

LESSON 6

When God Saw the Earth

Rebellion Across Boundaries, Worldwide Corruption, and Grace for Noah

MAIN IDEA The Creator judges a world corrupted by autonomous desire and violence, yet graciously favors Noah, preserves the promised line, and provides salvation through the means He appoints.

Lesson Objectives

- Connect Genesis 6 with the spread of sin and preserving grace in Genesis 3–5.
- Identify the principal interpretations of the “sons of God” and the arguments for the angelic interpretation.
- Explain the biblical diagnosis of the human heart and the meaning of God’s grief.
- Distinguish grace from merit in Noah’s favor, righteousness, and obedience.
- Relate corruption, violence, judgment, the ark, covenant promise, and obedient faith.
- Trace key New Testament connections to Noah, the flood, fallen angels, and Christ.

Teaching Overview

Genesis 6 brings the degeneration of Genesis 3–5 to its crisis point. The passage moves from transgression of God-appointed boundaries to the corruption of the human heart, an earth filled with violence, and the announcement of divine judgment. Yet Noah finds favor, walks with God, receives covenant promise, and obeys the divine command. Use the prompts below to record the teacher’s major observations, interpretations, and applications rather than attempting to copy the manuscript.

Key Scripture Passages

Genesis 5:29–6:1: Noah enters the narrative as human multiplication continues alongside the spread of sin.

Genesis 6:1–4: The sons of God, daughters of humankind, 120 years, Nephilim, and men of renown.

Genesis 6:5–8: God evaluates the human heart, grieves corruption, announces judgment, and favors Noah.

Genesis 6:9–10: Noah is righteous, blameless in his generation, and walking with God.

Genesis 6:11–13: The earth is corrupt and filled with violence.

Genesis 6:14–21: God commands the ark and announces His covenant promise.

Genesis 6:22: Noah responds with comprehensive obedience.

Hebrews 11:7; Matthew 24:37–39; 1 Peter 3:19–21; 2 Peter 2–3; Jude 6: The New Testament applies Noah, the flood, judgment, faith, and rebellious angels.

1. From Noah’s Hope to Humanity’s Corruption

Note prompt: *How does Lamech’s hope for Noah connect Lesson 5 to Genesis 6?*

Note prompt: *What contrast does the teacher draw between human growth and spiritual health?*

Note prompt: *How does ha’adam function in Genesis 6:1?*

THEOLOGY IN PRACTICE Receive creation’s blessings without separating those blessings from obedience to the Creator.

2. The Sons of God and the Daughters of Humankind

Note prompt: *List the three leading interpretations of the “sons of God.”*

Note prompt: *What evidence supports the angelic interpretation, and what cautions remain?*

Note prompt: *How does “saw, good, took” connect Genesis 6 with Genesis 3?*

Note prompt: *Record the distinctions among bene ha’elohim, Nephilim, gibborim, and men of renown.*

Note prompt: *What does the passage clearly teach even where interpretation remains disputed?*

THEOLOGY IN PRACTICE Hold interpretive convictions with humility, and do not allow fascination with supernatural details to obscure the passage’s warning against autonomous rebellion.

3. God Evaluates the Human Heart

Note prompt: *What comprehensive terms describe human wickedness in Genesis 6:5?*

Note prompt: *What do yetser and leb reveal about the inward source of sin?*

Note prompt: *How should nacham and God’s grief be understood?*

Note prompt: *How does “But Noah” turn the direction of the paragraph?*

Note prompt: *What relationship does the teacher establish between hen, grace, and the life that follows?*

THEOLOGY IN PRACTICE Confess sin at the level of the heart and receive divine favor as grace rather than earned reward.

4. Noah: The Man Who Walked with God

Note prompt: *How are tsaddiq, tamim, and walking with God related?*

Note prompt: *What is the difference between integrity and sinless perfection?*

Note prompt: *How does Noah continue the pattern of Enoch?*

Note prompt: *How do Genesis 6:8–9 and Hebrews 11:7 relate grace, righteousness, faith, and obedience?*

THEOLOGY IN PRACTICE Walking with God prepares believers for visible, costly obedience in a corrupt world.

5. Corruption, Violence, and Divine Judgment

Note prompt: *How does the repeated root shahat connect human corruption with divine judgment?*

Note prompt: *What does hamas include, and how has violence filled the earth?*

Note prompt: *How does human sin affect the wider created order?*

Note prompt: *Why is the flood presented as morally fitting judgment rather than arbitrary anger?*

THEOLOGY IN PRACTICE Speak truthfully about evil so that divine judgment is understood as holy, personal, and righteous.

6. The Ark and the Covenant Promise

Note prompt: *What does tevah contribute to the Noah-Moses connection?*

Note prompt: *Which ark details are clear, and which should be held with interpretive humility?*

Note prompt: *What does berit and the phrase “my covenant” reveal about divine initiative?*

Note prompt: *How do the animals and creation vocabulary widen the purpose of preservation?*

Note prompt: *What is the difference between trusting God’s promise and refusing God’s appointed means?*

THEOLOGY IN PRACTICE Trust the promise of God through the means God appoints rather than demanding salvation on self-chosen terms.

7. Obedience by Faith and New Testament Fulfillment

Note prompt: *What does the repeated asah language emphasize about Noah’s response?*

Note prompt: *How does Hebrews 11:7 interpret Noah’s obedience?*

Note prompt: *How do Jesus and Peter use Noah’s generation as a warning?*

Note prompt: *How do Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2 relate to the angelic interpretation?*

Note prompt: *In what ways is Noah a pattern, and in what ways is Christ greater than Noah and the ark?*

THEOLOGY IN PRACTICE Obedience is not the ground of grace. Obedience is the necessary fruit of faith in the trustworthy word of God.

Commentary and Scholarly Insights

Author	Kenneth A. Mathews
Source	Genesis 1–11:26, New American Commentary, vol. 1A
Student Prompt	Record one interpretation, vocabulary observation, or theological contribution from Mathews that clarified Genesis 6.
Why It Matters	

Author	Victor P. Hamilton
Source	The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17, New International Commentary on the Old Testament
Student Prompt	Record one structural or literary contribution from Hamilton that helped organize Genesis 6.
Why It Matters	

Theology in Practice

Sphere	Actionable Application
Personal	What desire, plan, or responsibility needs to come under God’s authority?
Family	What truth about grace, integrity, violence, or covenant should be discussed at home?
Church	How should the church hold together judgment, grace, and readiness?
Ministry	How can Christ be presented as greater than Noah and the ark?

Questions for Reflection

- What is the strongest argument for the angelic interpretation, and what limitation must be acknowledged?
- How does Genesis 6 define the depth of human sin?
- How can God genuinely grieve while remaining unchanging in holy character and purpose?
- How do favor, righteousness, faith, and obedience belong together in Noah’s life?
- Why is violence an offense against both neighbor and creation?

- What does the covenant promise reveal about God's initiative?
- How does the New Testament use Noah's generation to prepare believers for Christ's return?

Personal Notes

Key Takeaways

- Write one sentence summarizing the human problem in Genesis 6.
- Write one sentence summarizing God's response to corruption.
- Write one sentence explaining why Noah found favor.
- Write one sentence explaining the ark within covenant promise.
- Write one sentence connecting Noah's obedience with New Testament faith.
- Write one sentence explaining how Christ is greater than Noah.

FINAL SUMMARY Complete after the session: Genesis 6 teaches that

Resources Used in This Lesson

- Kenneth A. Mathews, Genesis 1–11:26, New American Commentary, vol. 1A.
- Victor P. Hamilton, The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17, New International Commentary on the Old Testament.
- Lesson 6: When God Saw the Earth, Revised Seven-Section Teaching Manuscript.