

Dear Friends and Family,


Let's start in the beginning. Turn to Genesis 6. Following the incredible detailing of creation and the original fall of man, just 6 chapters into the text of scripture, we read that God is grieved that he made man. What could have possibly happened to make God grieve, and grieve to the point that complete destruction by flood is the only answer? Genesis 6:5 stands as a warning to be examined closely.

"The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time." (Genesis 6:5)

Read that again and let it sink in. **EVERY** inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was **ONLY** evil **ALL** the time. In case there is any doubt, **ALL** thoughts and inclinations were **ALWAYS** evil. Can you imagine living in a world where **EVERY** thought was **EVIL** all the time? Imagine all sin, all the time, exacted on all people. Everything wicked and vile, unchecked, **ALL** the time. Pandemonium, chaos, weeping, and indulgence are just a few words that come to mind.

The Holman Christian Standard Bible translation reads:

“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. Then the LORD said, “I will wipe off from the face of the earth mankind, whom I created, together with the animals, creatures that crawl, and birds of the sky— for I regret that I made them.” Noah, however, found favor in the sight of the LORD.” Genesis 6:6-8



**Love must be
sincere. Hate what
is evil; cling to
what is good.**

ROMANS 12:9

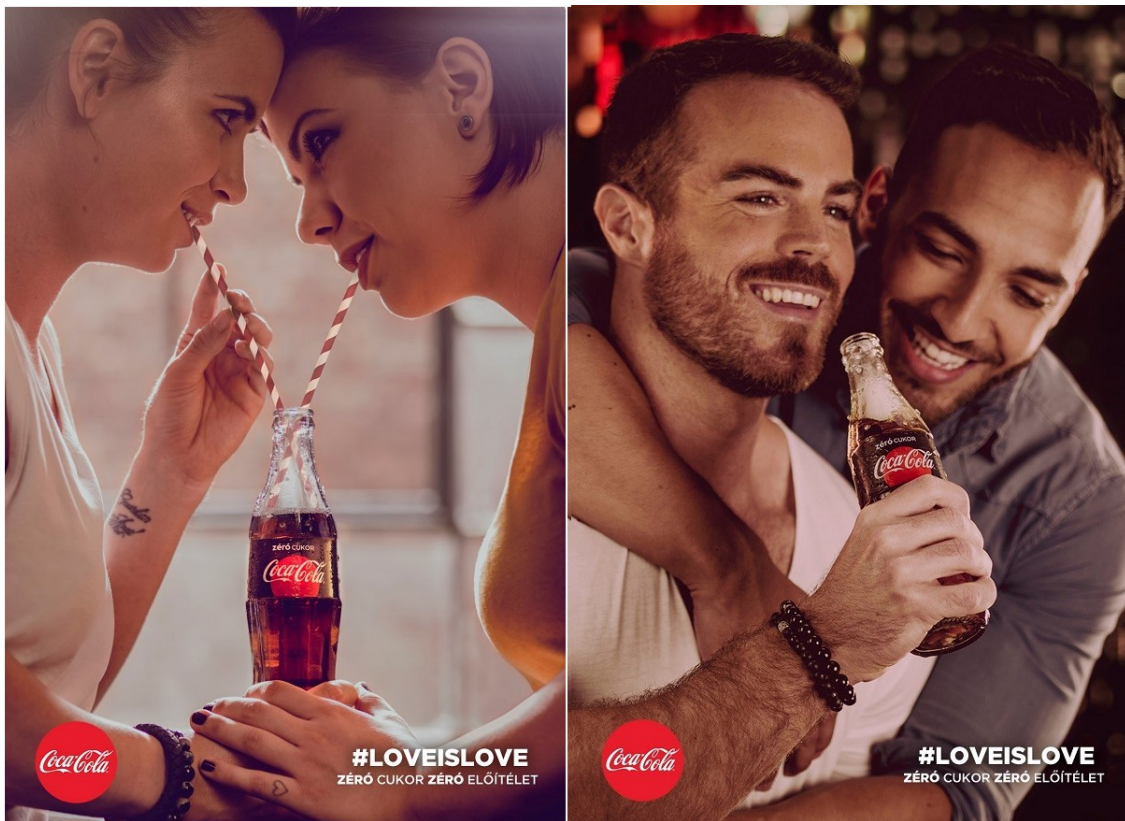
Widespread evil grieves God. Sin grieves God. Wickedness grieves God. Yet evil still remains. Not long after the flood, Genesis tells of another great evil, upon which there was an outcry that reached the heart of God. This time it was centered in a city.

“Then the LORD said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great. Because their sin is so grievous, I will go down to see if their actions fully justify the outcry that has reached Me. If not, I will find out...” (Genesis 18:20-21)

Genesis 13:13 provides some background information. “But the men of Sodom were wicked, sinning greatly against the LORD.”

When the Lord sends angels to gauge the wickedness of the city, they confirm the reigning evil growing, unchecked. The angels quickly warn Lot, his wife, daughters and sons-in-law to leave with them, "because we are about to destroy this place. For the outcry to the LORD against its people is so great that He has sent us to destroy it." (Genesis 19:13).

You probably remember that Lot and his 2 daughters are the only ones to escape the fire and sulfur that rain upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Yet, even this family who was spared had allowed the evil of their culture to greatly influence them. The daughters committed unspeakable acts with their father, a direct result of the evil from which they had just escaped.



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Historically, we see evil permeating world wide events with catastrophic results. Culturally, we see evil creeping into every corner of society, through laws, regulations, decrees, actions and those in authority. Even companies are becoming complicit in promoting evil. Should we be surprised? Consider the words of Christ:

Then He said to the disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it." Luke 17:22.

Why would we *long* to see Christ come back? Is it because of evil? Did Noah *long* to be free from the evil in which he was immersed? Did Lot and his daughters recognize the evil that surrounded them in their city? Do we recognize the evil in our own culture? As evil becomes more commonplace, it becomes harder to identify as wrong. Do we detest evil as much as God does? Does evil grieve us?

We know the heart of God. He detests sin and hates evil. Yet, he loves those who have accepted his Son, those who have been made righteous before him because of the blood of Christ. Before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham asked God if he would “kill the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike?” (Genesis 18:25). God responded and rescued the righteous. As he did with Noah. Consider this as you read what Jesus explains in Luke 17:26-30.

“Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man: People were eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.”

It was the same in the days of Lot: People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But on the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

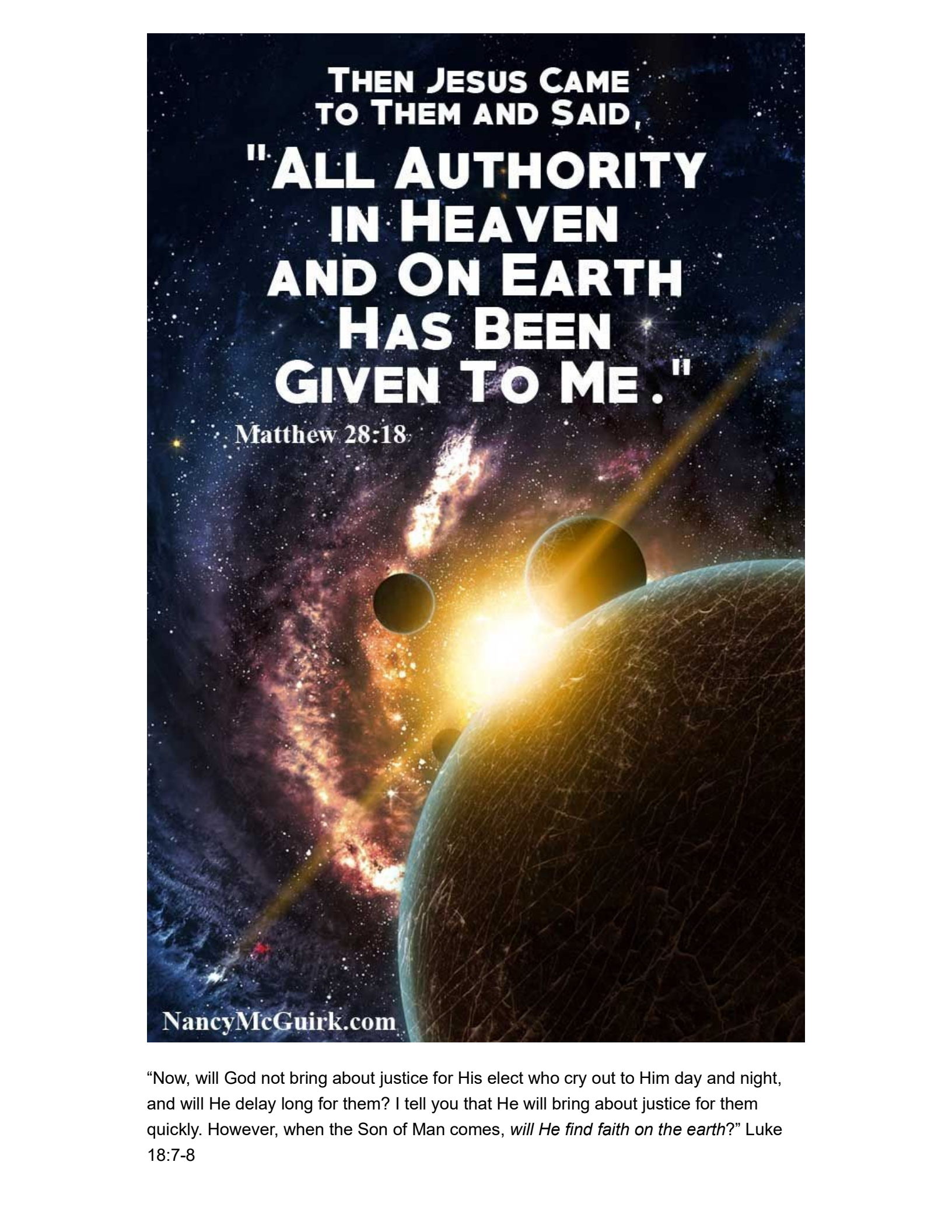


It will be just like that on the day the Son of Man is revealed.”

Consider this! Jesus compared his return to 2 major catastrophic events in which evil had gained a foothold so great that the result was complete destruction. However, in both instances, he spared only the righteous. The statistics are grim. From the entire population of the earth, only 8 escaped the waters of the flood. And of an entire city, just 3 were spared. My friends, may God find us faithful! Evil corrupts. May we not be corrupted.

It has been said that “absolute power corrupts absolutely”. As we look around at our immediate culture and the world at large, it is not hard to see that evil is gaining power and power is corrupting. May we not be part of it! May we continue to stand firm, set apart, as God’s chosen and holy people, committing ourselves to fasting and prayer, renewing our hearts with worship, meeting together faithfully, and studying his word. May we be motivated by prayer, impassioned to share, and seeking the heart and face of God continually.

We know the Lord is returning. We know not the time or place, but we do know that evil will increase before his return. To what degree might evil increase?



THEN JESUS CAME
TO THEM AND SAID,
"ALL AUTHORITY
IN HEAVEN
AND ON EARTH
HAS BEEN
GIVEN TO ME."

Matthew 28:18

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"Now, will God not bring about justice for His elect who cry out to Him day and night, and will He delay long for them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, *will He find faith on the earth?*" Luke 18:7-8

What a question! Will Christ find faith on earth? If Christ is making a comparison of his return to the days of Noah and Sodom, it is very possible that our world will return to the extent of evil seen in the days of Noah and Sodom. May we not be surprised by evil! May we not succumb to it. May Christ find us faithful! We must stand against it! But take heart - we have a defense of Goldy proportions and our mission remains:

“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20).

We have been given a mission. (Matthew 28:18-20)

We have been given the Spirit, who tests our hearts and prepares our lips. (Luke 12:12)

We have been given an armor, to put on, daily, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand firm. (Eph 6:13)

We have been given a defender and protector. (Psalm 91)

We have been given a plan, a guidebook, a weapon, and a source of hope. (Hebrews 4:12)

We have been given a way. (John 14:6)

We have been given a spirit of power and of sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)

We have been given the end of the story. (Phil 2:10)

My friends, I encourage you, in the face of increasing evil: glorify God, stand firm on scripture and prayer, make disciples of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and love others as yourselves.

May you be of good courage, fully equipped, resting in the shadow of the almighty until His return.

AMEN and May it be so,

Pastor Matt

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*Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us **RUN** with endurance the race that is set before us -- Hebrews 12:1*



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