

The Sorrow and Solemnity of God

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[0 : 00] Well, that's a good prayer, isn't it? To move into this with. My intention this morning is to conclude this section in Genesis 6, 1-8.

And then we'll move into God recapping his rationale, reasoning behind the flood, and giving then Noah instruction about how he's going to preserve humanity in his mercy through the ark.

Genesis 6, beginning in verse 1. Now it happened 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 good in appearance.

They took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. Then Yahweh said, My spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he indeed is flesh. Nevertheless, his days shall be 120 years.

The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came into the daughters of men. They bore children to them. Those were the mighty men of old, the mighty men of renown.

[1 : 28] Then Yahweh saw that the evil of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And Yahweh regretted that he had made man on the earth, and he was grieved in his heart.

And Yahweh said, I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, for I regret that I have made them.

But Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh. The title for my message this morning then is The Sorrow and Solemnity of God, because that's what we see, particularly in these verses, from verse 6 and 7.

And then, of course, the hope that we have, and I want to point that out to you even before I get there, because this is how I'll end as well. The hope that we see in verse 8. But Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh.

And so even in the condition that we find ourselves in as a nation today, having turned so much away from the truth of God, and it becomes so evident in the immorality that is increasing in depth across our country, it seems year by year.

[2 : 46] Even with that, we have this promise, but Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh. And that favor points us to Jesus Christ. It points us to the cross and the unmerited favor, the undeserved favor that God will show to us in His Son, Jesus.

And that's where we camp out, isn't it? That's where we put our hope. So that's coming. Now, in Genesis 1.31, God said, And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.

Then in Genesis 6.5, where we are, Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

In chapter 1, verse 31, God observed that He made all these wonderful things and evaluated all that He saw that He made as being not only good, but very good.

Very good. In 6.5, God observed what mankind had made and evaluated it all as utterly evil.

[4 : 04] We're as far away from very good as you can possibly be as a human being. That is this era. That is the depth of the depravity being expressed in this passage before us, and I don't want it to escape us.

What happened? How did we get from 1.31, where it's very good, to just six chapters in, and now it's as bad as it can be?

What happened? Well, in six days, God made the universe to be very good by His measure. By His measure. But after a thousand or so years of living and building on the earth, which God had made for humanity, man's efforts have brought humanity to ruin and earned mankind this terrible appraisal from His Creator.

Every, every intent of the thoughts of His heart was only evil continually.

Now, read that for what it is, folks. Now, the earth was corrupt before God, for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.

[5 : 27] If you look at that verse, or a couple of verses there, you see every intent, only evil, continually corruption, for all flesh.

This is God's measuring stick. This is God's holy evaluation of where things have come. The interesting thing to me, and I've mentioned this to you before, is that people are going about their lives here, and the other scriptures tell us they were marrying and being given in marriage, and they were partying, and they were going about their lives in a very normal course of what they had been doing, as if to say and think that, what's, if you'd have confronted them, they'd have been, what? What are you talking about? Evil were so pervasive that it's like when you say, everybody's unique. Everybody's unique, and so nobody's unique.

Everybody's this, and so nobody's that. Everybody is evil. And so, that's how they measure their lives. There's no other standard for them to compare it to until you have Noah and Enoch coming on the scene and preaching righteousness to which these people mocked.

Their response to what Noah was bringing to them was to mock Noah and his message. Now, hear me. They did it for 120 years. 120 years from this time.

[6 : 57] God tried to get them to repent, and they're not having it. To these people, evil is the norm. This is just what life is.

This is what we do. And this is who we are. Well, the question then, I want to ask in light of this, what is the basis for God's appraisal?

God's appraisal of man being entirely, continually evil, and of living as a society in constant corruption so that he can say, all flesh is living like this.

Everybody's living like this. What's the basis? What's the foundation for God making that appraisal? Well, here, I want to give you three things. I could have given you a bigger list, but I narrowed it to this.

Number one, God's holy character. Amen? His holy character is the measure. Number two, God's sovereignty as creator. God is sovereign. He gets to say. His rules stand.

[7 : 56] He made it all. And then finally, God's purpose for mankind. God had a design for mankind, and what they're living isn't it. So God gets to be the one to say, this is not right.

This is not why I made you. This is as far from why I made you as you can get. Repent and turn away. Well, together, these three things serve as the standards for God's assessment of mankind as entirely corrupt.

Again, let that settle on you. We've taken a couple of messages to carefully work through the first five verses or so of chapter six. And the reason, the reason that these verses are presented in the way they are is that these become the reasons for God's bringing the great flood on the earth.

This is God's rationale. He doesn't have to tell us why He did this, but He is telling us, and it's a warning. It is a warning to all the societies that will come after.

It's a warning to the people of Israel. Turn your back on God, and you have one option left. Evil. And it will consume you as a human being.

[9 : 14] Evil will consume you and define you as a human being. That's what it does. There's no stagnation. There's no neutral gear in human life.

You can't stick your life in neutral and cruise for a while. Spiritually, that is not possible. Spiritually, you are either moving forward in your growth in Christ's likeness, or you're going the other way.

For unbelievers who care nothing about the things of God and mock the Lord, they are caught in the quagmire of self-deception. You understand that? And that deception requires that God send His Holy Son, Jesus Christ, to die on a cross in their place in order to release them from it.

That's how bad the problem is. Measure how bad the problem is by what God has to do to solve it. He had to send His own Son to die.

Doesn't that sober you about how bad it is? That's sin. That's how bad sin owns us. That's how deeply it corrupts our souls.

[10 : 27] That the Holy Son of God had to come from heaven and give His life to rescue us from it. The answer defines the depth of the problem, doesn't it?

That's what we're seeing here. Now, the interpretation, beloved, that I have put forward is that the sons of God in this text refer to demons or fallen angels.

And again, in messages previous to this, I've outlined that and explained it and gone into depth with it. We've taken a bit of a deep dive into these verses because of the enigmatic nature of what they say.

And we want to be careful here. These demonic spirits, these fallen angels, the text tells us, lusted after the beautiful daughters of men.

And so I can imagine that this is an early time in the development of human beings. While sin is taking its toll, people are not as susceptible to disease and all those kinds of things that we know about today after millennia of having to deal with sin on our planet.

[11 : 37] And so I can imagine that many of these women were extremely beautiful. And so they've caught the eye of these demons in the spiritual world. And what's happened is that they've taken notice of these women.

They left their appointed realm, the realm that God appointed for them in the spiritual aspect, to take possession of, notice now, men. To take possession of men.

I think it's, guys, this is a prelude to the 21st. I think it's very interesting that the text tells us that these demons are possessing men as they lust after the women.

They're not possessing women. If they were, we're not being told about it. The emphasis of the text is they're possessing men. Now, I want to talk to you at some length about why that happened.

Where were the men in their lives that made it possible for these demons to do that? This is not like demons are roaming the earth, looking at good guys or guys that are trying to at least live a moral life if not live for the Lord and invading them while they're going, no, no, stay away, don't do that.

[12 : 46] That's not what's happening. These men have made a fertile ground in their own heart for this to happen. And it's happening across society. That's how bad it is.

And so they're taking possession of these men in order to have illicit relations with these women. Now, there are at least two other ways to understand these verses that have been put forward so that there are basically, as there are several views, there are five or six, but basically three major views of these verses and they all have their pros and their cons to include the one that I have shared with you that I've landed on.

All right? But one final element caused me to choose the view I'm teaching. I think that as I studied the Bible, there were a number of things that kept pushing me toward, the text pushing me toward the view that I've proposed to you from this text.

But there was one final element that kind of shut the lid on my decision about this being the most accurate or biblically accurate view.

And so that's what I'm teaching. I landed on the demonic view based on the context of the passage. And that is the context emphasizing the nature of the unprecedented evil infecting all of society.

[14 : 08] I'll put that up here because I think it's very important that I share that with you and you know where I stand. I landed on this view based on the context of the passage which I believe emphasizes the nature of the unprecedented evil infecting all of society.

I think God is using this particular grammar and structure here to impress on us just how deep this thing ran, this thing sinned.

So there seems to be more going on in this text than ungodly men, just normal ungodly guys, acting immorally with equally wicked women who are very eager to be involved in that kind of thing.

I think there's more than that going on. There is that. But I think there's more. I think the very nature and I'll put this up here too. I think the very nature of the demonic possession explanation helps account for two important elements of this very unique time in human history prior to this catastrophic judgment that God's going to bring on this terrible evil.

The first is this. It's the terrible depth of wickedness, corruption and violence the passage describes. That's the first of two important elements that I think lend itself to this demon possession explanation.

[15 : 32] The second would be this, the terrible destruction God brings in response to the corruption. So this brings us then to the final points in my little outline that I'm working from here in these first eight verses of chapter six.

So what we've covered already in the first two points would be the sinfulness of society. In the first four verses, the sinfulness of society and that took us in then to the sagacity of God in 6.5 which I explained and I think that was last Sunday as well.

Now I want to let you know just in the way of a quick review, sagacity is the quality then of being wise, of being discerning. It is the quality of being sound in judgment.

And so when we apply this definition to God, it means that God looks on mankind and makes an assessment that is perfect. God is not flawed in the slightest way in how He is seeing what mankind is doing and evaluating it, measuring it, and then meeting out His judgment on it.

There's no part of that process where God is missing the mark. He sees mankind's heart perfectly just as He sees your heart perfectly.

[16:52] That is who God is. So God looks on mankind with the deepest of understanding and then from that understanding, He makes an error-free judgment of man's inner heart condition.

God is not just seeing the outward behavior. He is seeing that and it's gross to Him. But He's seeing the heart that is giving fuel to that behavior in society, across society.

So with verse 5, verse 5 in chapter 6, we have the main idea that God's assessment, while tragic, is true. Alright?

Hold on to that. The assessment He's making in verse 5 is tragic. It's terrifying. It's terrible. But folks, it's true. One of the reasons that I shared with you what I did this morning in my call to worship is because as terrifying as it is, it doesn't do us any good to deny it or hide from it and even worse, to put our hope in someone else on this planet to deliver us from it.

Vote. Vote. Vote your heart. Vote your conscience. But vote. Lots and lots and lots of really good people died so that we could have that privilege.

[18:16] And people ask me all the time, when you have two evils to vote on or whatever, I'm not saying that's the case, I'm just saying if that's how you feel, if you have two evils, I think I'll just, and I had a guy say this to me one time, a Christian say, I'm going to go and I'm just going to write Mickey Mouse in on the ballot and thumb my nose and I thought, you know, my dad could have died three different tours in Vietnam in combat and any of those times he was fighting to preserve the freedom that we enjoy.

And so that's personal to me. So when it comes to exercising our privilege to vote, vote. Even if you have to vote for the lesser evil. But vote.

Count. Count. So as we look into God's evaluation of mankind, we see that this evaluation, while tragic, is nonetheless true.

And we need to respond in faith. They needed to respond in faith. Moses is sharing this with these people so that Israel will be taught to respond to God in faith and not turn away from God to idols. Which, you know, in their history they did time and time again. Now we come to verse 6. Verse 6 shows us how this truth about God's evaluation of mankind affects God Himself.

[19:46] It's one thing for God to say in verse 5, this is the way it is. Now He's going to share with us and this is how it affects the Lord. God's conclusions about mankind's condition brought grief to God's heart.

So in this case, I'm going to put it up here for you, God's sagacity led to God's sorrow. The main idea of verse 6 is that just as God's judgments are true about these people, God's grief toward us is pure.

God always deals in what is true, in what is pure. And we can count on that in the Lord. Now, one of the reasons this is important is because as you take the message of Jesus to this world, you're going to have to speak to the reality of the abomination that sin is to a holy God.

You're going to have to do that. And when you start putting labels on that from Scripture, like homosexuality is wrong, transgenderism is wrong in the sight of Almighty God, the world is going to hate you for that.

But being faithful is more important and I'm talking about being faithful to God, being faithful to the truth and this is why I'm sharing this with you.

[21:04] The fact that God is making an accurate assessment of our time as we read it in God's Word and the fact that God is making this assessment and this assessment reveals the reality of His purity against impurity, all of that does not change the reality of how we need to share this and say this to people even though when they hear that they're going to hate it.

You have to stand on truth and purity in the Lord. You be gracious but you have to be courageous as well. You have to be willing to take a stand for Jesus.

And this is what we're trying to put forward in this text of Scripture as Moses brings it to the people of Israel. So revisit with me if you will and I'll put this up there as point number 3.

Chapter 6 verse 6. In response then to what he says in verse 5, And Yahweh regretted that He had made man on the earth and He was grieved in His heart.

And so the third point I want to put up here is obviously the sorrow of Almighty God from verse 6. The sorrow of God. While the grief of God is pure, it's pure, the guilt of mankind is grave in the sight of Almighty God.

[22 : 30] God sees it as grave. It's a grave issue. It's a life or death issue. God's grief issues from His uncorrupted character. There's nothing wrong with God.

Nothing wrong with God's assessment. You're going to hear people say to you, well that's your religion. Well that's how you interpret the Bible. I've had homosexuals look me straight in the face and tell me you know there are plenty of preachers out there who have a very different take on homosexuality from Scripture than you do Jeff.

Are you saying they're all wrong? People will say things like that to you. they'll try to challenge you in the way of you being prideful and I admit that we're not beyond that that happening and this is why we need to stay before the Lord dealing with our own sin and share this truth courageously but graciously kindly gently.

we're not their judge are we? We're not the one they're going to stand before and give an account of their lives are we? No. And so I don't need to come off with an attitude like that.

I don't preach turn or burn messages. I preach the truth with grace and kindness and I let them know God is not mocked. If you do not repent you will stand before God to give an account and that account will land you in the devil's hell.

[24 : 04] Now I do say stuff like that but I hold out the hope of Jesus. This is where we have to begin with God's uncorrupted character as we try to understand what it means for God to grieve.

Alright? The first thing that I want to give you as a platform to stand on as you start thinking about God grieving in His spirit in His heart is that God is doing this from an uncorrupted character a holy character and you'll see why that's important as with God seeing look what it says in verse 5 then Yahweh saw Yahweh saw now let me ask you does God have physical eyeballs no how do we know that because the Bible tells us that God is what spirit God doesn't have eyeballs as with God seeing God's sorrow is an example of Moses use of human emotions to convey God's activity in relating to mankind so

God doesn't really have a heart to be grieved in the sense that we understand that core of personhood alright this let me put this up here to clarify it for you this is what theologians refer to as an anthropomorphism and that just simply means that we are applying human emotions or characteristics to God to convey a certain reality about the Lord's relationship to mankind or to how God deals with mankind so an anthropomorphism is helping to describe some type of emotional response in God and we are doing that on a human level so that we can better understand or grasp the reality of what the scripture is teaching us in that moment and here is what it is teaching us in verse 6 when we read in verse 6 that God regretted or that God was grieved that is what we see in 6 about making man hear me folks

Moses is not saying that God made a mistake or that God was realizing that he never should have made mankind in the first place that is not what is being conveyed here in this text that is not a consistent theology with scriptures teaching about the attributes the character of almighty God he doesn't make mistakes he doesn't get down the road and look back and say oh my goodness what was I thinking he doesn't do that that's not our God to humanize God at that level would be wrong and unhelpful to us in our understanding of who he is well then what does this mean about God Jeff what does this mean in verse 6 when it talks about Yahweh regretting that he made man on earth and that he was grieved in his heart it sounds to me like he's saying boy I never should have done this I wish I hadn't done that but that's not what it's saying alright what is it saying what does this mean

I'm going to throw this up here for you too God's sorrow and grief refer to God's displeasure with mankind from which God will now change his behavior toward man so what we're saying is that God is responding to mankind's disobedience God's God's displeasure reflects his holiness in relationship to sin the fact that God is in this state of displeasure is a way of displaying or reflecting the holiness of God against sin God can only be displeased with sin he can't accept it he can't feel good about it he's not neutral about it God cannot abide sin and God's displeasure also reflects his sovereignty in relationship to mankind the fact that God is displeased is a way of signaling to us that the sovereign

[28 : 39] God of the universe is bearing some issue of judgment against what's going on there this is against God this is an anti-God thing that's happening and so he is displeased God is God God is judge and God is jury over the affairs of mankind now there are a couple of different places in scripture that I can take you to that might help balance this out for you and your understanding because naysayers will use verses like this to try and suggest to you that God is not really this great sovereign controlling entity in the universe he's a lot like Buddha or he's a lot like all these other false gods that we that we basically make in our own image right we humanize these gods and so we have to bring them all kinds of different things and anyway there's a couple of places I can take you and I want to take you to the first one in 1st

Samuel chapter 15 1st Samuel chapter 15 all right let me let me read through this and give you the context you just follow along with me in your translation as best you can then Samuel said to Saul in verse 1 because I want you to see the context of what's happening here Samuel is a prophet of God Saul is king in Israel then Samuel said to Saul Yahweh sent me to anoint you as king over his people over Israel so now obey the voice of the words of Yahweh so that's the context Samuel the prophet has been sent to anoint Saul to be king over Israel and Samuel is going to tell him all right now if you're going to be king dude you're going to have to really subscribe to the truth and the word of the Lord and follow him without fault obey the Lord a lot rests on your ability to do that thus says Yahweh of hosts verse 2

I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that he has do not spare him but put to death now notice folks both man and woman infant and nursing baby ox and sheep camel and donkey you see that that is total annihilation no one survives nothing lives then Saul summoned the people in verse 4 and numbered them in Talain 200,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 men of Judah and Saul came to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the valley and Saul said to the Kenites go depart go down from among the Amalekites lest I destroy you with them you showed loving kindness to all the sons of Israel when they came up from Egypt so the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites so Saul struck the Amalekites from Havilah as you go to Shur which is east of Egypt and he seized Agag the king of the

Amalekites alive and devoted to destruction all the people with the edge of the sword but verse 9 Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep the best of the oxen the fat the lambs and all that was good and they were not willing to devote them to destruction but everything despised and worthless that they utterly destroyed then the word of the Lord came to Samuel saying now notice verse 11 I regret that I have made Saul king for he has turned back from following me and has not established my words and Samuel became angry and cried out to Yahweh all night he was so grieved in his heart about what God just told him and so when we read verse 11 we need to understand and realize that what this is telling us is that God made a mistake in putting Saul in place right is that what it's telling us what did I just say to you a little while ago he never makes mistakes so we know that's not what this is teaching when it talks about he he's the fact that he's regretting that he made Saul king let me ask you this when he made Saul king did he know

Saul would respond like this because he is sovereign amen amen verse 12 then Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul and it was told to Samuel saying Saul came to Carmel here and behold he set up a monument for God for himself then turned and proceeded on down to Gilgal and Samuel came to Saul and Saul said to him how blessed are you of Yahweh I've established the word of Yahweh he's all full of himself and all pride look what I did I did it but Samuel said oh really what then is this sound of that in my ears and the sound of the oxen which I'm hearing you got to love the the cynicism of these prophets sometime and Saul said oh well they now look look what he says they who's he talking about his army his people they oh really king they did this yeah they have brought them from the

[34 : 22] Amalekites for the people spared the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice them to Yahweh your God right but the rest we've devoted to destruction then Samuel see this is what I'm saying folks God sees the heart he knows that Saul is lying through his teeth he knows the motive of these people wasn't to spare the best to sacrifice to Yahweh what do they want they want the plunder then Samuel said to Saul wait and let me tell you what Yahweh spoke to me last night and he said to him speak and Samuel said is it not true though you were little in your own eyes you were made the head of the tribes of Israel and Yahweh anointed you king over Israel and

Yahweh sent you on a mission and said go and devote to destruction the sinners the Amalekites and fight against them until they are consumed that is annihilated why then did you notice this is God's assessment why then did you not obey the voice of Yahweh but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh that's

God's evaluation then Saul said to Samuel I did obey the voice of Yahweh and went on the way on which Yahweh sent me and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek and have devoted the Amalekites to destruction but the people but the people took some of the spoil sheep and oxen the choices of the things devoted to destruction to sacrifice to you see he's still trying to bring this ridiculous lie and purpose it before this prophet of God that God directly speaks to this is the kind of self-deception that we bring to this he this man is so desperate to cover up his tracks that he's not even taking into consideration who he's speaking to then Samuel said in verse 22 has Yahweh as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices and as in obeying the voice of Yahweh you should have obeyed dude you shouldn't have made this an issue of lying through your teeth about no you're going to worship God with the best no you're not behold to obey is better than sacrifice you should have obeyed and to heed to do than the fat of rams for rebellion notice God's assessment rebellion is as the sin of divination and in insubordination is as wickedness and idolatry so God sees this as rebellion and insubordination in the king because you have rejected the word of Yahweh there it is he has also rejected you from being king there it is that's what it turns on then Saul said to Samuel notice I have sinned I have indeed trespassed against the command of Yahweh in your words because I feared the people and obeyed their voice now it comes out right it's almost like I know I know I know but you don't understand the pressure I'm under that kind of that kind of thing and Samuel's not having it so what is he saying so now please forgive my sin and return with me that I might worship Yahweh but Samuel said to Saul I will not return with you for you have rejected the word of Yahweh and Yahweh has rejected you from being king over Israel you see that then Samuel turned to go but Saul sees the edge of his robe and it tore so Samuel said to him Yahweh has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor who is better than you also the eternal one of Israel will not lie or have regret for he is not a man that he should have regret now that puts it into context for us doesn't it when Saul tries to plead his case it doesn't work Samuel ends up taking a sword from somebody and hacking agag to pieces right in front of Saul this is what you should have done tough stuff isn't it Samuel first Samuel 15 helps us use the scripture to better understand scripture in several places

Samuel explains why God is displeased with Saul and with what Saul did several times he goes over that with Saul not just once in verse 11 you see that I regret that I've made Saul king for he's turned back from following me and not has not established my words that's the problem that is the problem that's why God is taking this action in verses 22 and 23 has Yahweh as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as an obeying obedience Saul you missed obedience and now you've rebelled you've been insubordinate to God why because you've rejected the word of God and so God has rejected you from being king that's God's rationale that's God's response towards Saul's evil and then finally in verse 26 we have it capped off for us I will not return with you for you have rejected the word of

Yahweh and Yahweh has rejected you from being king and then we have in verse 29 the fact that God is not like mankind so that when I say that I I relented or I regretted making Saul this helps us here the eternal one doesn't lie or have regret for he's not a man that he should have regret he doesn't make mistakes he doesn't look back and say oh man I wish I would have zigged instead of zagged there boy that he doesn't go like this up no no my bad that one's on me that one's on me I know it's ridiculous isn't it but this is what people come up with because they're not careful with the scriptures they're not careful with it the issue here I'm going to sum it up for us the issue here is that Saul disobeyed God and proved unfaithful to be king of Israel so in response to Saul's rejection and unfaithfulness the Lord changed his behavior towards Saul and rejected him and again verse 29 makes a critical distinction between us and God and it clears up any doubt or confusion that we might have about this being the same kind of regret we experience as human beings it's not the same they're using human terminology to help us realize a very important truth about all of this look rejection rebellion unfaithfulness disobedience that's just exactly what Saul's coming under condemnation for that's exactly the kind of thing that we're seeing from Genesis chapter 6 but this is on a scale in six of wickedness beyond our imaginations the people the people rejected God thus God rejected them that's what's happening it's I don't want you to think this I don't want you to think

well everything was rocking along fine until these demons showed up and messed everything up no the demons showed up because things weren't fine and mankind gave them permission to come and take up residence and it got worse but it was far from fine before they showed up on the scene so the issue for God then is the disobedience and rebellion which prompted his displeasure in which led to

[42 : 25] God's change in response to them it's what we're dealing with we have a very similar issue and I'll just do one more real quickly with you in Jeremiah will you turn there with me I know that what I just gave you is pretty much a slam dunk but I want to show you one more here in Jeremiah chapter 18 do I have a I think I have a yeah now notice this one the word which came to Jeremiah from Yahweh saying arise and go down to the potter's house and there I will make you hear my words then I went down to the potter's house and behold he was making something on the wheel but the vessel that he was making of clay was ruined in the hand of the potter so he turned around and made it into another vessel according to what was right in the eyes of the potter to make then the word of Yahweh came to me saying can I not O house of Israel deal with you as this potter does declares Yahweh behold like the clay in the potter's hand so are you in my hand O house of Israel at one moment I might speak concerning a nation concerning a kingdom to uproot to tear down or to make it perish but if that nation against which I've spoken notice turns from its evil what will God do I will relent concerning the calamity I plan to do against it do you remember a really famous story a really popular story in scripture where God sent a prophet to preach doom and the city repented and made the prophet mad who was that yeah

Nineveh right and so God said I will relent if those people repent or verse 9 at another moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning the kingdom to build up or to plant it but if it does evil in my sight by not listening to my voice then I will relent concerning the good which I promised to do good to it so now then speak to the men of Judah and against the inhabitants of Jerusalem saying thus says Yahweh behold I am forming calamity against you I am devising a plan against you oh turn back each of you from his evil way and do good in your ways and your deeds in other words turn to the Lord give your heart to God but they will say it's hopeless for we are going to follow our own plans and each of us will act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart this is throughout God's word therefore thus says Yahweh ask now among the nations whoever heard the like of this the virgin of Israel has done a most appalling thing does the snow of Lebanon forsake the rock of the open country is the cold flowing water from a strange land ever uprooted for my people have forgotten me they burn incense to worthless gods they've stumbled from their ways from the ancient paths to walk in bypass not on a highway to make their land and object an object of horror boy that's so fitting an object of horror an object of perpetual hissing everyone who passes by it will be horrified and shake his head like an east wind I will scatter them before the enemy I will show them my back and not my face in the day of their disaster then they said come and let us devise plans against Jeremiah see they hated him Jeremiah brings this message they hate him surely the law is not going to perish from the priests or the counsel of the wise man anyway they don't heed him they don't give heed to God and so God deals with them in judgment all I'm trying to do is point out to you that this idea about relenting in verse 8 and relenting in verse 10 have everything to do with God changing his behavior toward these people because they changed toward God and so God is responding to them and this is more of the idea of giving them over so God listen now God is not sorry that he made mankind because God thinks that he made a big mistake in making mankind he's not looking back on it like that and God isn't grieved because God is vulnerable and therefore weak so that we have this weak God that went out and did something in kind of an impetuous way you know oh you know what I think I'll make all of these things called humans and make a male and female and just see how that turns out that's not what he did we know that and so God's not looking back on all of this like that he's not us God's sorrow and grief are evidence of his holiness and his sovereignty in his relationship to mankind God's sorrow and grief are real but they are not human they are put in human terms to convey to us the fact that God is not indifferent to human sin or he is not unaffected by our sin he's not just sitting up there and these people are sinning and he's just going yeah well too bad for them he's not distant from that in that way and I appreciate that the scripture teaches us about our God God cares for his creation he cares that these people are doing this the unrepentant sin of these people are having a deep impact on our God

having a deep impact on the way that he's choosing now to relate to them God has remained constant he's remained good he's remained faithful he's remained true he's kept his promises he's unchanging in his relationship to mankind but this is what mankind's doing mankind is seeking a life apart from a relationship with God so that the demonic possession and pervasive immorality are destroying the last hope for mankind as they reject God and turn to themselves you will see this played out over and over again in scripture and in various societies throughout the years and we see it happening today the children of Israel needed to see this age-old struggle already going on just about a thousand to fifteen hundred years into this this is already going on it's a struggle with sin in its true light its destructive influence was introduced into human life through the disobedience of Adam and Eve and it has followed us ever since that's the truth that's the truth of scripture scripture gives us the reasoning behind what we're seeing folks when we look at our nation and we see the depth of evil that is growing by leaps and bounds every year that we're here as we see that happening and we think to ourselves lands in just ten years ago could we have ever thought that people would be embracing the kinds of things they are today and calling it normal could we have ever conceived that people in churches today that profess to know Jesus Christ are giving league to that and embracing it and calling it inclusive well it's inclusive all right it's including a lot of people on a path to hell is what it's doing and we need to be the people that are saying don't do this don't do this this leads to death here we are in our day every single person needs to know the truth about sin's origins and why we're in the shape we're in they need to know about its deadly impact on each individual life but they also need to know something else about this every person needs to come to terms with God's evaluation of what sin sin does to us and how helpless we are against it without the Lord

God is not indifferent to our sin he's not unaffected by our sin now in verse 7 more quickly we can see God's second response let me put this up here for you we're back in Genesis chapter 6 and now we see God's second response to men and women plunging themselves deeper and deeper into sin God is made sorrowful by what he's seeing happening in their hearts and in their lives his first response was sorrow now this one the solemnity of God and that involves the judgment of God being deserved so you see here let me put it up there you see here solemnity the idea of solemnity refers to God's serious attitude and actions toward man's sin God takes sin very seriously and this verse expresses it this is a solemn matter for the Lord no gains because God hates sin and must deal with it according to his holy nature

God's solemnity brings about God's sentence in verse 7 and what does verse 7 tell us? I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land so now we're back to the potter in the passage in Jeremiah I'm the potter I've made the clay into what I want I can do whatever I want to with it I'm not capricious I never judge apart from what is true and pure you can count on God for that so when God says I will blot out man whom I have created that's the potter talking to the clay isn't it?

[52 : 42] I will blot out is one word in Hebrew it's just one word and it has a very strong connotation of to wipe out or exterminate or obliterate the legacy standard Bible has to blot out it's a very strong phrase and it conveys twin concepts two basic concepts from this phrase I will blot out the first is this God's patience has a limit I will blot out tells us you can get to the place where God is done that's scary under that we have the idea of His common grace for hundreds of years God's been long suffering with mankind in this sin and depravity God's common grace is His favor His undeserved unmerited unearned favor shown to unbelievers as He sustains them in life they're not grateful for God's grace they don't acknowledge God they mock God they live their lives however they want they talk about the big man upstairs or the big guy or whatever but God has now fixed a true time limit for this grace to end and then next

God's uncommon judgment His common grace and His uncommon judgment never before this time and never since this time in history has mankind's degree of wickedness brought such universal acts of judgment from the Lord as what we're about to see God's degree of response gives evidence to mankind's degree of sinfulness and then the second concept I want to bring before you in terms of what we're seeing here God's punishment is absolute His punishment is absolute in terms of its scope the entire earth will soon fall under the just judgment of God's wrath that will be a global flood I believe in a global flood because I believe the scripture teaches a global flood science doesn't teach me a global flood it supports the Bible's truth that the flood went across the entire planet and then in its severity no one who is unrepentant will escape in fact you and I both know

that an ark full of animals and eight human beings were all that was left the apostle Peter used this very passage to sober us as he put God's patience and punishment in proper perspective so I want to turn to 2 Peter for just a moment before I end here and I want to show you how Peter is helping put the patience of God and the punishment of God into perspective particularly as it relates to future judgment we're not done yet there's more judgment coming this time it won't be a flood what will it be?

of fire of fire so 2 Peter 3 just hold your finger there in Genesis 2 Peter 3 beginning in verse 3 knowing this first of all in the last days mockers will come with their mocking following after their own what does it say in your translation?

lusts isn't that interesting this is always what's behind this stuff the lusts of men mockers will come we're in the last days folks the last days are the days this side of the cross we're in those days verse 4 and this is what these mockers will say as they follow their lust where's the promise of his coming since the fathers fell asleep all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation for when they maintain this it escapes their notice by the word of God the heavens existed long ago the earth was formed out of water and by water through which the world at that time was destroyed being deluged with water but by his word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men but do not let this one fact escape your notice beloved that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day the Lord is not slow about his promise as some consider slowness he's patient toward you not willing for any to perish but for all to come to repent that is such a beautiful verse but the day of the Lord will come you see his patience has a limit but the day of the Lord will come like a thief in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat and the earth and its works will be found out since all these things are to be destroyed in this way what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God because of which the heavens burning will be destroyed and the elements will melt with intense heat but according to his promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness flows back to Genesis

Peter puts it in perspective to repent and the Lord will come to us reflect on what the Lord has told these people in Genesis the Lord's going to give them 120 years to repent and after this will come swift judgment Peter just told us that a thousand years are like a day with the Lord the Lord's not measuring it like we do it's coming and he knows when it's coming and right now you've got your 120 years to repent you see what he's saying it's the same message that he told to the people of Noah's day right now you're in the day of repentance you don't know when I'm going to close the door on the ark and that's going to be the end of it but I do you don't know when I'm going to bring fire to burn this place down but I do right now take advantage of the time to repent and walk spiritually with me and build treasure in heaven and be sobered about the reality don't let the stuff of this world lull you to sleep now let me just make a couple of quick points about this last one and I'm done just hang with me a little bit more because I want to end on the salvation of

[59 : 45] God in verse 8 but Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh the grace of God is undeserved but freely given so this is the holy favor that I've been preaching about for weeks this is the holy favor of the Lord that produces a high fear of God God's judgment is coming on the rebellious unbelieving but the Lord mercifully gives us this promise of rebirth and blessing in verse 8 what does it say but Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord these words of evaluation from God bring hope holiness and healing so you see God's still making an evaluation but that evaluation is very very different from what he's saying about mankind because we have a man here who has the fear of the Lord a high and holy reverence for God and he's cultivating that in his life he's not letting society suck him along and define his priorities for him did you hear me say that

Noah was not allowing society to suck him along and define the priorities of life for him Noah kept a spiritual vigilant attitude about life he had a heavenly mindedness about life and it kept him sober about spiritual things and it set him apart Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord it's important for you to know did Noah earn that favor from God no what Noah is doing is expressing the grace of God in his life isn't he the reason that Noah can be this man is because of the work of God in his heart and that's setting him apart so God gets all the glory doesn't he God gets all the praise it is the gift of God in Jesus Christ his son that we enjoy as God's gracious gift of salvation so this passage in verse 8 particularly reflects God's saving favor through

Noah's line through his lineage the promise of a redeemer a savior will be kept by the Lord I'm going to destroy everything else Noah but I'm going to put you in a boat that you're going to make and I'm going to spare your life because there's someone that I need to bring to the world of humanity from you and I'm going to save a lot of them let me end with this verse up here for you and the angel said to her do not be afraid Mary for you have found favor with God and behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son and you shall name him Jesus he will be great and will be called the son of the most high and the Lord will give him the throne of his father David there's your lineage and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and his kingdom will have no end the kingdom of America will one day end God did not promise that we would go on and on but the kingdom of Jesus

Christ will go on forever build your treasure in heaven and walk with God make it about Jesus make it about Jesus and lead your family to follow Jesus let's pray together well dear father we have been sobered this morning in our worship as we've come before you and allowed the truth about our nation as we watch the events of the election unfold week after week leading up to the day when millions and millions of Americans will cast their vote for the next president of our nation and there's just so many things that our people are suffering from God and so we appeal to you as the creator of every human heart that you would show much common grace that you would go on leading us in faithfulness and righteousness help us to be a courageous and loving people who are willing to share with anyone in our path the hope of the Lord

Jesus help us Lord God to get past the fear of man help us to re-evaluate in prayer the priorities that we have about our lives and help us to turn in this dark time to making sure that we're walking with you in spiritual truth and organizing our lives according to the priorities of heaven that you have set for us as your people help us to be as Noah walking in ways that please you setting ourselves apart for our service to you Lord whatever the cost thank you for Grace Church Williamsburg thank you for the souls who are here and the people who are joining and making an investment in what I hope will be many years of this church standing on the truth of the Lord graciously and kindly and gently but never ever backing up or compromising on what the truth tells us about a holy life in Jesus

[65 : 15] Christ thank you for your goodness to us Lord and your blessings on us even as we stand now to sing your praises fill our hearts with hope and joy that we are on the side that wins in the end and you will bring us to paradise where we will love Jesus and be loved by him without sin or tears or pain or distress and God how we hope for that day come Lord Jesus in his name we pray amen