I. A BIG MESS

A. The First 1656 Years from Adam to Noah

1. Genesis 4 and 5 records the history of the world before the flood in a highly condensed account. From the biblical genealogical list the time between Adam and the flood—which occurred when Noah was 600 years old—can be calculated to be 1656 years.

2. Henry Morris calculated that “... the average of the recorded ages of the nine antediluvian patriarchs (Adam to Noah) was 912 years. Recorded ages at the births of their children ranged from 65 years ... to 500 years. Every one of them is said to have had "sons and daughters," so that each family had at least 4 children, and probably many more. As an ultraconservative assumption ... an average family of 6 children, an average generation of 100 years and an average life-span of 500 years. On this basis the world population at the time of the Flood would have been 235 million people. This probably represents a gross underestimate of the numbers who actually perished in the Flood.”

B. A Fresh Start Short Lived

1. Sin, like a virus, had infected humanity through Adam and Eve. Genesis 8:21
   a. The birth of each newborn spread the infection further.

   Gen. 8:21 Then the Lord said ... the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his YOUTH ...

   Rom. 5:12 - Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to ALL MEN because all sinned.

   b. Within the lifetime of Adam to Noah, the earth teemed with rebellious men and woman. A relatively young earth was mature in evil imagination and sin.

   ”... man’s wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every scheme his mind thought of was nothing but evil all the time...” Genesis 6:5 HCSB

   c. God had a problem. The sin He hated and the humanity He loved were so intertwined that to destroy sin was to destroy humanity. Yet to spare humanity would mean the epidemic of sin would totally consume the world.

C. The Biggest Mess

1. Everything that God put under man’s management was poisoned by sin and it continued to get worse.
   a. A perfectly balanced ecosystem designed to be self perpetuating was self destructing—contaminated and ruined by the very ones assigned to protect it!

   b. Try to imagine how God must have felt when He looked at the mess His prized creation had made of creation.

   When the LORD saw that man’s wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every scheme his mind thought of was nothing but evil all the time, the LORD regretted that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.
   Genesis 6:5-6 HCSB

   c. The Lord REGRETTED that He had made man and was GRIEVED in His heart.
2. What is the biggest mess you have ever made? ________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

D. Cleaning up the mess.

1. So God had a mess of gigantic proportions.
   a. What would have happened if He had chosen to do nothing? ___________________________
   b. What would have happened if He had decided to scrap the entire universe and people project?

2. What project have you started that ended up so badly that you totally scrapped it? ____________
______________________________________________________________________________

3. God chose to extend His grace and clean up the mess sinful man had created. He designed a way to
   destroy the effects of sin and yet not destroy mankind.
   a. The ultimate solution was a Savior (remember Gen. 3:15?)—a Savior whose earth assignment
      would create a way for God to deal with sin without having to destroy his earth and people project.

      An interesting and amazing observation:

      Dr. Chuck Missler lists the Hebrew root meanings of the consecutive names of
      Adam to Noah listed in Genesis chapter 5 as:

      Adam - Man
      Seth - Appointed
      Enosh – Mortal
      Kenan – Sorrow
      Mahalalel – The blessed God
      Jared – Shall come down
      Enoch – Teaching
      Methuselah – His death shall bring
      Lamech – Despairing
      Noah – Comfort and rest

      Put those consecutive meanings into a complete sentence and you get:

      Man (is) appointed mortal sorrow, (but) the blessed God shall come down teaching. His death shall bring, (to the) despairing, comfort and rest. (added for clarity)

   b. The immediate solution was that God flooded the world destroying all who refused to believe
      in Him and thus washing the world of sin. 2 Peter 3:6

4. But God’s grace came through even then.
   a. God examined the hearts of every human heart on earth and He found ONE MAN who trusted
      Him.

      Genesis 6:8-9 NKJV But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. This is the genealogy of
      Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.

      CEV But the Lord was pleased with Noah, and this is the story about him. Noah was the only
      person who lived right and obeyed God.
But the LORD was pleased with Noah. This is the account of Noah and his
descendants. Noah had God’s approval and was a man of integrity among the people of his
time. He walked with God.

b. God’s grace was also extended to **SEVEN** others of Noah’s family.

2 Peter 2:5 HCSB . . . He didn’t spare the ancient world, but protected Noah, a preacher of
righteousness, and seven others, when He brought a flood on the world of the ungodly;

c. God’s grace also chose to be longsuffering for **120** more years and gave the world a chance at repentance while Noah built the ark.

Gen. 6:3 TLB Then Jehovah said, “My Spirit must not forever be disgraced in man,
wholly evil as he is. I will give him 120 years to mend his ways.”

In 1 Peter 3:19  TLB Peter writes of . . . *those in the days of Noah, had refused to listen to
God, though he waited patiently for them while Noah was building the ark. Yet only eight
persons were saved from drowning in that terrible flood.*

So, the earth was cleaned of all things polluted by sin.

d. Interesting facts explaining the godly influences upon Noah.

1) Methuselah, Noah’s grandfather, was a contemporary with Adam for 243 years. So,
Methuselah knew first hand the events of the Garden of Eden—creation, provisions, the fall.

2) Methuselah’s son, Lamech, the father of Noah, lived during the last 56 years of Adam’s life
and he clearly understood the fall of man and the curse of God, as well as being taught by
his father.

3) Both Noah’s grandfather and his father had heard Enoch preach and had seen the example of
his noble life—it was said that *he* (Enoch) *walked with God* (Genesis 5:24).

4) **All of this must have made a deep impression on Noah.**

5) Noah’s father, Lamech, died several years before the flood and before his father, Methuselah
died.

6) Methuselah died in the year of the flood.

E. God’s Grace At Babel

1. The story of the Tower of Babel is in Genesis 11. Henry Morris wrote, “The Tower of Babel seems
to have been built about the time of the birth of Peleg . . . 101 years after the Flood.”

2. Morris calculated that “Since there are 70 nations mentioned in Genesis 10 as resulting from the
"division" at Babel, it is reasonable to infer that there were 70 families at Babel, representing
probably the generation of Noah’s grandsons and great-grandsons. Seventy families containing 800
or 1,000 individuals altogether seem to fit the situation described at Babel very adequately.”

3. Since God had commanded mankind to *be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it;* (Gen.
1:28), those in Genesis 11 disobeyed God. *And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and
a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad
over the face of the whole earth.”* Gen. 11:4 9 (emphasis added)

4. What are some actions God could have taken? ______________________________________
__________________________________________________ ____________________________
5. So, what did God do? God decided to... *confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the Lord SCATTERED them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.* (Genesis 11:7-8 NKJV)

6. God’s grace came through again!

**F. God’s Grace Started a New NATION**

1. God decided to have a **NATION** of people who would demonstrate His power and His goodness to the rest of the world.
   
   a. This nation would be an example of how people could live together in peace, good health and prosperity.
   
   b. This nation would be a mouthpiece through which He would speak to the world, offering salvation to all who would believe in Him and receive His grace.
   
   c. He would settle this nation at the crossroads of the ancient world so that the merchants and armies of all nations would carry compelling tales of a remarkably advanced civilization and the powerful invisible God they served.

2. Unfortunately, all the existing nations and civilizations on the earth already had their territorial gods, deities associated with a particular region. Their laws and superstitions were in direct opposition to what God intended at creation.
   
   a. So, rather than reform an existing nation, God decided to start His own.
   
   b. He would promise to nurture and preserve this nation.

3. He would start with one individual.

4. God would establish a covenant—an agreement—with this one man of His choosing, whose offspring would multiply and in time become a **NATION**.
   
   a. In this covenant He obligated Himself and demanded nothing in return. This covenant would be an expression of His grace, not in response to any merit of theirs.
   
   b. He would treat this nation like a son, rewarding obedience and punishing rebellion.
   
   c. In this way every member of this new nation would become sons and daughters, heirs of a new covenant.

5. So God selected a very unlikely person by our standards. He chose **ABRAM**.
   
   a. A unknown member of an idol-worshipping society.
   
   b. An old man. According to Gen. 12:4 he was **75** years old.
   
   c. Whose wife was **BARREN**. (Gen. 11:30)
   
   d. Not the most ideal couple with which to launch a nation!

**G. God Began His Plan of Cleaning Up the Mess Sin Had Made**

1. He determined to begin a nation through a man with:
   
   a. No **INFLUENCE**
   
   b. No **CHILDREN**
   
   c. No **HOMELAND**
2. God said to Abraham, “Get out of your COUNTRY, from your FAMILY and from your father’s house (your relatives), to a LAND that I will show you.” (Gen. 12:1)

3. Then God’s grace made Abram a promise. Gen. 12:2-3)

   I will make you a great NATION;
   I will bless YOU
   And make your name great;
   And you shall be a blessing.
   I will bless those who bless you,
   And I will curse him who curses you;
   And in you all the FAMILIES OF THE EARTH shall be blessed.”

4. Did Abram ask for this covenant? NO
5. Had Abram earned or deserved it? NO
6. Whose idea was this covenant? GOD’S
7. Did God issue a set of behaviors for Abram to adhere to? NO
8. He simply asked Abram to RECEIVE these promises.
9. In other words God initiated their relationship by asking Abram to “just TRUST Me.”
10. And, that’s exactly how God has been initiating relationships ever since.