

Genesis 6:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

Analysis

And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his da... This passage belongs to the primeval history section (Genesis 1-11) which establishes universal truths about God, humanity, sin, and divine purposes before focusing on Abraham and Israel. These chapters answer fundamental questions about human origins, the spread of wickedness, God's judgment, and the preservation of a righteous remnant.

Recurring patterns emerge: human sin escalating from individual disobedience to societal corruption, divine patience followed by judgment, gracious preservation of a remnant, and covenant promises ensuring redemptive purposes continue. The genealogies connect historical persons, demonstrate the fulfillment of divine promises (blessing and multiplication), and trace the line leading to Abraham and ultimately Christ.

Key theological themes in this section include:

1. sin's destructive progression affecting all humanity
2. God's righteous judgment while preserving mercy
3. human pride and autonomy opposing divine sovereignty
4. cultural development as both blessing and potential idolatry
5. God's sovereign plan advancing despite human rebellion.

These narratives provide the necessary context for understanding God's calling of Abraham and the covenant promises through which all nations will be blessed.

Historical Context

The primeval history (Genesis 1-11) parallels ancient Near Eastern traditions including Sumerian King Lists (pre-flood longevity), Akkadian flood traditions (Atrahasis, Gilgamesh), and Mesopotamian city foundation myths. However, Genesis demythologizes these traditions, presenting monotheistic history rather than polytheistic mythology. The genealogies connecting Adam to Noah to Abraham provide historical framework absent in pagan myths.

Archaeological evidence confirms ancient urbanization (chapter 4's cities), agricultural development, metallurgy, and musical instruments emerging in Mesopotamia's early history. The Babel account reflects Mesopotamian ziggurat construction (stepped pyramid temples), particularly in Babylon. Linguistic diversity requiring explanation was obvious to ancient peoples, making the Babel narrative culturally relevant.

For Israel in covenant with Yahweh, these chapters explained their relationship to surrounding nations. All peoples descended from Noah, but Israel descended from Shem through Abraham—chosen for blessing all nations. The flood demonstrated God's justice and mercy: judging wickedness while preserving the righteous. This pattern would recur throughout Israel's history, assuring them that God's covenant faithfulness endures despite judgment on the wicked.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What theological truths about Wickedness emerge from this passage?

2. How does this passage challenge modern cultural assumptions about identity, purpose, or morality?
3. How does this verse fit into the broader biblical story culminating in Christ?

Interlinear Text

לֹא לא said H559	יְהִי the And the LORD H3068	רֹוחַ spirit strive H3808	אֶל with My spirit H1777	בְּאָדָם man shall not always H7307	לֹא always H120	לֹא always H5769
מֵאַת days shall be an hundred H3117						
בְּשֶׁבֶת also for that he also H1931	רָגְבָּה is flesh is flesh H1320	וְ and and twenty H6242	וְ also years H8141	וְ also years H3967		
שְׁנָה: year: years:						

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 9:30 (Spirit): Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands.

Isaiah 63:10 (Spirit): But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

Jeremiah 11:11 (References Lord): Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them.

Psalms 78:39 (Parallel theme): For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.

Acts 7:51 (Spirit): Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

Numbers 11:17 (Spirit): And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.

Isaiah 5:4 (Parallel theme): What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

John 3:6 (Spirit): That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 (Spirit): Quench not the Spirit.

Jeremiah 11:7 (Parallel theme): For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, even unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey my voice.