
GENESIS 6:9: "...PERFECT IN HIS GENERATIONS..."

This article was written in response to a query by a member of the United Church of God (an International Association).

The world before Noah's Flood was a violent, wicked world (Genesis 6:5) This state of affairs was connected with "the sons of God" intermarrying with "the daughters of men", and with the existence of "giants" or "Nephilim" in the earth (verses 1-4).

Among all the wicked of the earth, only one righteous man yet lived: Noah (Genesis 5:28), the eighth "preacher of righteousness" from Adam's time forward (2 Peter 2:5, KJV). His family history is given in Genesis 6:9-9:28, ending with the time of Noah's death three hundred and fifty years after the Flood.

"These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man *and* perfect in his generations, *and* Noah walked with God" (Genesis 6:9, KJV). As usual, words found in the *King James Version* that have no corresponding Hebrew words in the original text are italicized. Thanks to the wording and phrasing found here in the *King James Version*, and the fact of intermarriage of "the sons of God" and "the daughters of men" mentioned in the preceding verses, many have concluded that "perfect in his generations" in this verse refers to the *purity* of Noah's *physical pedigree*. But is this what the passage is really saying?

The answer to this question is important because to take "perfect in his generations" in the sense of *pedigree* has definite *racial* implications. Some take this passage as part of the foundation of their "white-supremacist" ideology. Others who resist that ideology resist the idea that "perfect in his generations" refers to Noah's pedigree. Still others conclude (correctly) that God made no race of people "superior" or "inferior" in His sight, yet hold that this passage nevertheless does (or does not) refer to pedigree (depending on how they read the passage).

What does Genesis 6:9 really mean?

Before we answer that question, let us be clear on several points. First, contrary to some "white-supremacist" and even "British-Israelite" ideas that arose during the Victorian era (when so many theologians compromised with Darwinism), the non-white peoples of the world did *not* arise from inferior, "pre-Adamic" forms of life! Rather, God "made from *one* [Adam] *every nation of men* to live on the face of all the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation" (Acts 17:26, Revised Standard Version).

Genetic science has confirmed the *essential sameness of all races* beyond dispute. One geneticist has claimed there is more genetic variation among the *handful* of chimpanzees dwelling on a typical hillside in tropical Africa than there is among all the over *six billion* human beings living on earth today. Yet among humans, how *great* differences in appearance (and other factors) can arise from relatively *small* genetic differences! These differences (genetic and expressed) we call *racial* differences -- or on a smaller scale, *national or ethnic* and *tribal* differences.

But why did God make the various races and nations of humanity and set them where He did on the earth? "*That they should seek God*, in the hope that they might feel after him and find him. Yet he is not far from each one of us, for

'In him we live and move and have our being';

as even some of [the Greek] poets have said,

'For we are indeed his offspring'" (Acts 17:27-28).

Because we are all God's offspring by creation through Adam (verse 29; Luke 3:38), "truly...God shows no partiality, but in *every nation* any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34-35).

Second, it is clear that Noah himself must have been white, for many of the "white" peoples of the earth descend directly from him through Shem (Genesis 10:21-31). The rest of the "white" peoples descend from Japheth, the descendants of whom also include the "yellow" and "red" peoples of the Orient and the Americas (verses 2-5). Ham's descendants include the "black" and "brown" peoples of the earth (verses 6-20). Some of these (despite their relatively dark coloring generally) have "Caucasoid" features, while some have "Negroid" features.

Obviously, the racial variety in the descendants of Noah must have arisen from *intermarriage between different racial stocks*. The simplest explanation of the biblical,

historical and genetic facts as we know them is that Noah, his wife, his three sons, and Shem's wife were white; Ham's wife was black; and Japheth's wife was yellow. Obviously, then, racial intermarriage *as such* is not evil in God's sight. Without it, the varieties of humankind extant today would not exist. But once the various peoples were established in their places, in general they would not intermarry save on the borders of their various spheres of influence, or at other places (such as trading ports) where they would come into frequent contact. Wars and their attendant conquests and enslavements also offered opportunities for interbreeding. In such cases, intermarriage would serve to renew the genetic vigor of both racial stocks. Again, genetic studies have confirmed this picture; despite the sometimes *massive movements* of people in antiquity, not before the European Age of Colonization beginning in 1492 was there *massive interbreeding* between the larger racial groups of humanity.

In this light, it is important to note that the genetic traits that set whites apart from other people are often *recessive*. A white-skinned person with blue eyes and blond hair (for example) has *three sets* of recessive genes: those for skin color, eye color and hair color. If he marries someone with black skin, brown eyes and black hair, in their children the skin color will be *blended* (brown or brown-black, not black), but their eyes will be brown and their hair black. With eye and hair color, the expression of the recessive genes is *suppressed*, not *blended* with that of the dominant genes.

Since many of the traits associated with the white race are *recessive*, intermarriage between whites (especially the lighter-colored varieties) and non-whites leads to a majority of descendants who appear non-white. On the other hand, not all obvious racial features have to do with the sense of sight. Blacks generally have an abundance of scent glands in their skin; whites, fewer scent glands; Orientals, few if any. Korean-Americans living in Korea actually can face prejudice from "pure" Koreans, not merely because of their appearance, but because of their relatively "strong" scent! So whites are far from alone in having concern for maintaining the "purity" of their pedigree. On the other hand, some peoples of the world have no qualms about intermarriage with other peoples; some actively encourage it, and the results can be striking (as among some of the French Polynesians, for example).

So what is the biblical example as post-Flood history gives it? Is "racial purity" an end in itself? *No*. God created the races and peoples and set them in their places (with linguistic and geographical barriers between them) to maintain their overall integrity; but He also set them so that when they did intermarry, they would keep each other's genetic stocks viable. Thus *basically compatible people* from different, but generally neighboring genetic stocks could intermarry and have unions which were fertile, happy and socially and culturally profitable.

Moreover, when the many varieties of humanity encountered each other, they would give rise to yet more varieties, which would then separate and form peoples of their own. This is consistent with sound-minded genetic and social policy.

Israel -- the nation descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob -- is a special case. In order to enter into the Old Covenant, one had to be a physical descendant of Israel, or else a Gentile convert who renounced his or her people and its paganism (as did Ruth of Moab: Ruth 1:15-18). In particular, the descendants of a marriage between a Moabite or Ammonite man and an Israelite woman down to "the tenth generation" could not enter "the assembly of the LORD" (Deuteronomy 23:3-6) -- by implication, not even if those descendants intermarried with Israelites themselves. By contrast, the descendants of a marriage between an Edomite or an Egyptian man and an Israelite woman could enter "the assembly of the LORD" in "the third generation" (verses 7-8). Note that Israel was commanded: "You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother; you shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were a stranger in his land" (verse 7). But Moab and Ammon, though like Edom related to Israel by descent, were rejected because they sought to curse rather than to help God's chosen people (verses 3-6).

We have seen that "purity" of pedigree after the Flood, while important for God's purposes, was not an end in itself. What about before the Flood? Is God inconsistent?

Much has been said about the possible identities of "the sons of God" and "the daughters of men" in Genesis 6:1-4. One possibility can be ruled out at once: that supernatural beings intermarried with mortal women. Aside from God, only angels are revealed to be part of the present supernatural realm -- and like the saints after their future resurrection, angels cannot marry or give in marriage (Luke 20:34-36; Matthew 22:29-30; Mark 12:24-25).

Who then are "the sons of God" in Genesis 6? Some have thought that they were the descendents of Seth, while "the daughters of men" were the descendents of Cain. There is nothing in the immediate context to suggest this. Adam was "the son of God" by creation, and Seth descended from him (Luke 3:38); but *all* Adam's descendants are God's offspring by creation (Acts 17:28-29).

Notice then how Genesis 6 begins: "When men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair; and they took to wife such of them as they chose"

(verses 1-2). "Men" in Hebrew is *ha'adam*, here having the significance of "men" or "mankind" rather than "the man" (as it has in Genesis 3:24, for example). "Fair" is the feminine plural of the Hebrew word *tov*, "good", here in the sense of "good-looking, attractive" -- not "fair" in the sense of being *light-colored* as some have erroneously concluded.

It appears that "the sons of God" were *exalted above* "the daughters of men" (and "men" generally) in some way. We may be certain that the descendants of Seth (who retained their fear of God) would not call themselves "sons of God" in contrast to "men" or "daughters of men". They would have remained *humble*, knowing that *all* humans are God's children by *creation* (and potentially by *conversion*). We also know from Mesopotamian and other documents that early civilizations had a concept of the *divine right of kings*, and indeed of *divine kingship manifested in man* -- and that such "divine kingship" reportedly existed before the Flood and was restored to the earth after it. Thus, some Bible students have concluded that "the sons of God" were actually the *descendants of Cain*, whom Eve originally mistook for the "One Seed" promised to the "woman" (Genesis 3:15).

Interestingly, the Hebrew of Genesis 4:1 (by a quirk of spelling and grammar) is *ambiguous*. It may be translated "...I have gotten a man with (the help of) the LORD", or else "...I have gotten a man, (even) the LORD". Given the *melodic accentuation* which supports the words in the Hebrew Masoretic Text, and in the light of extra-biblical history, the second translation appears preferable. In other words, Eve apparently (and naturally) expected Cain to be the *Divine Messiah* promised from the foundation of the world. When Cain was rejected by God, he nevertheless held to his claims of *divine kingship*, and his descendants with him. In time, they managed to bring most if not all of humanity under their sway -- except the line from which Noah descended.

Intermarriage between the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men" (the descendants of Seth and the rest of Adam and Eve's children) was therefore problematic less because of *race* than because of *religion*. The "sons of God" chose their mates from among those they ruled, and that on the basis of *purely physical attraction* -- not because of *character* or *compatibility* (racial, cultural, or personal). That they were able to do so with little if any resistance says much about their power over others. Issues of interracial marriage *as such* would inevitably have arisen, but they would not have been the *only* factors involved.

Needless to say, God was displeased with the situation, and set a limit as to how long He would endure it (Genesis 6:3). Moreover, the lack of social restraints in pre-Flood society led to *perpetual violence and evil*, which deeply grieved God (verses 5-6, 11-12). It is in this context that "Noah found grace in the eyes of the

LORD" (verse 8). It is also in this context that the description of Noah in verse 9 is given.

What then of the *social context* in which Noah's family arose? Since Noah, Shem and their descendants were white (as were many of Japheth's descendants), and given the *recessive nature* of many traits peculiar to the white race, we know that Noah was almost certainly descended entirely or nearly so from white ancestors. This does not necessarily imply that Adam and Eve were white. With regards to skin, eye and hair color, for example, it is easily possible that both had a *mixed* genotype that allowed different racial traits to be expressed within one to two generations. Other traits may well have arisen through mutations. Groups of people with similar traits no doubt would have largely remained separate from other groups with greatly differing traits for most of pre-Flood history. Seth's descendants, therefore, would long have remained purely white or nearly so.

By Noah's day, however, racial intermarriage had become much more unrestrained, due to the then-current emphasis on *physical attraction* rather than on *compatibility*. The fact that two out of three of Noah's sons married outside both their race and their religion (as was the case from all indications) was no doubt none too pleasing to Noah and his wife -- especially if Ham's wife was Na`amah, a daughter of Lamech, descendant of Cain, as some believe (cf. Genesis 4:19-22). Indeed, Na`amah's mother Zillah (Hebrew *Tsillah*, which name apparently means "shadow" or "darkness") was herself no doubt a famous black woman of her day -- which means Na`amah would have been black herself. But God allowed Noah's family to become configured as it did for His own purposes: both to preserve and later to restore the genetic variety of humanity, and to make it possible for us to sort out essential elements of pre- and post-Flood history.

There is a fair amount of evidence that Lamech's family was *directly and powerfully responsible* for the technological and social abuses of late pre-Flood society. This may have included the *first deliberate breach of racial barriers* in marriage. Roy Schultz, in his unpublished thesis "Exploring Ancient History -- The First 2,500 Years" (Imperial Schools, Pasadena, CA., 1967), has this interesting comment in Chapter 4 (CD-ROM text by Don Tiger): "Lamech had two wives, Adah and Zillah. Zillah was of the line of Cain [which Schultz infers was a non-white line]...But Adah was very probably of the family of Seth. She came from the white line before the Flood.* (* This statement appears in the 1961 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* article "Lamech".)"

Schultz goes on to infer: "In marrying Adah, Lamech had *dared* to bridge the gap between the races. He had rebelled grossly against God -- and did it knowingly.

But...this act greatly pleased the descendants of Cain. They wanted to mix the races. Their goal was to make one world, one society, racially and religiously. They did not want to remain separated as God had prescribed for their benefit. This fact is specifically revealed in Genesis 6:2 which will be analyzed shortly." As it turns out, Schultz's analysis of Genesis 6:2 is incorrect, in that the verse does not speak of *fair complexions*, but only of *general attractiveness*. Nevertheless, this breach of barriers between the line of Cain and the line of Seth had both *racial* and *religious implications*, as part of the larger social picture in a world increasingly in rebellion against God. In effect, the world was saying that such fundamental differences between people as race and religion (among others no doubt) were *irrelevant* -- that one could take a wife (or two, as in Lamech's case!) as one pleased for one's own selfish purposes, without regard to genuine personal compatibility or God's overall purpose for humanity.

Unfortunately, given the above and other facts, it is easy to draw the wrong conclusions. Given the fact that Seth's line (which was essentially white) was used to preserve God's ways, and that Noah and Shem's descendants were used likewise (Genesis 9:26-27), some conclude in error that there is some *inherent superiority* in being "white" (or at least Semitic). By that logic, of course, the "purer" one's white heritage is, the better. Some non-whites go to the opposite extreme, and try to show that Noah's ancestry need not have been "pure" -- or even that the issue of racial intermarriage is *completely irrelevant* in God's sight. But what if Seth, or Noah, or Shem, or Abraham had been black, say, or yellow? Would that fact have made the black or yellow race inherently superior? On the other hand, "hybrid vigor" has its advantages in some circumstances, as does a basically "pure" pedigree in others. God has even used certain people born of "mixed" unions for His honor (1 Kings 7:13-14). Can we realize that racial differences are not to be valued as *ends in themselves*, but as *gifts* given by God for specific purposes? *Compatibility* -- not *race* as such -- is the overriding issue here.

Some will argue that God created living things to reproduce "after their kind" (Genesis 1). This is true. They will then use this fact to argue against *any* form of intermarriage between the races and peoples. But what is a "kind"? Creationist scientists are well aware that a biblical "kind" may include anything from a *species* to an entire *order* (in modern taxonomic terms). Varieties (races and smaller groupings) within the human species do *not* constitute "kinds" -- *all* of humanity reproduces after the "*God kind*" (Genesis 1:26), and physically after the "human kind". God loves variety, and He originally set the races and peoples in such a way that their variety would be maintained and even expanded -- but He did *not* make intermarriage between compatible individuals of somewhat different genetic stocks unlawful. Had He done so, He would have flatly and clearly forbidden such unions. It is all a matter of understanding the *principles* that lie behind how God has dealt with the issue of race relations.

Having dealt with the most common false assumptions that are brought to an analysis of Genesis 6:9, we are ready to examine what it says point by point.

Not all Bible versions in English convey the impression that Genesis 6:9 speaks of Noah's pedigree. Let us compare the most important of the versions, as given on [The Bible Gateway](#) Web site:

Genesis 6:9 :: New International Version (NIV)

This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.

Genesis 6:9 :: New American Standard Bible (NASB)

These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.

Genesis 6:9 :: New Living Translation (NLT)

This is the history of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless man living on earth at the time. He consistently followed God's will and enjoyed a close relationship with him.

Genesis 6:9 :: King James Version (KJV)

These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

Genesis 6:9 :: New King James Version (NKJV)

This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.

Genesis 6:9 :: Revised Standard Version (RSV)

These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God.

Genesis 6:9 :: 21st Century King James Version (KJ21)

These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

Genesis 6:9 :: Young's Literal Translation (YLT)

These [are] births of Noah: Noah [is] a righteous man; perfect he hath been among his generations; with God hath Noah walked habitually.

Genesis 6:9 :: Darby Translation (DARBY)

This is the history of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect amongst his generations: Noah walked with God.

Evidently the *King James Version* and versions with similar renderings comprise a *stumbling block* to many people. These versions say that Noah was "perfect in his generations", and usually that "these are the generations of Noah" as well. What is the account talking about?

First, the word "generations" in the *King James Version* of this verse actually translates two different Hebrew words. In "These are the generations of Noah", the word for "generations" is *toldot* (from the Hebrew word for "birth", as *Young's Literal Translation* points out). This is a word found only in the plural form, which refers to Noah's *family history*. In "Noah was...perfect in his generations", the word translated "his generations" is *dorotav*, taken from *dor*, which refers to a literal *generation* of people or figuratively to the *time* in which they live.

The *New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Genesius Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon* concurs with this analysis. *Toldot* (page 410a, #8435 in *Strong's Dictionary*) is translated "generations, esp[ecially] in genealogies = account of a man and his descendants". Whereas *dor* (pages 189b-190a, #1755 in *Strong's Dictionary*) is translated "period, generation, dwelling", and generally means 1) period, age, generation; 2) a future age to come; 3) men living at a particular time, period or age. The word may also refer to 4) a particular class of men, characterized by quality or condition, or 5) rarely to a dwelling-place or habitation -- but these usages are irrelevant to the context of Genesis 6:9.

One can readily see that *none* of the usages of *dor* have anything to do with a man's pedigree! Definition 1) -- period, age or generation -- is most probably the one intended in Genesis 6:9, with 3) as a possible (but less likely) alternative. Noah was therefore "perfect in his *generations*" in the sense of his lifestyle during the *times* in which he lived and vis-à-vis that of the *men and women* who were his contemporaries.

This is confirmed when one looks at the word translated "perfect" in the *King James Version*: *tamim*. The *New BDBG* renders the word *tamim* (#8549 in *Strong's Dictionary*) as "complete, sound" (page 1071a). In the physical sense, it means "whole, sound, healthful", almost always as applied to sacrificial animals (which were to be *unblemished* as a type of the Messiah's spotless physical and moral character). In the moral sense, however (the sense that is almost always applied to human beings), it means "sound, wholesome, unimpaired, innocent, having integrity". The *New BDBG* puts the usage of Genesis 6:9 in this category without

hesitation. Nowhere else in the Bible does *tamim* or the related words *tam* and *tom* apply to the *pedigree* of either humans or animals.

Another point of confusion comes from the phrasing of the *King James Version* itself. Here is its translation of Genesis 6:9, with the customary italics included:

These *are* the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man *and* perfect in his generations, *and* Noah walked with God.

Young's Literal Translation, however, points out that the phrasing of the original Hebrew is rather different:

These [are] births of Noah: Noah [is] a righteous man; perfect he hath been among his generations; with God hath Noah walked habitually.

The *King James Version* (as does many other versions) gives the impression to some people that "Noah was a just man *and* perfect in his generations" is a single linked phrase, with "was" being the primary verb. If one assumes that "perfect in his generations" refers to pedigree, it takes no large stretch of the imagination to conclude that Noah's status as a "just man" and his "racial purity" were very closely linked -- and that therefore racial intermarriage *of itself* is evil. However, "was" (*hayah*) in Genesis 6:9 strictly applies to "perfect in his generations", not to "a just man". The phrases are related (and in a surprising way, as we shall see), but they are not directly linked.

Young's Literal Translation adds a problem of its own. Biblical Hebrew has no verbal *tense* -- no direct statement of past, present and future by its verb forms. Rather, its verbs deal with *state* -- that is, whether the action is complete (perfect) or incomplete (imperfect). Tense as such is then defined by the context. When biblical Hebrew describes a static state of being (past, present or future), it generally leaves the verb "to be" out entirely. When it describes an active state of being, it inserts a form of the verb *hayah* ("fall out, come to pass, become, be": *New BDBG*, pages 224a and following). *Young's* use of "[is]" and "he hath been" at least identifies the absence or presence of *hayah*, but his use of past and present tense is confusing. The same goes with his use of "he hath walked continually", which makes no more sense in English than do "[is]" and "he hath been". But understand the Hebrew words in their real force -- having to do with whether the action is complete, incomplete or static -- and their intent becomes clear.

Now it is possible for *hayah* to be absent in one phrase of a verse and present in the next, without a change in the implied verbal tense. A good example is found in Genesis 29:17: "Leah *was* tender eyed: but Rachel was beautiful and well-favoured" (KJV). The first "was" is in italics, showing the verb is missing via

ellipsis in the original; the second "was" is in normal type, showing that it is present in the original. The presence or absence of the verb apparently is to contrast the *then-present, static state* of Leah with what Rachel *had become* by the same time.

And so it is with the description of Noah in Genesis 6:9. At that time, he "was" (in the static sense) a just or righteous man; but he also *had been* or even *had become* "perfect in his generations" -- implying some ongoing action now complete. His then-present state as a righteous man, as well as his upright "track record" among his contemporaries, was faultless. Moreover, *Noah had walked with God habitually* to that very time. The relevant verb, *mithalekh*, is in the *hitpa`el* stem, which generally signifies action that is both *intensive* and *reflexive*. To give the force behind the verb, one could say that *Noah had submitted himself to walking with God wholeheartedly and habitually*.

Here then is an "amplified" translation of Genesis 6:9:

These *are* the genealogies of Noah. Noah *was* a righteous man; he had been to that time [or had become] perfect [innocent, upright] in his generations [times]; Noah had to that time submitted himself to walking with God wholeheartedly and habitually.

Now if one is still not convinced, consider: Genesis 6:9 (after the reference to Noah's family history, which is the subject of the narrative) begins with a reference to Noah's status as a righteous man. It ends with a reference to the fact that Noah walked with God. Why would a reference to Noah's *physical pedigree* be inserted, *without apparent rationale*, between two references to his *spiritual state*? Would that be consistent? Moreover, when the actual words behind "perfect in his generations" are examined, they *rule out* the possibility that the phrase refers to Noah's pedigree. Rather, the phrase refers (just like the phrases that precede and follow it) to Noah's *personal, spiritual character*.

So then -- do the three phrases refer to the *same thing stated three different ways*, or rather to *three related elements of the same thing*? First, Noah is described as a "just" or "righteous man" (*ish tsadiq*). *Tsadiq* is related to the word *tsedeq*, "rightness" or "righteousness" (*New BDBG*, pages 841b-842b), generally in the legal or governmental sense. "All thy commandments are *righteousness (tsedeq)*," sang David (Psalms 119:172). Noah, then, was a man who *kept God's commandments*.

The second phrase, "perfect in his generations", is less immediately clear as to its full significance, but it does point out Noah's *innocence and integrity* while living

in evil times. The third phrase, "Noah walked with God," unquestionably refers to Noah's *faith* in God. Enoch, Noah's ancestor, likewise "walked with God" or "pleased God", and this is directly linked with Enoch's faith (Genesis 5:22, 24; Hebrews 11:5-6). Moreover (as several scriptures cited in **The Seven Principles of God's Government** prove), to "walk humbly with God" is *by definition* to have faith in and proper fear of God.

Let us review those scriptures for a moment. Jesus spoke of "the weightier matters of the law, *justice* and *mercy* and *faith*" (Matthew 23:23). He was citing Micah 6:8, which says: "What does the LORD require of you but to *do justice*, and to *love mercy*, and to *walk humbly with your God*?" Psalms 130:3-4 adds another parallel: God's *ability to mark iniquities* (according to *justice*), His *forgiveness* (according to *mercy*), and the proper *fear* of Him that results (according to *faith*).

Let us now return to Genesis 6:9. The first phrase (after the introduction of the family history) says that Noah was a righteous man (of necessity, according to *justice*). The third phrase says that he walked with God (of necessity, according to *faith*). By analogy of order, then, what does the second phrase indicate? That he was "perfect in his generations" -- innocent and upright in the midst of a sinning world -- according to *mercy*. In fact, apart from God's mercy and the *grace or favor* that comes with it (Genesis 6:8), Noah *could not have been or become* "perfect in his generations". Neither could Noah have found favor with God through justice and faith alone. The fact that the first phrase (and none other) of the description of Noah in Genesis 6:9 refers to *justice*, and the third phrase (and none other) of that description to *faith*, confirms (by parallels with the other biblical passages cited above) that the second phrase (and none other) of that description must refer to *mercy*.

Once again, aside from its references to moral integrity, *tamim* ("perfect") is used almost exclusively to refer to the physical soundness of *sacrificial animals*, including the *Passover lamb* (41 times in the Pentateuch and 11 times in Ezekiel). As mentioned above, these unblemished animals served as a type of the Messiah's own perfect moral integrity, which led to His death on a cross. "You know that you were ransomed...with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19). Yet the Messiah's own integrity was a *gift of grace*, made possible by the Holy Spirit within Him. That Spirit kept Him in a constant state of awareness of His own human nature and that of human beings generally. It seems beyond question, then, that *tamim* (when used with reference to Noah) refers to the sort of integrity that results from *the forgiveness of sin upon repentance*. In other words, Noah was not only *just* and *faithful*; he was also *repentant* -- and therefore *merciful* (cf. Hebrews 5:3).

In sum, "perfect in his generations" in Genesis 6:9 refers, not to Noah's *physical pedigree*, but to an aspect of Noah's *spiritual character*. While unrestrained racial intermarriage was part of the social turmoil of Noah's time, it was but part of a larger social picture. In any case, while Noah was unquestionably white, and therefore was almost certainly descended entirely from whites, his being white granted him no special favor in God's sight. It was his Godly character that gained him God's favor -- and that is the point of Genesis 6:9. ###

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