



## Meditation— Genesis 6.<sup>5-6, 11-13</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. <sup>6</sup>And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

<sup>11</sup>The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. <sup>12</sup>And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. <sup>13</sup>And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

In their desire to portray the gross nature of wickedness found in the pre-flood generation, Genesis' author and editors bring an impressive array of "superlative" language to bear in their sixth chapter: "every," "only," and "continually." Does it get any greater than "every"? Can it be any more exclusive than "only." Can it be any more frequent than "continually"? And we must not pass over the notice that "the earth was *filled* with violence," or that "*all* flesh had corrupted his way."

Little wonder that God was "grieved" to the core of his being. This passage does not speak so much to the depths of Yahweh's anger as it does to the utter brokenness of God's heart. Moses reminds us of this divine brokenness by recording Enoch's vision of a God who weeps over the devastation brought on by human violence.

The text's notice that "the earth was filled with violence" reminds us that one of humankind's most consistent vocations is the production of violence. But we must not think of this violence only in terms of the vilest physical harm that, if carried to its extreme ends in physical death. The wall street broker engaged in illegal and immoral trading commits an act of violence against other members of society. His "briefcase" is every bit an instrument of violence as the pistol of a convenience store thief. A municipal, state, or national government that perpetrates injustice against any individual or class of individuals is engaged in violence. "Violence" takes any form that "violates" the dignity and value of another.

Come to think of it, then, one suspects that the inspired authors and editors that are chronicling today's American society will have recorded much the same observations as did the ancient authors and editors. Poor God. Will his heart ever experience anything but hurt and sorrow from the children in and for whom he had such high hopes?

Certainly, we must examine our own hearts, our own minds, our own souls in search of any feelings, attitudes, or actions that violate other's dignity. But we must go further. We must demand that public institutions prioritize human dignity over the acquisition of wealth or power or prestige. We must expose and renounce violence at every level, private and public.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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