

REBELLION AND GOD'S GRACE

(SUNDAY, MAY 11, 2014)

Scripture Reading: Genesis 4:16-26; Eph. 2:1-10

INTRODUCTION

We must not forget the importance of Genesis 3:15 for these chapters of Genesis, the word of God as a whole, and our own lives.

Enmity

Struggle

Victory of Christ

End of Genesis 3 – Acknowledge God's judgment and rejoice in His mercies.

First part of Genesis 4 – Consider God's justice and salvation in the midst of the horror of man's rebellion.

We see a similar theme at the end of Genesis 4 – In the line of Cain we see God's blessing in technological development but also the horror of men who are at war against God. And in the midst of this description of rebellion we see God's grace in changing sinners so that they will call upon His name.

I was reminded of a line in Isaac Watt's hymn, "Am I Solider of the Cross."

"Is this vile world a friend to grace, To help me on to God?"

Increasingly we realize the hostility in our nation to God's truth.

Likely we are only seeing the very beginning of this hostility.

There well may be the temptation to despair.

While I certainly do not rejoice in the present rebellion we are all being taught by God very important lessons.

Living with hostility and even persecution.

Realizing this world is not a friend of grace.

Learning that our hope cannot be in anything of this world but in God's purposes which will be fulfilled even in the greatest opposition of rebellious men and women.

Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

Take note of the evil of the world, but do not miss God's great plan of salvation being fulfilled.

We will look at vv. 16-26 in three parts, vv. 16-18, vv. 19-24, and vv. 25-26.

1. THE LINE OF CAIN, VV. 16-18

Gen. 4:16 Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. **17** And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son—Enoch. **18** To Enoch was born Irad; and Irad begot Mehujael, and Mehujael begot Methushael, and Methushael begot Lamech.

Verse 16 is better grouped with verses 1-15, but many translations have verse 16 as the start of a new paragraph.

Let's briefly look at verse 16 again.

In the first half of the verse we see the horror of sin – separation from God's presence.

The language of Cain went out from the presence of Yahweh is similar to what we read two times in the book of Jonah. Jonah tried to get away from the face or the presence of the LORD.

There is no evidence of Cain's repentance.

What did we see last week that troubled Cain?

Was it his sin?

No, Cain was troubled by his punishment.

He complained about God's judgment and was afraid that he would be killed by anyone who would find him.

Cain we see dwelt in the land of Nod, an area east of Eden.

The name Nod can mean *restlessness*.

It is connected to the judgment God gave to Cain.

The word vagabond translates a similar Hebrew word.

The designation that this land was east of Eden, further shows Cain's rebellion.

I have mentioned already that the theme of moving east is used in other places to describe those living in rebellion against God.

Let me briefly discuss the age-old where did Cain get his wife?

This was a question in the famous Scope's Monkey Trial that Williams Jennings Bryan could not satisfactorily answer when asked.¹

Could you answer this question?

Recall from what I mentioned last week from Genesis 5:3 that Adam was 130 years old when Seth was born.

We are not told but it seems that Seth's birth was not that long after Abel's murder.

Let us assume for this discussion that Adam and Eve had 8 children in 30 years and that they had 4 boys and 4 girls.

In this early stage of human development, it would have been necessary for at least a generation or two for brothers and sisters to marry.

Rightfully we see this as repugnant because God would later declare this to be forbidden.

Let us assume that Adam and Eve's 8 children had on average 6 children.

By the time Adam was 60, they could have had 24 grandchildren.

In another 30 years, 72 great grandchildren.

By the time Adam and Eve were 120, they could have had 216 great-great grandchildren.

By the time Seth was born, there easily could have been several hundred people living.

The text does not say that Enoch was Cain's firstborn son.

The name Enoch is an adaptation of the Hebrew which would be pronounced, *h^anôk*. This name actually appears in other parts of the OT where it is written as H-a-n-o-c-h.

What does the name *h^anôk* sound like?

The name means dedicated. The name is related to the feast of Hanukah, where the temple was rededicated. The book of Nehemiah also presents a Hanukah celebration after the walls of the Jerusalem were rebuilt.

The last part of verse 17 then connects the birth of Enoch (Hanoch) with Cain building a city.

Literally verse 17 could read, and it came to pass that he was building a city and he named the city after his son Enoch.

The birth of Enoch is connected with Cain seeking to build a city.

The actions of Cain in building a city likely suggest continued rebellion against God.

This is the first place where the word city is found. The next place is Genesis 10:12 (account of Nimrod).

¹ <http://www.opbm.org/cain-wife.html>

Those who built the tower of Babel wanted to build also a city. It is not just building a tower but a city that is the focus of the account.

It was Lot who chose to move near the city of Sodom.

We can say that the earliest references to cities in the OT are not positive. This doesn't mean that as Christians we are to stay away from cities, but they generally reflect the glory of man rather than seeking the true glory of God.

The challenge we face as Christians is how to faithfully evangelize and bring the gospel to the powerful cities of the world which in almost all cases celebrate man's glory rather than God's glory.

Verse 18 completes this section with the line of Cain through his son Enoch up until the 7th generation from Adam.

Irada - Interesting that the name Irada is similar to the word for city. This is one of the suggested meanings of the name though there are others. This is the only use of the name in Scripture.

Mehujael - Strong's Dictionary says that the name means "smitten of God." Other suggestions are given by others including God gives life. This is the only use of the name in Scripture.

Methushael - This name is similar to the previous name. Strong's suggests the meaning—"man who (is) of God." Does this indicate some degree of faith? As with the others we don't have enough information to make strong judgments.

Lamech - This the most familiar of these names especially as it is the same name as found also in the line of Seth as the father of Noah.

Let's now focus on what we learn about Lamech in verses 19-24.

2. THE WICKED TESTIMONY OF LAMECH, vv. 19-24

Gen. 4:19 Then Lamech took for himself two wives: the name of one *was* Adah, and the name of the second *was* Zillah. **20** And Adah bore Jabal. He was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. **21** His brother's name *was* Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute. **22** And as for Zillah, she also bore Tubal-cain, an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron. And the sister of Tubal-cain *was* Naamah.

Gen. 4:23 Then Lamech said to his wives: "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech! For I have killed a man for wounding me, Even a

young man for hurting me. **24** If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.”

I listened yesterday to a story on BBC Radio about why some songs get stuck in our head.

One of the experts interviewed in the story said this is part of human evolution.

Thousands and thousands of years ago before writing was developed, he said history and information were passed down through the use of song.

I wondered immediately what evidence this supposed expert had on this. How does he know this?

Verses 19-24 are remarkable in that they are essentially the only information that we have related to the development of culture and technology in the pre-flood world.

These verses bear testimony to what is sometimes called God’s “common grace” and to the reality of man made in the image of God.

Significantly these verses also trace the continued rebellion especially seen in the line of Cain.

Is it significant that the first example of polygamy is Lamech, a very rebellious man?

Gordon Wenham here comments:

It may therefore be wrong to argue that because the first polygamist in Scripture was an unsavory character, Genesis is thereby condemning the practice of polygamy itself. It is more concerned with illustrating how all human activity, including marriage, is affected by sin.²

Clearly we can say that the account here in Genesis 4 shows a decline from the creator’s original pattern.

Polygamy was certainly far from God’s ideal which we see as we study all of the examples and testimony of Scripture.

I think we also have a witness here to the fact that change and development are certainly not a testimony by themselves to progress and true blessing.

Lamech took two wives – Adah and Zillah.

The name Adah might mean ornament.³

And the name Zillah could carry the meaning of the sweetness of the feminine voice.⁴

² Wenham, 112.

³ BDB.

⁴ HALOT.

The text in verses 20-22 describes four children Lamech had with his two wives, three sons and a daughter.

You might note that the names of the three sons are all quite similar. All three played a very important role in developing technology and culture as we see.

Lamech is the 7th generation in the line of Adam through Cain.

Enoch is the corresponding 7th generation in the line through Seth. Enoch was born when Adam was 622.

Though we are not given any timing, we would probably not be far off in understanding that what is described here is from a similar time 600-700 years after creation.

The first son is Jabal.

He was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock.

These two characteristics go together.

Jabal is the ancestor of the Bedouin, the nomadic people who move from place to place and raise livestock.

Now what about Abel who also worked with animals as a shepherd?

The word used for livestock is different than the word used to describe Abel.

The word livestock covers a wider variety of animals that are herded – sheep, goats, cattle, asses, and camels.

Wenham wrote:

“Whereas Abel merely lived off his flocks, Yabal [Jabal] could trade with his beasts of burden, and this represents cultural advance.”⁵

The second son is Jubal.

He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute.

Harp is a rather common word in the OT, used over 40x.

Laban said he would have sent Jacob on his way with joy and songs, with timbrel and harp. This word is used also for David’s harp. It is a word found throughout the OT.

The word flute is in some versions translated as pipe, a long flute. This word is not as common in the OT, used only 4x including in the last Psalm.

The third son is Tubal-cain.

⁵ Wenham, 113.

He was the father of metallurgists or blacksmiths, those who worked to shape bronze and iron.

This testimony represents quite a development in terms of technology and understanding.

It indicates that even before or along with Tubal-cain and Jubal, there were those who learned how to mine and separate these elements from the earth.

Recall the testimony even before the fall in Genesis 2 related to the rivers which broke off from the river which watered the garden.

Gen. 2:11 The name of the first *is* Pishon; it *is* the one which skirts the whole land of Havilah, where *there is* gold. **12** And the gold of that land *is* good. Bdellium and the onyx stone *are* there.

From this passage and from other archaeology findings we again can state that pre-flood civilization was certainly very advanced. Hardly was this a primitive time.

We can say this is a testimony to God's blessing as a whole to humanity and a witness to man created in God's image.

Verse 23 takes a much different turn further illustrating man's rebellion and the violence which also characterized the pre-flood age.

Here are the only recorded words spoken by Lamech.

The words of verses 23 and 24 do have the characteristics of poetry in their rhythm and even rhyme in Hebrew.⁶

I think I have for a while misunderstood the declaration of Lamech.

His words certainly must be interpreted in light of verse 15a.

Gen. 4:15 And the LORD said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold."

God was not simply protecting Cain but His established law-order of the family and society with this ruling.

Lamech apparently was attacked or at least hurt by another man.

The term young man can be used of those up to age 40, so I don't think we are talking about a little kid.

Lamech reasoned that since whoever might murder Cain would be given a seven-fold judgment so it was right that Lamech kill the man who had injured him.

⁶ I believe it was Wenham who emphasized there is element of rhyme in this short poem.

Lamech argued it was right for him to exercise a seventy-sevenfold vengeance on the one who injured him.

It is significant that two words Lamech uses in his poetic speech are later used in the law.

Ex. 21:25 burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

The word wound is the same word translated wounding in Gen. 4:23.

The word stripe is the same word translated as hurting in verse 23.

There is certainly a place for self-defense but the response must be proportionate to the danger. Lamech boasted that he went beyond this appropriate response. He killed one who had just injured him.

Wenham wrote:

By placing this comment at the end of the story of Cain, the editor suggests that all his descendants are under judgment and hints at the disaster to come.⁷

Another point we can make here is that technological progress is not necessarily an indication of a society that is under God's blessing.

There is no doubt that a godly society prepares the way for technological development.

But technological development by itself, as we see in our own age, is not a sign of true progress or right relationship with God.

3. GOD'S GRACE IN THE LINE OF SETH, VV. 25-26

Gen. 4:25 And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, "For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed." **26** And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then *men* began to call on the name of the LORD.

When Adam and Eve were 130 years old, God gave them another son.

Are we to think that they only had three sons? Certainly not.

The three most significant sons of Adam and Eve are noted in verse 25 – Cain, Abel, and Seth.

In verses 1, 2, and 17 we are not told who named Cain, Abel, and Enosh, but here specifically we are told it was Eve who named Seth.

⁷ Wenham, 114.

The testimony of both verses 1 and 25 with respect to Eve are significant.

Eve as all godly mothers do realized that life is an incredible gift that God gives.

It is horrible that today life is viewed merely as a biological process.

Recently a video made by a young mother and murderer named Emily has been gaining attention.

Emily produced one of the saddest videos I have ever seen, a record of her short pregnancy and murder of her baby.

After killing her baby in an abortion, this young woman gave this testimony.

But I don't feel like a bad person. I don't feel sad. I feel in awe of the fact that I *can* make a baby! I *can* make a life! I knew that what I was gonna do was right because it was right for me and no one else.

Eve recognized the theological significance of God's gracious gift to her and Adam.

God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel whom Cain killed.

It is this testimony I think that suggests Seth was born not long after Abel was killed.

The word *seed* is a very significant word as we have examined before.

It is used in the first gospel promise in Genesis 3:15. It is later found in 12:7; 13:15, 16; 15:3, 5, 13, 18.

God gave another seed to Eve in replacement of Seth in light of the promise of the one who would crush the head of the serpent.

The birth of one of Seth's sons is then recorded in verse 26.

We learn from Gen. 5:6 that Seth was 105 when Enosh was born, but this does not mean that this was his first born son.

Interestingly the name Enosh can have the meaning of one who is mortal.

It is the final phrase of this chapter that makes it end on a very hopeful note.

Then men began to call on the name of the LORD.

Isn't this an interesting ending of this chapter?

How does it relate to the beginning of the chapter where we see Cain and Abel offering sacrifice?

Well, certainly there is no contradiction.

Rather, verse 26 signals an important aspect in redemptive history.

The verb translated as *began* is used other times in Genesis.

Gen. 6:1 Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them,

Gen. 9:20 And Noah began *to be* a farmer, and he planted a vineyard.

Gen. 41:54 and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

What we should see then in verse 26 is how this chapter testifies to the grace of God specifically in the line of Adam-Seth-Enosh.

As you study the phrase to call on the name of the LORD, it certainly has the idea of worship, but I think it also can have the idea of crying out for help.

Gen. 12:8 And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent *with* Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.

Psa. 116:3 The pains of death surrounded me, And the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow.

4 Then I called upon the **name of the LORD**: “O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!”

5 Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God *is* merciful.

CONCLUSION:

Rom. 10:13 For whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.

Are you calling on the name of the Lord?

Take note of the evil of the world, but do not miss God’s great plan of salvation being fulfilled.

Prayer

Hymn: 402

Benediction – Jude 24-25

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.