶ Lotz, *God's Story*, 160-161.

³⁷ See 2 Kgs 25:27-30; 2 Chron 36:22-23; Amos 9:13-15. Wright, *Genesis*, 27.

³⁸ Heb. *chen* is used Gen 18:3; 19:19; 30:27; 32:6; 33:8, 10, 15; 34:11; 39:4, 21; 47:25, 29; 50:4.

³⁹ Earl Radmacher, Ronald B. Allen, H. Wayne House, eds. *New Illustrated Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Nelson, 1999), 18.

⁴⁰ There is a word play in the Hebrew text (an anagram). The same consonants of Noah's name (*nh*) in the reverse order mean, "grace" (*hn*). John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 122.

⁴¹ Eaton, *Genesis 1-11*, 124-125.