

When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, ² the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. ³ Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years.”

⁵ The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. ⁶ The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. ⁷ So the LORD said, “I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them.” ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

⁹ This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. ¹⁰ Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. ¹² God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. ¹³ So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. ¹⁴ So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out.

¹⁷ I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. ¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁹ You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. ²⁰ Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹ You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them.”

²² Noah did everything just as God commanded him. (NIV 84)

Theme: A Loving Warning:

1. The world will be destroyed.
2. All Believers will be saved.

It seems as if everything has a warning on it nowadays. You see warnings like, “This game piece may be a choking hazard” or “the contents inside this coffee cup may be hot” or “safety goggles recommended.” Mostly it has to do with the fact that companies want to cover all of their bases. They want to make sure they don’t get sued by a negligent parent or someone else who is looking for a quick and easy buck under the guise of fairness. However, sometimes warnings are in place because the company actually cares. That is why some people warn others of incoming danger—a car driving the wrong way down the road, a tornado heading right this way, or a computer virus. They give a warning because they care about others. In fact it is expected of you to warn someone if an upcoming danger if you see it coming.

That’s what Christ did for Noah and what he does for us—he gives us a loving warning. He warns us that the world will be destroyed and he comforts us that all believers will be saved.

By the time the flood took place the world was over 1600 years old—and perhaps older. No doubt there were millions of people in the world at this time. The people did as God commanded—the filled the earth and they subdued it. But that might have been about the only way the people of this time actually obeyed God. In verse five Moses explains the way God looked at the people, **The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.** There wasn’t anything good about these people. They were nothing but wicked and sinful. There was absolutely not part of them that was pleasing to God.

Moses gives us a few more specifics. In verses 11 and 12 he mentions, **the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.** In verse 2 he describes what led up to the world becoming such a wicked place, **the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them**

they chose. The Sons of God is a reference to the followers of God—to believe; the descendants of Adam's Son, Seth. The daughters of men refers to unbelieving women, the descendants of Adam's son, Cain. So what happened was that believing men saw how beautiful and attractive the unbelieving women were and they married them and had children with them. No longer did a believer care if his spouse was God-fearing, or if she would be a good mother for his children. He only cared about her looks. So they married these unbelieving and good looking women. And what was the result? Unbelieving children who didn't care about God or his Word. And soon the world was almost completely full of wicked unbelievers.

So what did God decide to do? **The LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them.** God was so upset at what mankind had become that he decided to destroy everything living on the land. Not just humans but all land animals as well.

Of course, we know how God decided to do this. **I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.** God would send a world-wide catastrophic flood that would destroy every thing on the earth and would alter the course of history. The waters of this flood would cover the highest mountain by over 20 feet. And everything would be destroyed.

The similarities between Noah's day and our day are striking. First off, think of how many people choose a spouse today. Many today, even Christians, don't ask themselves if their significant other is God-pleasing or if she would be a good mother for his children. No, they are blinded by the attractiveness of their future spouse. Not that it is a sin to marry an unbeliever. Yet, it shows where priorities lie—not with God and his Word, but in having fun. And what is the result? Instead of a marriage based on their marriage vows before God, it's a marriage based on having fun with each other. But lust wanes, beauty fades, life gets in the way. And often two things happen—people cheat or they get divorced. And when parents aren't obeying God's Word, there is a good chance that their children won't be either. Just like in Noah's day.

A world full of corruption and violence—sounds like the world today. And that really shouldn't surprise us. The world is full of sinners just like it was at Noah's time. When sinners start to run things, then sexual sins become the norm. Corruption is more prevalent because the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, and causes many people to seek it by many means necessary including violence. Love is not the prevailing attitude, but one of revenge and taking advantage of others. Our world today is not unlike the world of Noah's day. And it is a world that our sinful nature is attracted to. It's enticing, it may seem like fun, and from time to time we may fall into the temptations that it offers.

And just like he did in Noah's day, God has decided to destroy the world once again. But he didn't do so without first proclaiming and warning the people. So he said in verse 3, **My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years.** God warned them that he would destroy the world in 120 years. They would have 120 years to repent and turn to him, otherwise they would die. The entire gospel for today is filled with a warning to be prepared for the coming of Christ—the day in which the world will be destroyed. Look at verse 3 again, **Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.**

God didn't have to do so. He didn't have to warn anyone. But in his love and grace he did. He warned them that they should repent and turn to him so that they wouldn't die when the flood came, or so that they won't die on the Last Day when the Lord returns. God in his infinite wisdom and power doesn't need to give us that warning. But in his love and mercy he does. Again and again on the pages of Scripture he warns of the coming destruction and the result of sin because he doesn't want anyone to die—but all to come to repentance.

But God didn't just warn Noah of the coming destruction—he saved Noah. And he doesn't just warn us, he saves those who believe in him.

He told Noah to build an ark—really just a large wooden vessel and cover it in pitch, a tar-like substance to make it water proof. The ark was 450 long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet tall. Why so large? Because God decided in his grace not to kill every animal, but to save some of them—two of every kind of unclean animal and seven of every kind of

clean animal. Many marine engineers have said that the dimensions of the ark would have made it possible to tip to a 45 degree angle without capsizing. It was the perfect vessel to save Noah, his wife, their three sons, some who weren't born when God first told him about it, and their wives.

Then the flood gates of the heavens opened. It rained on the earth. Water came from below the earth and above it. Until the highest mountain was covered by 20 feet and every breathing thing on the face of the earth was destroyed. But Noah and his family and all the animals were saved—safe in the ark. For over a year they stayed there in the ark until he was safe to go outside and live and to populate the planet once again.

In the same way God saved us. Notice what connection Peter makes in our second lesson for today. The water of the flood by which God destroyed the world yet saved Noah and his family, symbolizes **baptism that now saves you also**. It is through the waters of baptism that the Lord saves us. It is in baptism that the Lord washes away our sins and clothes us in a robe of his righteousness or perfection.

Through baptism the Holy Spirit brings us to faith and welcomes us into his family. Just as God saved Noah and his family, he saves us from eternal death through the waters of baptism.

Of course, baptism is only good as long as it is accompanied by faith. For it is faith that receives that the blessings that Christ won and gives to us. That is how the Lord saved us—by paying for our sins on the cross and giving us his perfect life. It is because of the work of Christ that our sins are removed and since our sins have been removed death no longer stings. It is by grace that we are saved, and this is received by faith. So the Holy Spirit guards and keeps us in the one true faith through the same gospel that he brings us to faith. God didn't need to do this. He didn't need to save us—but he did out of his love and grace; just as he did Noah.

In response to God's grace, what did Noah do? We read at the end of the chapter, **Noah did everything just as God commanded him**.

Later God would give him more specifications and commands of what to do. Noah did everything the Lord told him to do. That included building the ark and gathering the provisions of its inhabitants. It also includes warning others of the coming destruction of the world. In Peter's second letter he says that God, **protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others**. Noah was a preacher of

righteousness. He not only obeyed God but he warned others and preached the gospel through his words and actions.

Let us follow Noah's example. Let us follow and obey his Word by getting into the means of grace. Let us all be preachers of righteousness. Share God's Word with others. Warn them of the coming destruction and spread the gospel. Show others your faith through your deeds so that they may listen to your words and be saved.

In that sense you would become someone's warning label—just as God warns us through his Word. God did so because he loves us and cares for us. Don't ignore his warning. But cling to his Word and share it with others. For soon Christ will return and destroy the world. And he will save all believers forever. Amen.