

### Further deterioration of humanity

#### • Population explosion

The deterioration of humankind into sin now comes to its greatest climax in the Bible. Genesis relates the outworking of sin. Men and women were not originally sinful, but we have seen how they sinned against God <sup>☐1</sup>, against each other <sup>☐2</sup>, and of how sin damaged society.

☐1 Genesis 3

☐2 Genesis 4

Now we have a further stage in deterioration, the greatest yet and the greatest ever. *'It happened that 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.'* <sup>☐1</sup> There was a population explosion in this part of the world. And at that time this calamity took place.

☐1 6:1-2

There are three ways in which this passage has been taken.

#### • The 'sons of God'

i. Some have thought the 'sons of God' means the line of Seth. But this is not the natural meaning of 'sons of God'. And why is it only godly men who marry ungodly women? Did not godly women and ungodly men marry? And should we believe that only Canaanite daughters were good-looking?

ii. Another view is that the 'sons of God' are some kind of upper class, perhaps kings, who took large numbers of wives.

#### • Angels

iii. A third view is that this refers to something very mysterious which took place in the world of angels. 'Sons of God' refers to angels. This is the view I think is right. The phrase 'sons of God' in Hebrew refers to angels (see Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7 which refers to a time when there were no human beings Psalm 29:1; 89:6).

This event is mentioned in 1 Peter 3:19–20, 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 where it is interpreted as referring to angels.

It might be asked: can this happen? Can angels marry people? Remember these points.

#### • Angels may look like men

i. Angels may look like men. <sup>☐1</sup> They may be dressed like men; they may eat and drink. The men of Sodom tried to physically molest angels.

☐1 18:2; 8; 19:1; 5

#### • The pre-flood world

ii. We are dealing with the pre-flood world. Great changes came in the world after the flood, including changes in the angelic world. After the flood a restraint was put upon fallen angels. Matthew 22:30 is true **now**. It may not have been true **then**. The main point here is that sin in gigantic proportions came into the Mesopotamian world, leading to the end of the world for Mesopotamia. Perhaps (for all we know) similar things happened elsewhere. An event even greater than that of Genesis 3 took place, and once again *'they saw'...* something *'good'...* and *'took'* – as in Genesis 3:6. Men and women continued to fall ever more deeply into sin. There came a point where they were vulnerable to attack by evil spirits. The world of evil angels got a grip on human life. Immoral relationships of a weird kind came into being. Angels saw human women and (perhaps via demon possessed men) marriages took place between them.

*'Then Yahweh said, "My spirit shall not abide in man forever, because he indeed is flesh. His days shall be one hundred and twenty years.'* <sup>☐1</sup>

☐1 6:3

It made God determine that the 'spirit of life' should not dwell in men

and women for such a lengthy period. (The AV 'strive' is not accurate.) The 120 years period either means that the life-span is to be reduced or (as I believe) that there are 120 years before the flood. Reference to the Lord's patience in 1 Peter 3:20 seems to confirm the second interpretation.

• **Deterioration continues**

*'The Nephilim were also on the earth in those days, and also afterwards...'* <sup>1</sup> The word 'Nephilim' means 'fallen ones' and seems to refer to people who are fallen in society, 'criminals'. They were there even before the angel-marriages but the angel-marriages made things worse. The main point is that men and women tend to deteriorate morally and spiritually.

<sup>1</sup> 6:4

**God's attitude**

Genesis tells of God's attitude to the deterioration.

• **God notices**

**He notices it.** <sup>1</sup> Yahweh saw the wickedness of people was great. God is not far away so that He takes no notice of what is happening.

<sup>1</sup> 6:5

• **God grieves**

**God grieves.** <sup>1</sup> Can God suffer? Does God have feelings? God suffered when men and women sinned.

<sup>1</sup> 6:6

• **God judges**

**God judges sin.** <sup>1</sup> He resolves to wipe out of existence both man and His world.

<sup>1</sup> 6:7

• **God provides a way of salvation**

**God provides a way of salvation.** Noah found grace. God chose a man who would provide a way of salvation. 'Found grace' means that Noah did not deserve to be used by God. It was God's grace that saved him. Noah was to be a saviour, a means of salvation. When the judgement came there was to be a means of deliverance.

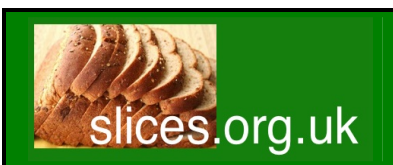
• **God intervenes**

Man still deteriorates. Society still runs down unless God intervenes. God still sees, still takes note, still grieves over the world, still feels for man in his crisis and tragedy. He still judges sin and still resolves that the world will not go on forever.

• **Jesus has provided a way of salvation**

There will be an end to our world as there was to Noah's world. A saviour was chosen then; a Saviour 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. *'As it was in the days of Noah so shall it be...'*

Jesus died on the cross, and paid a price for our sins. They had to trust in 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.



Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)* books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



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