

## OT Narratives Bible Study Series

### Genesis 4-8 - Sin and its effects

**For Discussion:** One of your old high school friends to whom you've been trying to share your faith finally agrees to come out to fellowship with you one Friday evening. As it happens, you're studying the account of Noah and the Flood that evening. The next day, you follow up with him and ask what he thought. He says, "It was OK, but do you really believe all that stuff about a world-wide flood and about Noah gathering animals into a boat? Sounds pretty far-fetched to me." How would you respond?

-Some thoughts...

- probe a little to see what the primary objection is - may require different approaches
- we believe in a God who created the heavens and the earth and everything in them just by speaking the word... this is really no big deal for Him (even if we may not completely understand why or how He would choose to do things this way)
  - e.g. it's conceivable that if someone today wanted to collect animals into a large ship and keep them alive for a year, it could be possible - if humans today could do it, why not an omnipotent God?
- for a book that purports to cover thousands of years of human history, the account in Genesis 6-8 contains quite a lot of detail that would seem irrelevant if this were just myth (e.g. the numbers of days it took for the water to subside, then for the ground to dry, then for Noah to come out of the ark)
- multiple Great Flood traditions in different cultures --> seem to be pointing to the same event

Previously, we saw how Genesis 1-3 lays the foundations for the Christian worldview, and also for understanding the rest of the Bible. In today's study, we consider the effects of sin, as depicted in Genesis 4-8.

#### Read Genesis 4-5

-Why did Cain kill Abel? (cf. Hebrews 11:1-4; 1 John 3:11-12)

- he was angry that God looked upon Abel's offering with favor, and not his
  - Hebrews 11:4 tells us that this was because of Abel's faith --> this faith led him to give of the best of his flocks to God
    - probably not so much a matter of animal vs. vegetable offering, as some have suggested
- 1 John 3:11-12 tells us that Cain hated his brother because his own deeds were evil and his brother's were righteous
  - echoes God's rebuke of Cain in 4:6 - "if you do well, will you not be accepted?"
  - unlike Abel, Cain lacked faith; acted out of the evil that was in his heart --> hatred --> murder
  - the attitude of his heart also seen in his response to God, when God questioned him

-Why do you think there are two genealogies provided in Genesis 4 and 5, given that only one would survive the Flood (Gen. 6-8)? (Hint: compare and contrast the characters described in the 2 genealogies - what does this tell us about mankind? consider also Hebrews 11:5-7)

- illustrates how mankind falls further and further away from God (Genesis 4)
- establishes a theme that will run through Scripture, of the people of God (line of Seth) in contradistinction to the people of the world (line of Cain)
  - a line people that is faithful to God (and whom God is faithful to preserve), despite the many others who turn away from God
  - cf. idea of children of God vs. children of the Devil (e.g. John 8:42-47)
  - also, idea of 2 kingdoms - kingdom of the God vs. kingdom of the world - runs throughout the Bible
  - interestingly, only in Seth's line is it indicated how long each key ancestor lived
- note that Lamech (Genesis 4) and Enoch (Genesis 5) are both "7th from Adam"
  - the number 7 in the Bible often signifies perfection --> Lamech & Enoch are the 'perfect examples' of each lineage
  - Lamech - commits greater sins than Cain (murder, polygamy), and boasts about it /sings a song about it
  - Enoch - walks with God; pleases God such that God takes him away (to Himself and to eternal life (Heb. 11:5))
- the people of the world are able to do great things - e.g. building a city; develop music, domesticating livestock, etc. (4:17-22), yet live in rebellion against God
- in contrast, the genealogy of Seth seems to focus not on their exploits, but on the hope of redemption from the curse
  - everyone dies, except Enoch (5:21-24); naming of Noah (5:29) - both commended for their faith in Hebrews 11
  - unsure whether everyone lived that long, or if this was a blessing of being in this specific lineage

#### Read Genesis 6-7

-Why did God destroy the earth with the Flood? Who was Noah, and why did God save him and his family?

- Sin/wickedness had spread and filled the earth - "the wickedness of man was great" (6:5)
  - unrestrained evil --> every inclination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually
  - God was grieved that He had made Man --> would destroy mankind and all that was under their dominion
- Noah was 10th from Adam in the line of Seth; "a righteous man, blameless in his generation" (6:9)
  - like Enoch, he "walked with God" (6:9)
  - he found grace (or favor) in the eyes of the Lord
  - he was a man of faith (Heb. 11:7), and that faith showed in his building of the Ark

## Read Genesis 8

-What warnings and encouragements does the account of Noah and the Flood give us today? (cf. 2 Peter 2:5,9 and 3:3-13; Matthew 24:36-39)

- God will judge sin and evil one day
  - even if it seems He isn't doing anything about evil in the world today, and even if scoffers come scoffing (2 Peter 3:3), there will come a day when He will judge the world in righteousness
    - presently, He is patient - as He was in the days of Noah (1 Peter 3:20) - not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance (2 Peter 3:9)
    - but He is not slow in fulfilling His promise
    - His Day of Judgment will come suddenly, like a thief --> people will be caught unprepared, as they were in the days of Noah
- this is a warning to turn away from evil, but also an encouragement for His people
  - though He will judge the world, He remembers those who by faith belong to Him and will show them mercy
  - a call to live lives of holiness and godliness, as we wait for and hasten the coming of that day (2 Peter 3:11-13)

## Putting it all together...

-What does today's passage (Genesis 4-8) tell us about God? about mankind? about sin and its effects?

- God
  - God is holy; He hates sin and will judge and punish it - His justice will be done, and seen to be done
  - He is patient -delayed the Flood for 120 years to give people time to repent
  - He is merciful - saved Noah and his family; showed mercy even to Cain and his descendants (common grace)
  - He is powerful
  - He walks with those who would seek Him by faith
- Mankind
  - capable of great things, but fallen, prone to fall deeper and deeper into sin
  - capable of 'calling on the name of the Lord' (4:26) and, by His grace, having relationship with God
- Sin
  - seeks to dominate and control us (4:7)
  - tends to spread and grow, as seen in the descendants of Cain, and in the state of the world by chapter 6
  - results in destruction - of the earth, of one another, of ourselves
  - invites the righteous judgment and punishment of God

## For further reflection

We've seen today that after the Fall, sin spread quickly throughout Adam's descendants, and the earth was filled with mankind's wickedness. In Noah's time, God warned that He would one day judge the sins of the world. Noah believed God and, by faith, "in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household." (Heb. 11:7) In His mercy, God patiently waited for many years while the ark was being built, giving ample time for repentance, yet the world continued in its rejection of Him. In the end, with the exception of Noah and his family, they were all swept away and perished when God's righteous judgment finally fell.

In the same way, though we may see evil abounding in our day, God has promised that He has "set a day when He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed" - that is, Jesus Christ (Acts 17:31). He is not slow to fulfill this promise, but as 2 Peter 3:9 says, He "is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." Have you turned to Jesus to be saved from God's coming wrath? If not, we urge you not to delay. The Bible tells us that the day of God's judgment will come like a thief, when we are not expecting it. Turn to Him now and be saved, for "now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2, NIV1984).

If you have already come to faith in Jesus Christ, are you continuing to walk with Him? Are you living a holy and Godly life, looking forward to the day of His return? Are you reaching out to others with the good news of salvation in Christ, knowing that He is coming again soon?

## Additional Resources

CGYG/LIFE website: [www.cgygfellowship.com](http://www.cgygfellowship.com) (Resources section)

- Genesis Bible study series: [http://www.cgygfellowship.com/BBS\\_Genesis.shtml](http://www.cgygfellowship.com/BBS_Genesis.shtml)
- OT Daily Devotional series

CGC website

- OT Survey and Genesis adult Christian education materials: <http://www.cgctorenglish.chinesegospelchurch.ca> (Resources section)