

Sin and Mercy: Part Two
(Genesis 6)

The earth's population grew rapidly during this time because of the longevity of life. And Genesis 6:5-7, 11, 12 provide a sobering assessment of the sinfulness of humanity during this time span. These verses clearly teach the total depravity of the human race. And after sin entered the world, people died. Sin exacted its heavy price on the human race.

Human sin also brought the animal kingdom under God's judgment (Genesis 6:7). Because the animals were under man's sinful dominion, they were also under God's divine judgment. It's hard for man to come to grips with how devastating sin is, and to think that sin affected the animals is almost unthinkable – it would be unthinkable if we didn't understand Scripture. In fact, sin affected the entire creation: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Romans 8:22).

It is hard to believe, but in just a few short chapters, the story of the Old Testament makes it clear that humanity desperately needs God's mercy and grace.

One of the most important words for all of human history is the word "but" that begins Genesis 6:8. In the preceding verse (7), God was prepared to blot out all of humanity. "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (6:8). Noah pleased God, and he, like Enoch his ancestor, "walked with God" (6:9). Genesis 6:8 and 9 provided a welcome relief for Noah's generation – one man can make a difference with God, and Noah was the man for his generation.

We learn from verse 9 that Noah pleased God ("found grace"), that he was righteous in the sight of God ("a just man"), that he maintained a blameless reputation among his contemporaries ("perfect in his generations"), and that he enjoyed fellowship with God ("walked with God").

The example of Noah teaches believers of every age that it is possible to please God even when they are encircled by sin.

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