

98-06-14a

Let's begin our worship this morning by going to the Lord in prayer. Father, we thank you, we praise your name for the wonderful grace that you have extended to us through our Savior Jesus Christ. We are delivered out of this present evil age, we have a standing before you, we have an eternal relationship with you through him.

We thank you for the example that he left us, for your word and your spirit which sustain us and enable us to seek to follow his example in living our lives in a way that pleases you and brings glory to your name. We thank you for the country in which we live, for the freedom that we enjoy, the relative freedom from persecution or from distraction. It is pretty much entirely up to us how much we desire to prioritize your plan in our lives.

We are not under a great deal of pressure other than the distractions that beset us. We pray this morning that as we study your dealings in the early days of the human race, the great flood and the deliverance of Noah, we recognize that you are the same God that spoke to Noah, you are the same God that has been fulfilling the plan that we see unfolded in the pages of scripture for all of these centuries, all of these millennia. We know that human history is rapidly drawing to a close and we are living in one of the final generations of that plan.

As we study your dealings in the past, we pray that it will make an impact on us in the present and help us to live in the light of the future, the eternal future that we will spend with you. We pray that you will bless us as we study your word, give us insight and understanding, help these things to become a part of the resources in our soul. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Turn with me this morning for our scripture reading to Psalm 136. Psalm 136.

As we see the great contrast between the fate of the entire civilized world versus that of Noah and his immediate family, we cannot help but be struck by the grace of God. The story begins with the statement that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Psalm 136 is a wonderful psalm of praise that recognizes God's grace, especially in his dealings with Israel.

A lot of times this psalm gets short shrift when it comes to scripture reading because it has a repeating refrain all the way through. For reading purposes, it gets almost distracting. We have to remember that this was a song.

If you ever listen to gospel music, you know that sometimes in a good old gospel song, you'll get to a point where the old gospel convention songs would be a case where the lead singer would be singing a melody line with words and so forth. The other three members of the quartet would be singing in the background at a little bit different speed. It's a refrain effect.

You can listen to one part and then fill in on the other because it's kind of like these guys that yell out the words right before you're supposed to sing them when you don't know the song. They say it all real fast and then the slow melody comes along and you sing with. You have that two-part thing going on.

A lot of times in the second part of the song or the bridge or somewhere, there'll be a place where somebody is singing and there'll be a repeating refrain in the background. There's a song that has been around a long time in the gospel field. In fact, James Blackwood is probably most notable for singing this.

He says, I want to be like him. I want to be like Jesus. He's talking about all the different attributes.

He says, I want to pray. I want to sing. I want to do this, that, and the other.

The other three members of the quartet are all saying, just like him, over and over again in the background. They say, I want to trust. I want to have faith.

I want to do all these different things. His part is constantly changing, but in the background you have this constant refrain. Just like him.

Just like him. I want to be just like him. That's the way this song is, Psalm 136.

Having observed that, what I'd like to do is read this psalm and to avoid the distraction. Because when you just read it, you miss what was probably there when they sang this and had that refrain in the background. It didn't distract.

In fact, it enhanced it. To keep ourselves from distracting, I'm going to skip all except the first and the last reference to this refrain. You'll have to skip along with me as we read this.

What we want to catch, particularly as we look at Psalm 136 for our scripture reading, is the theme of the first part of each verse. The repeating refrain here is, His mercy endures forever. It's poetic.

It's a great artistic device that His mercy endures forever. You get the idea. This refrain endures forever because it comes up in every single verse.

If it's distracting to you, you can just listen as I read Psalm 136. O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever. O give thanks to the God of gods.

O give thanks to the Lord of lords. To Him who alone does great wonders. To Him who by wisdom made the heavens.

To Him who laid out the earth above the waters. To Him who made great lights. The sun to rule by day, the moon and stars to rule by night.

To Him who struck Egypt in their firstborn and brought out Israel from among them with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm. To Him who divided the Red Sea in two and made Israel pass through the midst of it. But overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea.

To Him who led His people through the wilderness. To Him who struck down great kings and slew famous kings. Sihon king of the Amorites and Og king of Bashan.

And gave their land as a heritage, a heritage to Israel His servant. Who remembered us in our lowly state and rescued us from our enemies. Who gives food to all flesh.

O give thanks to the God of heaven for His mercy endures forever. The theme as you can probably tell by listening to that psalm here is deliverance in the day of judgment. The enemies of Israel are judged but Israel is delivered.

Why? Because God has made a promise. Israel has a covenant relationship with God and God remembers Israel even in their lowly state. Even when they have no resources, in some cases no redeeming qualities.

God remembers Israel, verse 23 especially. He remembers us in our lowly state and rescues us from our enemies. His mercy endures forever.

When God pledges His mercy to us which He has done at the point of salvation. It endures forever. This is one of the strong principles of scripture that tells us that salvation is not something you can lose.

Because it's based on a promise of God. God pledges His mercy. Just look at the history of Israel as rebellious and disobedient and apathetic and indifferent and so forth as Israel got.

God never forsakes the covenant that He made with Abraham. That his descendants, Abraham's descendants would be God's people forever. And there's always a remnant.

There's always a place where God can express His mercy. And that's true in our lives as well. We talked Friday night about the fact that different parts of our lives sometimes we're doing well in one area and not so well in another area.

But there's always, as long as we're alive on this earth as believers, there's always a place in our lives where God is expressing His mercy. If no other place than just the fact that we're still alive and breathing and we haven't died the sin unto death. God's mercy endures forever.

And that's what we're going to see this morning as we resume our study in Genesis chapter 6. As I said last week, we're going to attempt at least to move forward at a slightly faster pace. Just so that somewhere in our earthly lifetimes we will finish

Genesis. Now we have already gone well into chapter 6. We've seen in the first section, verses 1 through 4, the status of things after the fall, after the murder of Abel by Cain, after the proliferation of the early generations of the human race and men multiply on the face of the earth.

God has angels down here administering, giving them some technology, some religious instruction or spiritual instruction. They know what sacrifice is about. They know what a clean and an unclean animal is.

We know this because we see it in the early events here. And then we also see that those custodian angels got distracted. They're not a part of Satan and his demons.

It's a separate set of angels. They were given a task, but they kept not their first estate, as it says in the New Testament. They saw, they reached out and took, and in so doing they sinned, just the way Eve did in the garden.

And they have a separate fate from Satan and his angels. They're reserved in darkness until the day of judgment. We don't know, I don't know at least, exactly what that judgment will be.

I am not yet convinced that they are lake of fire bound. I only know that they are currently in a separate status from the demons. The demons roam the earth as Satan does, to and fro, seeking whom he may devour.

These angels are in chains in the pit. And so we've looked at that in some detail. But then in verse 5 we began what we've been looking at the past few weeks.

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth. And this is a shift because he's just talked in the first four verses about the fall of these angels. And that they intermarried with men.

And what's strongly implied there is that man cooperated in this. The big question is, well, if the angels messed up, why does God hammer the earth? Why doesn't he just come down and whack the angels and get them out of the way? Well, the problem is, man in his wickedness cooperates in this and sees an advantage. Thinks, well, I'm getting in with the, this is like someone who marries into royalty.

Or marries into somebody with influence and then uses that as leverage to get their way. And so the fathers and the brothers and so forth consented in these marriages that took place with the angelic overseers. And used that to their own advantage and used it as a means for abuse.

You can't marry a woman in this sort of culture without the consent of the family. The father has custodial authority until the woman is married. We still have this today.

It's considered to be real old-fashioned now. But it used to be quite common that if you were going to marry a girl, you went to the father and asked for her hand. Why is that? Why do you go to the father? Because, biblically, the father has custodial responsibility for the woman.

And he is the one who decides who he's going to pass that on to. And this was the basis even of arranged marriages and so forth. The father could decide that even before the girl had any say so.

But the father is responsible until he passes that on to the husband. And so the fathers here are culpable for letting their daughters be married to these they should have known better. And they are at fault.

And it's only one expression of the great wickedness that fills the earth. The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth. And take a look at the divine actions here in verses 5 through 8. We're stepping back here.

We want to look a little bit at the structure of this whole next couple of chapters. It begins right here. You have this aberration taking place on the earth.

It is lo tov. It is not good. And it has just gone from bad to worse ever since the fall.

The Lord saw. The first thing that happens is God looks. God evaluates.

Do you think that God is looking today? Is He looking at the world? Is He looking at American society? Is He looking at your life and at my life? Yes, He is. Don't think that He's not. Don't think that you're an unimportant person at the great sea of events.

And you've got your Billy Grahams and your great evil guys and your really wonderful guys. And that you're just kind of lost in the masses and God does not see. God sees.

God knows. And God is up there with His arms folded watching and evaluating each one of us. That's why there's a day of judgment where every one of us will give an account.

Because God sees and God knows. God sees here that the Lord saw. Now the thing that is very interesting here is that God in His grace, when Adam and Eve fell, made provision.

He gives them the skins. Even in the midst of the curse, He gives them hope. He says there's going to be a day when the serpent's head is crushed.

The seed of the woman has the hope of deliverance. And you have the Lord here. You have God's personal name, Yahweh.

And it is His name that implies relationship and implies intimacy. Who is it that looks at the earth and sees that it is totally corrupt here? It's Yahweh. It's the Lord.

If you look in your Bible, you'll see that it's probably L-O-R-D in caps. Whenever you see that, the convention among nearly all translators is when you see L-O-R-D in caps, the Hebrew word behind that is Yahweh. The Old Testament.

So the Lord saw. This is an affront to God's personal involvement with man. We tend to always think of God as God.

G-O-D. He's a distant box of essences and characteristics. He's sort of the great impersonal arbiter in the sky, the great judge and so forth.

But the God who is grieved here is Yahweh, the Lord. God in His personal sense. The Lord saw the wickedness of man was great and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

So the first action that takes place is God sees. God evaluates and the result of His evaluation is, this is really, really bad. It's the opposite of what God saw when He looked at the results of creation.

God saw everything that it was good. Now God sees everything and it's evil. So what's the next action? As a result of His observation, in verse 6, the Lord was sorry.

He regrets. Now, we wrestle with the idea that God would regret. Well, isn't He on mission? Didn't He know this was going to happen? How could He regret? Did He sort of get surprised by this? He didn't think it would turn out this way and now He's sorry.

He wishes He hadn't ever made man in the first place. If you think about this, it's not nearly so complex as everyone has made it. You can think of situations in our own lives where we commit to a course of action because we know that it's right.

The big four-year illustration in my mind is when I went to the United States Naval Academy. I knew ahead of time that that was a good thing for me, that they would teach me things I needed to know and that I would come out on the other side, if I survived, with a good education, with a direction in life, with a lot of my personal weaknesses corrected, a lot of my sharp corners rounded and so forth. I knew it was a good thing.

I knew that's where I needed to go. That knowledge never changed all the way through. Looking back, I still am totally convinced that that was God's plan for my life.

However, many, many times in the midst of that experience, I was sorry that I had ever showed up. I was sorry that I had ever darkened the door, ever signed on the dotted line, knowing at the same time that it was necessary. You can think of many unpleasant experiences, whether they are medical or training-wise or whatever, where you know ahead of time that you're going to do something.

In the midst of it, you just are suffering and you say, but in the back of your mind, you

know all along that you're going to come out on the other side and that it's a good thing. What this tells us is that God is not an inanimate machine. He doesn't just program something and then He's completely uncaring and unfeeling because He knows it's all going to turn out in the end.

God is personal and the Lord God, Yahweh, in His personal intimate sense, He, if you'll pardon the expression, feels right along through the course of human history. When bad things happen, it grieves Him. He feels it.

We tend to think that God is just so omni-everything, that He's impassive and undisturbed, unperturbed. All of His emotions are just anthropopathisms and so forth. That's not the way the Bible presents God.

God gets angry. God rejoices. God regrets.

God is sorry. He feels pain. You can only imagine what God the Father felt when Jesus Christ was on the cross.

God destined Christ for the cross and eternity passed. But do you think that He was impassive and unperturbed when His only begotten Son was suffering for the sins of the whole world on the cross? I think not. This is one of the early passages that tells us that God does not want us to think of Him as this impassive, emotionless, giant computer in the sky.

He is a person and He feels and that's in evidence here. So He was sorry. Does it mean that if He had it to go over again, He would not create man? Not at all.

It means that at this particular phase, it's so bad that it grieves Him that man is on the earth. But if it truly did grieve Him and He wished He'd never done it, He would have just wiped everybody out and we wouldn't be here. There would be no Bible.

Nobody would know the difference. But obviously He didn't regret it to the point of undoing everything that He had done. But He undoes an awful lot of it.

So the first action, God sees. The second action, because of what He sees, He's sorry. He regrets that He made man on the earth at this particular point.

And you know that there are things that you have committed to or things that you've been involved with and at certain points you have a deep regret. It's not to the point that you truly wish that you had never done it, but there's a lot of regret. You say, boy, this is the painful part.

He was grieved in His heart. God has a heart. People don't often amazingly seem to think of that, but God the Father has a heart and He experiences grief.

And it tells us that right here. So as a result, God sees. It is very unpleasant what He

sees.

It creates regret and grief in His heart. And so God acts. Based on what God sees, God is going to speak a policy into existence.

And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth. Man and beast, creeping thing, birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them. And so the vast, vast majority of creation is going to be wiped out at a single stroke.

And this word, when it says, I will destroy man in verse 7, this is a very interesting word. I want to back up and be sure we understand this particular turn of phrase here, this statement that God makes. When He says in verse 6, or verse 7 rather, I will destroy man, this is the Hebrew word Machah, M-A-C-H-A-H.

And Machah literally, interestingly, means to erase by washing with water. To erase by washing with water. And you say, well now that's a completely convenient definition for the word, since God is going to erase everything off the earth with water.

What makes you think that that's really the definition? Why doesn't that just mean to destroy? Well, take a look at Exodus chapter 17, verse 14. Another use of this very same verb, Exodus chapter 17 and verse 14. If you're familiar with the general sequence of events here in Israel's history, you know that as they left Egypt, they came up against the Amalekites, or the Amalekites, depending on how you want to say it.

But Amalek comes out in verse 8 of chapter 17, and fought with Israel at Rephidim. Moses says to Joshua, choose some men, go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.

Moses, Aaron and Hur, and this is the famous scene where as long as Moses can keep his arms in the air, they prevail. When Moses gets tired and his arms sag, then they start losing. Because God said, go out and stretch your arms forth.

So in verse 11, when Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed. When he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. Moses' hands became heavy.

So he took a stone and put it under him. You know, they do this to you when you have malfunctioned in some way, where you stick your arms out and they put your rifle out there. M1 rifle weighs 12.5 pounds or so, depending on whether you have ammunition in it or not.

So you hold that out, and for the first 20 or 30 seconds, it's no big deal. And then as time passes, you begin to realize that the force of your will is not sufficient to keep your arms out there. And no matter how badly you want to, or how many push-ups you're going to have to do because you fail, your arms just give out.

Well, this is what happened with Moses. Because a battle, especially when you're just hacking and slashing with swords and spears and things, takes a while. And so Moses ran out of the ability to hold his hands up.

So they took a stone, put it under him. He sat on it. Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and the other on the other side.

And his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. You try this. Well, I don't expect anybody to actually try this.

But you can imagine in your mind, holding your arms in the air all day long. I mean, if you get up on a chair to change a light bulb and hold your hands up for very long, you start to feel it in your arms. And a lot of lessons and sermons have been made out of this.

You know, the mutual support in the body of Christ and so forth, illustrated in this. But anyway, as a result of this, Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. The main lesson to draw out of this is obedience.

One man's obedience to God, hold your arms up, can make a big difference for a lot of other people, i.e. the army down there in the field. And it wasn't their might or their power or their proficiency with their weapons. It was Moses' obedience that enabled them to achieve the victory.

So then look at verse 14. The Lord said to Moses, write this for a memorial in the book. Well, we're reading the book.

This is part of the book that Moses wrote, the five books actually. God commanded Moses to write this episode down in the book. And we are reading the result of his obedience to that command.

Recounted in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out, there's our verb, makah, I will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And this actually took place. Other than the account in the Bible, Amalek, you know, these liberal scholars get in there and say, well, you know, we're taking the Bible with a grain of salt.

We can't find any archaeological evidence. We don't find any inscriptional evidence. We don't find any manuscript evidence.

We don't find any archaeological evidence. We can't find any trace of the Amalekite civilization. And this was true all the way for thousands of years, for about 3,400 years or so, 3,300 years.

Nobody could prove that the Amalekites had ever even existed. There wasn't a trace of them because God fulfilled this. He said, I'm going to blot them out and nobody's going

to remember them.

And that was actually the case. They thought that the Amalekites were a fictional element in Israel's history. And it wasn't until just late in the last century that they finally actually uncovered a very small amount of archaeological evidence that indicated that there really were Amalekites.

And as late as the first edition of the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, which was written right around the turn of the century, they still had no proof. There was no indication that there ever were any Amalekites. God blotted out.

God erased them out of the memory of the earth. The Amalekites are a fascinating subject to study through the scriptures. You find out that it's a big issue with King Saul.

And he does battle with the Amalekites because God commanded Israel to wipe them out. And they didn't really fully wipe out the Amalekites. David does the best job of eradicating as many of them as he can.

But it's a fascinating study, which we took up when we went through 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel. But this is another use of the verb. Now look at Exodus 32, verses 32 and 33.

This is another memorable episode where the golden calf incident has taken place. And God says, very similar to our example in Noah's day, God says, Moses, stand back. You're going to be like Noah.

I'm going to preserve you and I'll make a nation out of you. I'm going to blow away all the rest of Israel because of their disobedience. So in Exodus 32, Moses tries to go up and atone for their great sin.

He says in verse 30 to the Israelites, You have committed a great sin, so now I will go up to the Lord. Perhaps I can make atonement for your sin. So in verse 31 of chapter 32 of Exodus, Moses returned to the Lord and said, Oh, these people have committed a great sin and have made for themselves a God of gold.

Yet now, if you will forgive their sin, but if not, I pray, blot me out of your book which you have written. If you cannot forgive their sin, then blot me out of your book. And it's this word.

How do you blot something out of a book? I've always thought, and this is something I just have realized in studying this verb. I used to think, well, if you're blotted out of the book, whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, and I will not blot your name out of the book, and so forth. That this was like a big ink blot.

When we first switched over from pencils to pens in grade school, and started trying to write with a pen, if you made a mistake, you couldn't turn it over and use the eraser. And

so, how do you correct a mistake? Well, I used to just scribble it through, just blot it out with a big blot of ink, and write the correct thing above it, or next to it, or whatever. Then one day I looked over at somebody else's paper, and theirs looked a lot neater than mine.

They had made mistakes, but when they blotted it out, then they drew a border around the blot, a nice little rectangle, and filled it all in, so that it was a nice, neat little square. And I thought, well, that looks a lot better than the old scribbling I've been doing. So then, ever after, when I made a mistake, I made a nice, neat little rectangle, and filled it in.

But I thought blot out meant you'd make a big blot, and obliterate what was written there. But what the verb says is, when you blot it out, you take a damp cloth, and because the ink is water-based, you get in there, and you blot it, you soak it up off of the parchment, or off of whatever it is you're writing on, and you get that ink wet, and you erase it with water. And so that's what Moses is referring to here.

He says, my name is written in your book. Which book is that? Well, the books of God are a whole separate subject. But in this particular book, Moses' name is written.

Is this the book of the living, those who are alive on the earth in any given generation? Is it the book of reward, those who have been faithful and are written into the will, written in for inheritance? Is this the book of life? Is it the book that indicates whether or not you're going to be in the lake of fire? Whichever book it may be, Moses offers, in order to spare Israel, to blot his name out of the book. He says, he's already told the Israelites, I'll go up and try to make atonement for you. I will exchange myself for you.

The Lord said to Moses in verse 33, whoever has sinned against me, I will blot him out of my book. So now this gives us a clue as to which of the books of God this is. Those who have sinned are blotted out of the book.

So who's written in the book? Those who have not sinned. Well, how big of a book is that? Well, initially you think, well, all have sinned and come short of the will of God, so that's an empty book. Well, Moses' name is written in it, and Moses knows his name is written in it.

If you want to destroy Israel, then blot my name out of your book. So what does it mean that those who have sinned will be blotted out of the book? Well, you remember in the last couple of weeks when we've been talking about what Noah did to qualify for God's grace. You say, well, do you have to qualify? Do you have to work for God's grace? There is a qualification.

There is a condition to God's promise to be underneath the channel of blessing, the channel of grace. You have to choose to be there. And we've seen that it is walking with

God.

It is purification before God. You have to know how to be purified. How do you keep your name in the book? The book of remembrance, the book of being qualified for God's grace, qualified for God's deliverance, qualified for God's blessing, qualified for inheritance in God's plan.

You have to not be charged with sin. Well, we, because we are believers, and believers of every generation, have a way to be purified and cleansed so that sin is not charged to our account. And that is by confessing it before God, by turning from it and walking in the light, as we have seen.

You'll remember our studies in the last few weeks. This is an illustration of it here. Why is Moses' name in the book? Has Moses never sinned? Moses has made some colossal mistakes.

Moses has committed murder. Something happened with the circumcision of his sons and so forth. Moses has had marriage problems.

We'll get into it. But Moses' name is in the book of those who apparently have not sinned. How did he do that? Well, he understands, Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.

Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. You can either have yourself washed or you can have your name washed out of the book, one or the other. So, God says, whoever has sinned against me, I will blot him out of my book.

The problem with Israel is, Israel has committed this sin with the golden calf and has not confessed, has not come back to God, has not turned from that wicked way, yet. So, God says in verse 34, Now, therefore, go lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you. My angel shall go before you.

In the day I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin. The Lord plagued the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron had made. And it isn't until the people turn and repent that they, you know, he grinds up the golden calf and then they, that sin is forgotten.

But the point here is our verb, blot out of the book. Blot with water and erase is the idea of Makkah. You see this also in Numbers, chapter 5, verse 23.

This is a fascinating passage and much has been speculated about it and trying to find the modern day application for it is a challenge. But this is instruction in the law concerning unfaithful wives. If a woman is suspected of infidelity in her marriage, there is this very, what seems to us to be bizarre, ritual that is commanded in, or procedure I should say, that is commanded in Numbers, chapter 5. It begins in verse 11.

The Lord spoke to Moses, speak to the children of Israel, say to them, if any man's wife goes astray and behaves unfaithfully toward him and a man lies with her carnally and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband and there is no witness against her nor was she caught, if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and he becomes jealous of his wife who has defiled herself, or if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and he becomes jealous of his wife even though she hasn't defiled herself. He suspects her, but he doesn't know for sure. But the spirit of jealousy comes upon him.

Verse 15, the man shall bring his wife to the priest. He shall bring the offering required for her, one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal. He shall pour no oil on it, and there is, I hope someday we can study all the different offerings and the significance of why there is or isn't oil.

What is the meaning of this offering of jealousy? An offering for remembering, for bringing iniquity to remembrance. Normally offerings are for the obliteration of iniquity and thankfulness that it has been obliterated. But here is an offering for remembrance of iniquity.

The priest shall bring her near, set her before the Lord. The priest shall take holy water, verse 17, in an earthen vessel, and put it on the floor of the tabernacle and put it into the water. Now you think about the dust on the floor of the tabernacle.

You think about where these priests have been walking, what's going on outside at the altar, the blood and the gore and the little bits and pieces of sacrifices that are all around the area. You think about what's in the dust of the floor of the tabernacle. He's going to reach down and, I mean, would you do this? Would you go down and look in the corners and stir it up and then drink it? Well, that's what this lady has to do.

The priest puts the dust into the water. Then, verse 18, the priest shall stand the woman before the Lord, uncover the woman's head. You can do a lot with that when you get over there to Corinthians and women with their heads uncovered.

Put the offering for remembrance in her hands, which is the grain offering of jealousy. And the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that brings a curse. And the priest shall put her under oath and say to the woman, if you have not gone astray to uncleanness under your husband's authority, be free from this bitter water that brings a curse.

But if you have gone astray, see, nobody knows. There's no witnesses. The man, if she has in fact committed this sin, he's not fessing up.

If you have gone astray while under your husband's authority, and if you have defiled yourself and some man other than your husband has lain with you, then the priest shall put the woman under the oath of the curse and he shall say to the woman, may your

mouth rot and your belly swell. This is just a gruesome curse. And may this water that causes this curse go into your stomach and make your belly swell and make your thigh rot.

I don't even want to know what that looks like. The woman shall say amen, so be it. Then the priest shall write these, now pay attention here in verse 23, the priest shall write these curses in a book.

So he's going to get out a parchment, he's going to write down that if this woman is guilty, her belly is going to swell, her thigh is going to rise, he's going to write this down in ink on a piece of parchment, and then after he finishes writing it, it says in the New King James, he shall scrape them off into the bitter water. But it's makah. He will wash them with water into the bitter water.

This is the water that's got the dust of the tabernacle in it. So he writes the curses in ink, and then he washes those off into the water. So the curse that was written has literally gone into the water that's already bitter water because it's got dirt in it from the floor of the tabernacle.

And then guess what's going to happen? He shall make the woman, in verse 24, drink the bitter water that brings a curse, and the water that brings a curse shall enter her to become bitter. Then the priest takes the offering and it goes on from there. But our point here is in understanding this word that God uses in Genesis chapter 6 when he says, I will destroy.

He says, I'm going to wash, he's going to take the earth, it's just like a parchment that's got this curse written on it. He's going to wash it with water and erase it. And that sin and all that evil is going to go into the water.

Well, you remember we've studied in the past the imagery, especially in the Psalms and so forth, that the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked. God has established his throne upon the seas, the seas are the home of Leviathan, the seas are the home of the great serpent that gets pierced through and so forth.

But the seas, the troubled waters, especially in the Old Testament, are a poetic reference to the chaos of evil. And poetically speaking, the evil that was on the earth before the flood has entered into the water, and the waters are now where this curse has been washed off and contained. And so, I don't know what that does to your day at the beach, looking at the sea and the waves, but in much of the imagery of the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms, when you see the seas, it stands in for and is a symbol of the chaotic, uncontrollable, rebellious evil that exists in the world.

So, this is what God is going to do. He is going to makah man and beast from the earth.

He's going to wash them and their evil into the waters and cleanse them.

So, that's the introduction to all of what we have been seeing in chapter 6. He says, I'm going to erase this evil off of the earth. So, how is God going to do this? We've seen the basis for Noah's deliverance in the last few weeks. We're going to pause now and take our break, and when we come back, we're going to see the exact structure of how this great washing takes place, because there is quite an interesting presentation of how God does this erasure.

He could have just given us a couple of verses, and behold, God sent a flood, but he preserved Noah, and Noah offered thanks to the Lord, and we could have gone right on. But we have this nearly three chapters of information about the flood. Why do we have this level of detail? We have very little said about the evil that's on the earth, but we have a great deal said about how God judges it and how God delivers Noah in the midst of it.

So that's what we're going to look at when we come back, but this is a good place to pause and take a break.