

LESSON #4

ADAM TO ABRAHAM

We now start to follow the plan of God as we move through the Bible. The fall and sin of Adam and Eve resulted in their removal from the Garden in Eden. A further consequence of their sin was that the Serpent type of thinking or the “fleshly” thinking now becomes prevalent in one of the sons (Cain) and his seed. The Spiritual thinking is typified in Abel and then ultimately through the descendants of Seth as we will see in this section. The theme of the “enmity” between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman as outlined in Genesis 3:15, is not just internal, within the individual, but now is also represented as two lines of descendants that will track throughout the rest of the Bible. We begin to follow these threads here.

This lesson is divided into three sections and takes us from Genesis chapter 4 through chapter 11. In the period covered by these chapters we find some of the most dramatic events in the history of mankind.

CAIN AND ABEL

Genesis 4:1-6 In this first reference we see in the children of Adam and Eve, the conflict between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman that would continue through the Bible.

vv.3-5 Consider the occupations of Cain and Abel; a gardener, and a shepherd. By referring to Hebrews 11:4 we are given further info: that they had been instructed in the significance and proper procedure relative to their offering. It is noted in this reference that it was by faith that Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain. Faith implies understanding and belief. Cain demonstrated a different character.

vv.6-7 It is evident that Cain had been given an equal opportunity to do what was pleasing in God's sight, but it appears he chose to refuse the instruction of God through a spirit of rebellion and rejection of his warning, which lead to placing his will before that of the Creator. When God refused Cain's sacrifice, Cain gave vent to his anger at God's decision by killing his brother in resentment.

v.8 Through the slaying by Cain of his brother, we are reminded of the similar consequence of the rejection of Jesus the son of God by Israel and their determination to kill him on the cross. The pattern set by Cain foreshadows that of the slaying of Jesus.

v. 25 The continuation of the seed of the woman is shown in verse 25. God had appointed Eve another son to continue her seed instead of Abel. She shows her understanding of this by choosing for her son the name of Seth, meaning "appointed."

Genesis 5 When we consider the genealogy of the patriarchs, we are impressed with the extended life span in the patriarchal age. Adam lived 930 years, almost to the end of the first thousand year period, as indicated on the chart. We can also note that by adding the ages of the sons in this chapter, we are able to determine that the flood was 1656 years after creation, or about 2348 BC.

THE FLOOD

Genesis 6 The continuing word of God shows us that it doesn't take long for the wicked "seed" of mankind to overtake the godly descendants. This chapter illustrates the depth of the departure from God's ways and the moral decline in society. It becomes apparent that this process of degradation had its roots in the intermarriage between of the sons of God (seed of the woman) and the daughters of men (seed of the serpent). The result is "that the thoughts and imagination of mankind were only evil continually".

(v5) The record shows they were full of wickedness: the people were corrupt and filled with violence! With God's underlying purpose being that God wanted to fill the earth "with his glory", this slide into corruption and violence, God now determines to destroy wickedness from the earth. It is evident that in order to save humanity God must take control of this situation which had no human remedy.

In the New Testament, (Matthew 24:37) Jesus refers to Noah's time period as a sign when a similar condition would reveal itself, which would exist in the last days and can be corrected only by God's intervention.

Genesis 6:8 Of the men in the world at this time, only Noah was "a just man and perfect". Through Noah and his family, God would once again bring order to the earth and give this generation a new start by destroying the extreme violence and wickedness that was prevalent in the earth. The purpose was to preserve "the seed of the woman."

The remainder of the 6th chapter describes the building of the Ark that would save them from the flood of destruction which came upon the earth. Take a few minutes to read the construction of the Ark and the gathering of the animals, birds and creeping things.

Genesis 7 after 120 years of building the ark and warning the people of the impending judgment, Noah and his family enter the ark (v7). With them in the ark, were two of each of the animals, and 7 each of the clean animals (animals for sacrifice). The rain came from above, and from below, and last 40 days and nights. The scriptures declare the flood was universal, ie that it covered the whole earth. Some key considerations in this chapter:

v12 the rain was upon the earth 40 days and 40 nights.

v16 And the LORD shut him in.

v21 And all flesh died that moved upon the earth.... V22 All in whose nostrils was the breath of life of all that was in the dry land, died.

Genesis 8:1 And God remembered Noah... The flood gradually dries up and the Ark comes to rest on the mountain of Ararat. Finally after 1 year and 10 days Noah and all who were in the ark, came out. (cp 7:11 to 8:13,14).

V20 Noah built and altar unto the LORD ... and offered burnt offerings unto the LORD.

9:11,12 God makes the promise that he would not destroy the earth again with a flood and gives the Rainbow as a sign of this promise.

One further point of interest in this is the commentary in Genesis 9:1-7. Let's consider how the situation was a little different after the judgment of the flood.

V1 A reminder again of the commission to "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth". Cp Genesis 1:28

V2 the fear of man would now be upon the animals.

V3 Animals were now given as food for man.

V5,6 mankind was now to be responsible for the welfare of one another. The reminder that man was created in the image of God and therefore as part of our purpose is to look out for each other, just as God has.

V7 Again we have the reminder in the light of the previous verses to "be fruitful and multiply..." By implication this means with God in mind.

Genesis 10 This chapter shows us the development of the generations of the sons of Noah. Once again the earth was re-populated according to God's command to "be fruitful and multiply".

THE TOWER OF BABEL

Genesis 11 "The whole earth was of one language and of one speech". A great congregation of people migrated to a plain in the land of Shinar. The memory of the flood seems to have had a strong influence on the events that relate to Babel in this chapter. The impulse to pull together and build a city and tower evidently sprang from a desire for safety. This demonstrates how quickly the "nature" of man reasserts itself over the purpose of God. Safety lies not in cities and towers, but in obedience to God's word and laws. The pride of their developed social system became their downfall, for God cannot tolerate pride that excludes God. Their lack of belief in the promise that God would never again destroy the earth with a flood is here evident.

The LORD frustrates their rebellious intent by confounding their language, and scattering them abroad. This becomes the beginning of the nations that are to occupy the earth. It is significant that the name of their city is called Babel (the Bible margin alternative is 'confusion'). The remaining verses in this chapter reveal the generation of Shem, one of Noah's sons. In verse 26 we are introduced to one of his descendants, Abram (Abraham) who as we will see in our next session, this man is to be a father of the race later to be called God's chosen people!