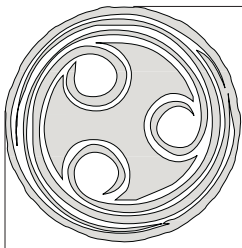


# Humanism Exposed

## Genesis 6:1-8

“I believe there is no God. If there was one, I would not worship it.”  
A recent post on an atheist forum



sermonnotes

### Introduction

Our passage today is possibly the most difficult one to interpret so far. I pray that we don't stumble on the debate, but look to the obvious reality it is conveying. This is a passage that challenges us to see reality through supernatural lenses rather than demand tidy answers in a confusing and secular world. Man denies that the fall is a reality, and then stumbles over a definition of evil--never mind an answer to its origin or solution for it. Unlike the humanistic doctrine of optimism for the future of humanity, Genesis makes us look long in the mirror, and honestly deal with our humanity. Humanism, like any religious faith, is trying desperately to define man apart from the supernatural. And even though it denies any purpose to our lives, it will contradictorily begin to construct hope based on the very mortal and frail corpus of humanity, while defiantly maintaining its god status.

*“When man began to multiply on the land,”* is the obvious result of *“Be fruitful and multiply.”* God's desire when He gave Adam and Eve that command was that they would multiply His praises. In the fallen state of humanity, multiplication can bring forth heartache as much as blessing (see **Genesis 3:16**). It is interesting that other Ancient Near Eastern literature (Atrahasis Epic) also indicates that there was a population boom before the flood. As I have said earlier, the creation and flood story are two of the most attested to narratives in all of ancient cultural literature (which is a testament to the oral tradition and the dispersing of the nations in **Genesis 10 and 11**).

### From The Head...

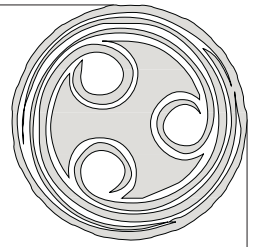
In chapter five the emphasis was on the males born to the culture, but in our segment today it is the daughters who take center stage and begin to have relations with the “sons of God.” This is definitely one of the hardest passages in all of scripture to interpret, so we will tread lightly, but confidently. My desire is to get to the core, and not create a treatise on handling all of the problems in this passage. One key question to try and answer is, “Who are the ‘sons of God’?” The phrase can be translated either “sons of God” (**Job 1:6; 2:1**), or “sons of the gods” (**Palm 29:1; 89:7**). Whatever the option, it is the nature of these beings that has many theologians perplexed and in debate. There are three popular options, all with their own supporters. First there is the belief that they are non-human spirits/angels; second, superior men/kings/rulers; last, godly men from the line of Seth. The angel view is the oldest interpretation, and is usually accepted for the following reasons: 1. The OT usually uses this term to refer to heavenly beings (**Job 1:6; Psalm 29:1**). 2. There appears to be a contrast between the “sons of God,” and the “daughters of men.” 3. Ancient Near Eastern literature also appears to use this to refer to heavenly beings. However, there might be a fourth view as to who these beings are. It is possible that they are a combination of despot rulers and spiritual beings. Passages like **Daniel 10:13, 20** and **Ezekiel 28:11-19** remind us that rulers can be associated with demonic activity. These beings aren't angels, but possibly earthly despots that are dominated by evil spirits. Ancient literature has a plethora of examples viewing their leaders as demigods, or the offspring of the gods. There are incidents in scripture that infer the same (**Psalm 82:6** cf. **John 10:30-38**).

### The Nature of the Situation (Genesis 6:1-2)

The heart of this passage is the evil and arrogance of the powerful, not the origin of the “men of renown.” This passage, though borrowing from ancient literature, is actually a polemic against it. Whereas ancient literature affirms these god-men rulers, Genesis is depicting their finiteness. The ancient pagans believed that immortality (divine status) was achieved by arrogance and immorality. This passage is in direct opposition to that belief.

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### The Wickedness of Evil and the Heart of God (**Genesis 6:3-6**)

**Exodus 37** reminds us of the character of God. He is patient, kind and loving, but, *“He will by no means let the guilty go unpunished.”* Mankind had become excessively evil, and God vowed to put a stop to the violence that would be caused by these “men of renown.” Mankind left unchecked (contrary to humanist doctrine) has brought some of the worse kind of evil and oppression known to this world. This includes evil done in God’s name, and evil done trying to eradicate God’s name. *“Because he is flesh,”* is the key to this passage.

We are dependent on God our creator, yet we live, plan, and build as if he is dependent on us. This is the hardest doctrine for mankind to accept. The fall has left us as our own gods, so it is hard to see and admit that we are actually wicked in our core. **Jeremiah 17:9** tells us that the human heart is desperately wicked, “Who can understand it?” This pride, and then the subsequent actions that often accompany pride, is what is happening in our passage. These rulers (led by demonic spirits), have become oppressors of mankind. This reality is seen in every despotic empire since the history of mankind; rulers who do to women what they want, and then use their power for their own pleasures and gain. The words “saw”...“good”...“took” are reminiscent of **Genesis 3:6**, when Eve turned a boundary set by God into her own pleasure. Humanity continues to transgress God’s creation intent in order to build its own temple made with human hands, and consisting purely of human wisdom.

Many of us judge evil on actions alone, but God sees evil where it begins in the heart of every human. We are not sinners because we sin; we sin because we are sinners by nature. This is a personal affront to humanism, and considered whacko by many, but when we sit down and try to define evil, we stumble and fall into categories of religious language either blaming our ills on environment or evolutionary survival needs--which either makes us genetically determined or socially determined. The result is a form of social engineering that attacks symptoms without understanding the problem.

The result of our evil is the grieving of God. The term used to express this grieving of God is the strongest possible form of emotional expression of bitterness and rage. We see Dinah’s brother reacting like this when they found out she was raped, and Jonathan when he realizes Saul’s plot against David, and also a deserted wife’s feeling (**Isaiah 54:6**). Sin deeply grieves God. His response is one of repentance or being “sorry,” which appears to contradict His character (**Numbers 23:19** cf. **1 Samuel 15:29**). This has been used to deny God’s absolute sovereignty in the world, and is the foundation for “open Theism” (a theology that denies God’s ability to know/predict the future). However this very human concept is used to acknowledge God’s heart, but is not meant to prove his limits. When God is sorry or “repents,” He doesn’t repent like a human of sin, but changes His mind based on the prescribed circumstances before Him. Jonah is a perfect example. God prescribes the circumstances before Him, and acts according to the free choice of men. If they repent, He relents on His judgment. If they don’t, He acts in righteous wrath. He sets these parameters, and although He is aware of the outcome, He is still grieved by the result of sin and judgment--much like a parent grieves at the continuous rebellion of their children. Foreknowledge does not negate emotion and hurt, but intensifies it. Jesus knew His bitter end was near, which wrought more emotion and pain than if He didn’t know it was imminently coming.

### The Grace of Judgment (**Genesis 6:7**)

**Ezekiel 18:32** and **33:11** reminds us that God does not take pleasure in the destruction of evil, but it is necessary for the ultimate good of humanity. The only pleasure we ever see of God destroying someone is in the destruction of His own Son (**Isaiah 53:10**) because He knew that this destruction was for the good of His own plan (see too **Acts 4:27-28**). It is very difficult to understand that God’s discipline and His judgment are acts of His grace and His mercy.

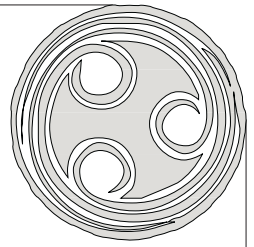
### The Grace of God in the Midst of Human Depravity (**Genesis 6:8**)

In the midst of His judgment, He finds “favor” in Noah. The word for favor is “hen” which means favor or grace. As we will see, this results in Noah being

a righteous man (see **Ephesians 2:10** cf. **Ezekiel 36:22ff**). When God's gracious favor comes upon us, we are transformed and given His righteousness (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). Noah was no more righteous than anyone else, but he and his family were spared God's wrath in much the same way that we are. There is no one righteous according to **Romans 3:10**, we are all wicked in His eyes, worthy of death, but saved by His grace and favor in our lives.

I pray that we understand these important verses and begin to drink in our depravity. All too often the church defines itself as righteous and others as unrighteous until we see that people of other faiths or of no faith at all are more moral than we are. It is then that we are struck with either the hopelessness that comes with a false belief, or we are transformed into the people of grace that our sin and subsequent salvation by grace should make us become. Mankind vehemently hates this doctrine, but it is when we understand it and embrace it that we will become truly human and connected to the God that created us and demands our devotion.

## sermonnotes



## ... To The Heart

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