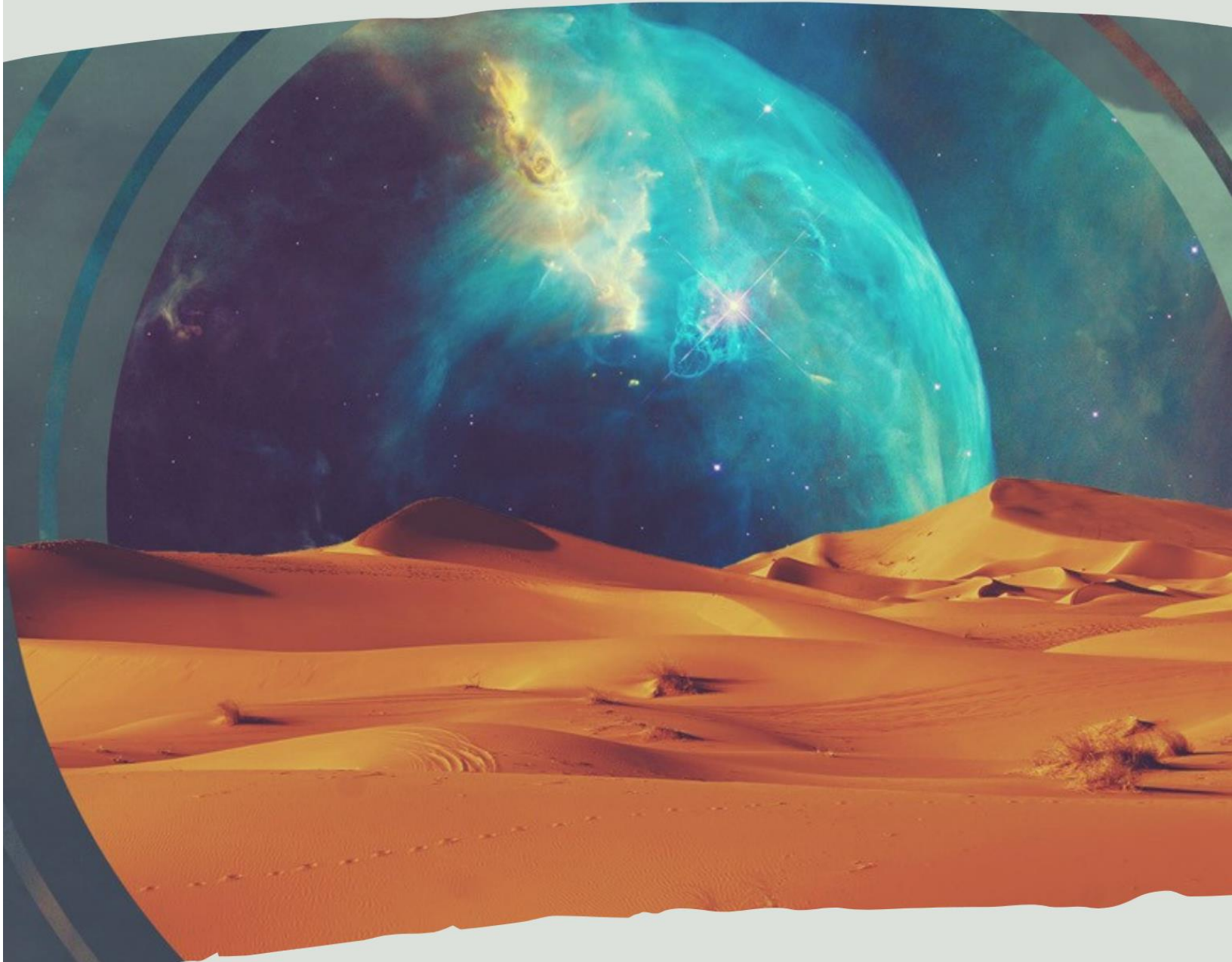




CROWDEDSHIP



EXPLORING

GENESIS



Exploring Genesis

February – September 2021



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Cornerstone Sunday Morning Worship: February – September 2021

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Message 1: Creation & Corruption in Three Acts (1:1-2:3)

February 21, 2021

Genesis: Purpose

Counter narrative. Recently, counter narratives seem to be on the rise. In a world in which everyone can declare their side of the story via social media, the same technology tends to be used to offer a counter narrative.

For example, consider immigration. (1) Many immigrants feel like the general understanding of immigrants and their reasons and manner in coming to America are demeaning to them in general, so they offer a counter narrative in which they reveal what they believe to be the accurate narrative. (2) ICE and Trump are criticized for keeping “kids in cages,”¹ so they offer a counter narrative in which someone else is responsible.²

Typical within counter narratives – the villain and hero change, the narrative offers a new villain, or the narrative further explains or completely changes the reasons and motives for the characters within the story.

While counter narratives may be on the rise, counter narratives are old as time. In the ANE, a number of narratives existed which explained creation, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel (Epic of Gilgamesh, Epic of Atrahasis, and the Sumerian Flood stories). These narratives paint an entirely different narrative to the one we find in Genesis. Genesis reveals God to be “one, omnipotent, omniscient, and good as opposed to the fallible, capricious, weak deities who populated the rest of the ancient world.”³ Additionally, instead of man being both an afterthought to the gods and the hero in the story, Genesis reveals man to be corrupt, disobedient, and hopeless without divine intervention.

Mesopotamian accounts of the flood not only provide some of the closest parallels between the Bible and oriental literature, they also paint a completely different

¹ Nooman Merchant, “Judge demands ICE better explain why it won’t release kids.” (AP News, May 22, 2020). Accessed February 21, 2021. <https://apnews.com/article/0cf36c3c15b6ce24c9486ab52ce86faf>

² Chelsey Cox, “Fact check: Obama administration approved, built temporary holding enclosures at southern border,” (USA Today, August 26, 2020). Accessed February 21, 2021. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2020/08/26/fact-check-obama-administration-built-migrant-cages-meme-true/3413683001/>

³ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, vol. 1, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1987), liii.

picture of the relationship between the human and divine worlds. They tell that the flood was sent by the gods piqued at man's noisiness and overpopulation of the earth. The Babylonian "Noah" escaped because he happened to worship a god who did not support the flood decision. Once started, the flood was beyond the gods' control, and they were terrified by it. In the closing scene, Enlil, the most powerful god, turns up at the sacrifice and is surprised to find "Noah" still alive. Genesis, while preserving a substantially similar story, paints a very different portrait of the actors involved. There is only one God, who is both omniscient and omnipotent. The flood is sent by his command and is totally under his control.⁴

Genesis offers to the people of Israel the accurate counter narrative to the many corrupt and erroneous written and oral traditions unfolding the history of God and mankind's beginning. Genesis offers to Israel an explanation of their history, why they were chosen by God, and why they need to submit to the one True God. Genesis, outright, contradicts the prevailing Mesopotamian narrative that the gods are fickle, capricious, and inconsistent and man is the hero of the story. Rather, Genesis reveals God to be faithful and worthy of man's worship and man is broken and hopeless without God's mercy.

The ancient oriental background to Gen 1-11 shows it to be concerned with rather different issues from those that tend to preoccupy modern readers. It is affirming the unity of God in the face of polytheism, his justice rather than his caprice, his power as opposed to his impotence, his concern for mankind rather than his exploitation.⁵

Genesis: Author

Who wrote Genesis? Both Jewish and Christian tradition claim Moses to be the author of the book of Genesis.

For almost eighteen hundred years (the first cycle) hardly anyone questioned the unity of Genesis, whether the writers were the rabbinical scholars of Judaism or the ecclesiastical scholars of Christendom. Thus a Maimonides within Judaism, an Augustine within Catholicism, and a Calvin within Protestantism shared no disagreement on the point of Genesis' origin and composition. For all of them Genesis was a unified work, and more specifically, the work of Moses.⁶

Other books in the Pentateuch make mention of Moses recording events and writing down God's laws and directives (Ex 17:14, 24:3-4; Num 33:2; Deut 31:24). Additional Old Testament passages attribute books to Moses (Josh 1:7-8; 2 Chro 25:4; Neh 13:1).⁷ The New Testament authors attribute

⁴ Wenham, 1:xlix.

⁵ Wenham, 1:L.

⁶Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, Third edition, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 11-12.

⁷ Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you (Jos 1:7). But he did not put their children to death, according to what is written in the Law, in the Book of Moses (2 Chro 25:4). On that day they read from the Book of Moses in the hearing of the people (Neh 13:1).

at least some level of authorship to Moses. When discussing a specific law, both the disciples and Jewish leaders acknowledge that Moses commanded them (Matt 19:7, 22:24). Even Jesus claims Mosaic authorship for at least parts of the Pentateuch (Mark 7:10, 12:26; John 1:17, 5:46, 7:23; In John 5:46-47 Jesus claims that Moses wrote about him).

As weighty as these passages may be, these passages do not demand Moses to be the sole author. Nowhere within the Pentateuch does Moses claim to be the author. Sailhamer, in his commentary on Genesis acknowledges, “we should not lose sight of the fact that the Pentateuch itself comes to us as an anonymous work and was apparently intended to be read as such.”⁸

A couple other text within the Pentateuch indicate that Moses may have had a little help in the formulation of the writings. For instance, Deuteronomy 34 unfolds Moses death. Unlikely Moses wrote this 😊. Additionally, a couple of geographical locations must have been designated by someone other than Moses. In Genesis, the Ur of the Chaldeans is referenced but the Chaldeans were not present until long after Moses’ death (Gen 11:31). As well, in Genesis, the city of Dan is referenced but would not have been established until well after Moses’ death (Gen 14:14).⁹

So then, let us draw a few conclusions as to the authorship of Genesis. (1) Moses likely authored much if not most of the book, and Mosaic authorship was the universal belief until the 19th century. (2) Moses likely used some earlier sources, whether oral or written, to write the book.¹⁰ (3) Human authorship is somewhat irrelevant. Even the author of Genesis indicates his authorship remains irrelevant by the fact that he does not clearly identify himself. Divine authorship remains critical, and as far as our study is concerned, God authored Genesis – primarily using Moses.

Simplified Outline of Genesis¹¹

1. Human history from Adam to Abraham: The human race (chap. 1–11).
 - A. Creation (1–2)
 - B. Fall (3–5)
 - C. Flood (6–9).
 - D. Babel (10–11).
2. Human history from Abraham to Joseph: The chosen race (12–50).
 - A. Abraham (12–24)

⁸ Douglas Mangum, Miles Custis, and Wendy Widder, *Genesis 1-11*, Lexham Research Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), Gen 1:1. Mangum quotes Sailhamer.

⁹ Tremper Longman III, “Who Wrote the Book of Genesis?,” Zondervan Academic, August 31, 2018, <https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/who-wrote-genesis>. I didn’t quote Longman but he offered a really helpful synopsis to this question. He also offers an online course for Genesis through Zondervan.

¹⁰ Moses likely used sources for the eleven genealogies (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2).

Mangum, Custis, and Widder, *Genesis 1-11*. “The relationship between text and author is complicated by oral tradition, scribal practices, and the possible use of ancient sources. For these reasons, very few scholars adhere to a strict version of Mosaic authorship, in which every word came from Moses himself.”

¹¹ Steven J. Cole, *Genesis*, Steven J. Cole Commentary Series (Dallas: Galaxie Software, 2017), Gen 1:1. The above outline is not Cole’s exact outline. I made just a few minor changes.

- B. Isaac (25–26)
- C. Jacob (27–36)
- D. Joseph (37–50)

Personal Outline for Genesis 1-11¹²

Chapters 1-11 set up God's creation of and interaction with the whole world

1. Creation of Heaven and Earth (1:1-2:3)
2. Humanity inside and outside the garden (2:4-4:26)
 - God creates man and woman and dwells with them in the garden (2:4-25)
 - God gives man responsibility and autonomy within the garden (2:4-17). God extended to man the responsibility to care for the creation.
 - God declares "It is not good that man be alone" and God creates Eve (2:18-24)
 - Man, alone, does not accurately reflect God.
 - God designed marriage to be between a man and a woman.
 - Adam and Eve expelled from the garden (3:1-24)
 - The serpent enters the scene and interacts with Eve (3:1-5).¹³
 - THE FALL: Adam and Eve sin (3:6-8). Humanity chooses autonomy rather than submission to the Creator.
 - Mankind chooses autonomy.
 - Relationships within mankind are broken.
 - Relationship with God is broken.
 - God comes to Adam and Eve and they hide themselves (3:9-13).
 - God judges mankind (3:14-21).
 - Adam and Eve are expelled from the garden (3:22-24).
 - Adam and Eve's life outside the garden (4:1-26)
 - Cain and Abel born (4:1-2)
 - Cain and Abel worship (4:3-7)
 - Cain murders Abel (4:8-16)
 - Cain's family (4:17-24)
3. Adam's descendants up to Noah (5:1-32)
4. With the increase of man came the increase of wickedness (6:1-8)
 - The sons of God and the daughters of men (6:1-4)
 - Pervasive wickedness throughout the world (6:5-8)
 - Man continues to choose self-autonomy and increases in wickedness.
 - God regrets creating man and grieves their sin.
 - God chooses to judge and destroy.

¹² I derived the following outline from my own reading of the passage and the use of several different resources. However, Kenneth Matthews Commentary on Genesis played a significant role. Kenneth Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, vol. 1a, NAC (Nashville: Holman, 1996).

¹³ This is the first place in Genesis in which the reader reads of the serpent, but the serpent must have existed prior to this moment. Satan, present in the serpent, must not only have been created prior to this moment but also fallen prior to this moment. Job indicates that the angels sang and shouted for joy as God created the world (Job 38:4-7).

- God looks on Noah with favor to preserve a remnant of his creation.
- 5. God destroys the world with a flood but preserves man and his promises to Adam and Eve by sparing Noah and his family (6:9-9:28).
 - Righteous Noah and his family (6:9-10).
 - The world is corrupt and filled with violence (6:11-12).
 - God's judgment and an ark of promise (6:13-7:10).
 - Announcement of flood (6:13).
 - Directions for building of ark (6:14-16).
 - Promise of destruction (6:17).
 - Promise of covenant (6:18).
 - Instructions involving animals and food (6:19-22).
 - Entrance onto the ark (7:1-10).
 - The Flood begins (7:11-12).
 - Noah, family, and animals safe on the ark (7:13-16).
 - God destroyed everything except Noah and those on the ark (7:17-24).
 - God remembers and rescues Noah (8:1-14).
 - Noah exits the Ark (8:15-19).
 - Man worships and God offers a promise (8:20-22).
 - A new world and a new covenant (9:1-17).
 - A new world but ongoing corruption (9:18-24).
 - Noah curses one son and blesses the other two (9:25-28).
- 6. The generations of Noah's sons. Nations spread throughout the world (10:1-32).
- 7. The Tower of Babel: Mankind corporately pursues self-autonomy (11:1-9).
 - The world unites (11:1-2).
 - They build Babel (11:3-4).
 - God observes and considers man's combined efforts (11:5-6).
 - God stops their progress by confusing their languages (11:7).
 - God disperses the people throughout the world (11:8-9).
- 8. Shem's family line leading to Abram (11:10-32).
 - Shem to Terah (11:10-26).
 - Introduction to Abram (11:27-32).

12:1 introduces the covenant with Abraham and a transition in the book. God is now going to work specifically through Abraham and his offspring to accomplish his broader work of redemption.

12-50 deal with God's specific interaction with one man (Abraham) and his offspring.

Creation and Corruption in Three Acts

A. Act 1: Adam to the Fall

- a. Ideal Creation/Choice: Adam and Eve (1:1-2:25)
- b. Corruption: Adam and Eve (3:1-8)
- c. Judgment: Death and Ejection (3:9-24)
- d. Promise: Messiah through Eve (3:15)

B. Act 2: Cain to the Flood

- a. Choice: Cain, Lamech . . . (4:1-5:32)

- b. Corruption: Up to Noah's Day (6:1-8)
- c. Judgment: World Destroyed (6:9-8:22)
- d. Promise: Never Flood World (8:21-22)

C. Act 3: Noah to Babel

- a. Choice: Noah, Canaan . . . (9:1-10:32)
- b. Corruption: Up to Babel (11:1-6)
- c. Judgment: World Dispersed (11:7-9)
- d. Promise: World Blessed Through Abraham (12:1-2)

Timeless Principles

1. God is consistent and faithful.
2. God deserves our undivided loyalty and submission due to his creative sovereignty.
3. Mankind chooses between submission to the Sovereign Creator or self-autonomy. Every day, multiple times a day, you make the decision whether you will submit to God and His revealed will or follow your own will.
4. Mankind chooses self-autonomy due his natural disposition. Left to your natural disposition you will consistently choose self-autonomy.
5. God judges self-autonomy and punishes.
6. God always extends grace through Jesus Christ. We will look with much more depth as we come to each of the passages but let me at least acknowledge the three places we see the coming Messiah promised or pictured.
 - a. In Genesis 3:15, God promises Eve through her offspring would come one that would crush the head of the snake. Jesus Christ fulfilled this as Satan bruised his head in the crucifixion, but Christ crushed Satan, death, and sin through the crucifixion and following resurrection.
 - b. Following the destruction of the Flood, God remembers Noah and promises he would never "again strike down every living creature." Additionally, God promises that the seasons and day and night will never cease. However, New Testament authors reveal to us that the Ark itself was a picture of Jesus Christ and the salvation he would offer (1 Peter 3:20-21). In the same way that Noah was saved by being in the Ark, we are saved by being placed in Christ.
 - c. We find one additional Messianic prophecy in the first two verses of chapter twelve. God promises Abraham, "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:2). The coming Messiah, the Ark of mankind's salvation, the seed of Eve, and the offspring of Abraham – all point to the coming and work of Jesus Christ.

Message 2:

Creation of the Universe by the Word of God

(1:1-31)

March 7, 2021

This week I felt acutely the Hebrew wisdom that no one under 30 study Genesis. In one sense, the grandest moment of all history (its very creation) is simply summarized into around 400 words. Yet, every word and phrase seemed to reveal a rabbit hole of intrigue and study.

The beginning and ending of Ezekiel, the third of the four, are involved in so great obscurity that like the commencement of Genesis they are not studied by the Hebrews until they are thirty years old.¹

Since we have people under thirty listening this morning, I am going to do my best to not crawl into any of those curious labyrinths 😊. Before jumping into the first chapter of Genesis, let us take just a moment to once again capture a vision of the whole book all the way down to the specific context of chapter 1.

Purpose statement. In outlining His work of creation, God offers man the blueprints for the ideal.

Disdaining the myth-laden concepts of the ancient world and disregarding any attempt at scientific sophistication either ancient or modern, the text charts a course of theological affirmation that results in a picture of an ordered, purposeful cosmos with God at the helm, masterfully guiding its course.²

Overview of Text

I. Overview of Genesis

- a. Chapters 1-11 summarize the events of God's interaction with his creation from its inception up to Abrahams calling (ch. 12:1-2).
- b. Chapter 12-50 consists of God's covenant with Abraham and his offspring.
 - i. Abraham (12-24)
 - ii. Isaac (25-26)

¹ Jerome, *St. Jerome: Letters and Select Works*, vol. 6, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series (Christian Literature Company, 1893), 101.

² John H. Walton, *Genesis*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 65.

- iii. Jacob (27-36)
 - iv. Joseph (37-50)
- c. Chapters 1-11 consists of three rotations of choice, corruption, judgment, and promise.
 - i. Begins with God creating the ideal
 - ii. *Adam to the Fall*. Adam and Eve are offered a choice to submit to the sovereign Creator or choose self-autonomy. They choose self-autonomy, leading to corruption and judgment in the form of death and exclusion from the garden. Yet, God, amid his judgment offers a promise to provide redemption through the offspring of Eve.
 - iii. *Cain to the Flood*. Humanity has another opportunity to choose submission or self-autonomy. Cain kills Abel. Lamech spirals into darkness, and generation after generation (ch. 5) continues to spiral into corruption to conclude in Genesis 6:5 "every intention of the thoughts of [man's] heart was evil continually." God judges the world with a Flood and destroys everything save that which was spared in the Ark (which is a picture of Christ and the salvation we would experience in Christ). Additionally, God made a promise with Noah that he would never "strike down every living creature" as he had done (8:21).
 - iv. *Noah to Babel*. Humanity has another opportunity to choose submission or self-autonomy. Noah gets drunk and Canaan has an inappropriate interaction with his drunk father in the tent. Generation after generation (ch. 10) spirals into further corruption resulting in God's judgment at Babel. Yet, at this point, God once again makes a promise. He promises Abraham one of his offspring will bless the whole world (12:1-2).

II. God Creates the Ideal (1:1-2:3)

- a. Verse 1 stands as a title for the chapter.³
- b. Verse 2 both describes the earth prior to culmination of creation on day 1 and offers a brief breakdown of the 6 creation days.
 - i. The earth was "without form (*tohu*) and void (*bohu*)."⁴
 - 1. *Bohu* always occurs with *tohu*. While "without form" may refer to emptiness, it also may refer to chaos and confusion.⁴

³ There is debate over whether verse one should serve as a title for the chapter. The debate is probably worth delving into at some point, but for now, I saw no reason to look any further.

⁴ Ronald F. Youngblood, "2494 תהו," R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr, and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, New Edition (Chicago: Moody, 2003), 964. "תהו (*tōhū*) confusion. תהלה (*tohōlā*) error (Job 4:18). Confusion,

2. Routledge argues "Genesis 1 does point to God as the originator of all things, and also to creation as an ordering of chaos, with little attempt to resolve that tension."⁵
3. In contrast, Tsumura argues otherwise. He concludes "(hayétâ) *tohû wabohû* signifies the earth in a "bare" state, without vegetation and animals as well as without man. The author's intention in de-scribing the earth in its initial state as *tohû wabohû* was not to present the earth as "the terrible, eerie, deserted wilderness" but to introduce the earth as being "not yet" normal."⁶
 - ii. God's first three days of creation seem to indicate the presence of chaos more than simple emptiness. Apparently, darkness and light were not distinct and separate. The waters on and around the earth were not established in their place.
- c. God takes the first three days to bring order to the chaos (1:3-13).
 - i. God separates light from darkness (1:3-5).
 - ii. God separates the water above from the water below (1:6-8).
 - iii. God separates the sea from the land and produces vegetation⁷ (1:9-13).
- d. God takes the second three days to fill the now ordered earth (1:14-31).
 - iv. God fills the skies with the sun, moon, and stars (1:14-19).
 - v. God fills the sea and air with birds and fish (1:20-23).
 - vi. God fills the land with animals and mankind (1:24-31).

III. Note the pattern within each day.

- a. God speaks.
- b. And it is so . . . or . . . and there was light (1:3).

the empty place (Job 26:7; ASV "empty space"; RSV "the void"), nothing, nought, vain, vanity, waste, wilderness, without form."

Elmer A. Martens, "205 בָּהוּ," Harris, Jr, and Waltke, 92. "בָּהוּ (*bōhû*) *void, waste, emptiness*. Always occurring with *tōhû* "waste", *bōhû* describes the primordial condition of the earth, "void" at the beginning of creation (Gen 1:2), or "made empty" by God's judgment (Isa 34:11; Jer 4:23). It is probable that the descriptions in Isaiah of the desolations of Edom and those in Jeremiah of Israel borrow this phrase from the Genesis picture of a primordial chaos.

⁵ Robin Routledge, "Did God Create Chaos?: Unresolved Tension in Genesis 1:1-2," *Tyndale Bulletin* 61, no. 1 (2010): 69.

⁶ David Toshio Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 33. "In conclusion, the phrase *tohû wabohû* in Gen 1:2, which is traditionally translated into English "without form and void" (rsv) or the like, simply means "emptiness" and refers to the earth, which was a desolate and empty place, "an unproductive and uninhabited place" (Tsumura, 35)."

⁷ One author indicated that the Hebrews did not consider vegetation life. This would make follow in that God does not tell the vegetation to "be fruitful and multiply" as he does the birds and fish, animals and mankind.

- c. And God saw that it was good (except for day 2 potentially due to the fact that God wasn't done with his work involving the water).
- d. And there was evening and there was morning the first day.
 - i. The day *Yom* can mean something other than a 24-hour period.⁸
 - ii. Both the numbering of each day and the use of "evening and morning" strongly indicate that *yom* refers to a 24 hour period.

In this chapter, however, it must carry its normal meaning. Support for this view includes the following: (1) elsewhere, whenever *yôm* is used with a number, it means a twenty-four-hour period; (2) the Decalogue bases the teaching of the Sabbath day on the six days of creation and the seventh day of rest; (3) from the fourth day on, there are days, years, signs, and seasons, suggesting that the normal system is entirely operative; and (4) if *yôm* refers to an age, then the text would have to allow for a long period of "day" and then a long period of "night"—but few would argue for the night as an age. It seems inescapable that Genesis presents the creation in six days.⁹

Theological Implications

God remains the singular and sole sovereign Creator.

God is singular in that He is One, contrasted to the polytheistic view of the ANE. God is the sole Creator and as a result appropriately deserves and demands all creation to submit to his singular rule.

The psalmist models such an appropriate response to God's creative work in Psalm 104.

Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty . . . He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind . . . He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved . . . the waters stood above the mountains. At your rebuke they fled; at the sound of your thunder they took to flight. The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that you appointed for them. You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth . . . From your lofty abode you water the mountains . . . He made the moon to

⁸ Leonard J. Coppes, "852 יום," ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 370. "It can denote: 1. the period of light (as contrasted with the period of darkness), 2. the period of twenty-four hours, 3. a general vague "time," 4. a point of time, 5. a year (in the plural; I Sam 27:7; Ex 13:10, etc.)."

⁹ Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 109.

mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting. You make darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep about . . .

O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. Here is the sea, great and wide, which teems with creatures innumerable, living things both small and great. There go the ships, and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it. These all look to you, to give them their food in due season. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.

May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works, who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke!

[The Psalmist's response to the greatness of God.] I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD. Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more! Bless the LORD, O my soul! Praise the LORD! (Psalm 104).

God transforms chaos into that which is very good.

God takes that which is chaotic (without form), empty, and meaningless (void) and produces something which is "very good." We jump ahead of ourselves a bit, but as revealed in chapter 3 and continually throughout Scripture, man takes that which is good and corrupts it into something which is chaotic, empty, and meaningless.¹⁰

Scripture reveals both of those principles in the first three chapters and they remain true throughout the rest of Scripture. Gloriously, even though man tends towards chaos and corruption, in Christ, God takes corrupt and chaotic man and produces a new creation – old things are passed away and all things become new.

God determines every created thing's proper place.

"From the beginning God's people would thus learn that God makes divisions."¹¹ Due his sovereign control, God can determine what goes where. He determines appropriate structure and placement. He separated light and darkness. He separated the sky from the water below. He separated the water from the land.

¹⁰ Ross, 103. "This creation narrative traces how God transformed the chaos into the cosmos, turned darkness into light, and altered that which was unprofitable to that which was good, holy, and worth blessing."

Ross, 99. "It demonstrates convincingly and graphically the need for God's blessing in the world; for ever since humankind acquired the knowledge of good and evil, evil became the dominant force, bringing corruption and chaos into God's creation and incurring the divine curse. This prologue explains why God called Abraham and inaugurated a program of blessing through his covenant."

¹¹ Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 108.

“Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, when I...prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed’? (Job 38:8–11).

He determined and placed the ideal. He created animals for the water and created animals for the land and sky. He placed mankind as the stewards and gave man dominion over every living thing. He determined it was not good that man was alone and created woman.

Not only does God determine every created thing’s proper place but also determined the order of importance of every created thing. God crafted everything prior to man’s creation, so that all creation was set for man to be brought in and care, maintain, and administrate creation. Mankind is the climax of God’s creation. God created man in his own image, and God gave man dominion over the rest of creation.

God designed and created everything, and he has the right to determine everything’s proper placement, function, and order.

The means of God’s creation is His Word.

The Holy Spirit is the agent of transformation.

God’s Blueprint

While in school, I worked construction. The crew, of which I was part, roughed in all the walls of homes. This entire process was directed by a set of blueprints. We knew how long a wall was supposed to be based on the blueprints. We knew where the kitchen was supposed to go based on the blueprints . . . The blueprints were incredibly important so that we knew where everything was supposed to go. If we had any questions, we would go look at the blueprints.

God, in Genesis 1, offered mankind the blueprints. Of course, throughout Scripture, he expanded on them quite a bit in different areas, but the initial set of blueprints was drawn out for us in the first chapter of Genesis.

In fact, many, if not most, of the challenging questions of our modern culture could be easily answered if we were to simply pull out the blueprints and follow them.

How should we relate to God? God and man possess a healthy relationship in which God communes with man and man submits to God’s directives. When man chooses self-autonomy, God’s good design is distorted. When man chooses to submit to or worship anything other than God, this ideal is distorted.

How should we relate to one another? Within the ideal, man is not alone. People possess healthy relationships with others. God commanded Adam and Eve to procreate. In so doing, all following generations would be assured companionship. Isolationism distorts God’s good design. Replacing human relationships with nature or animals is a distortion of God’s good design. (The ideal is not so much that every man has a woman and every woman has a man but that no one is alone.)

Within the ideal, every single individual is created in the image of God, possesses immense inherent value, and deserves to be treated with respect and grace. Whenever we belittle an individual or group of individuals, we distort God's good design. Racism is wrong. Cultural bias and prejudice are wrong.

Within the ideal, man and woman are equal yet distinct, and this distinction is very good. Attempting to blur these distinctions or do away with these distinctions distorts God's good design. Demanding a gender spectrum and transgender ideology embraces self-autonomy and distorts God's good design. Many from the modern waves of feminism to evangelical egalitarians embrace self-autonomy and distort God's good design. Additionally, men, often hungry for power, treat women inferior which is a distortion of God's good design.

How should we relate to creation? Within the ideal, mankind rules over God's good creation. God gave man dominion over all creation. Mankind is not subservient to creation but instead is responsible to care for God's creation. Ignoring man's negative impact on Creation is a distortion of God's ideal. A refusal to acknowledge and/or address legitimate concerns about the care of the earth is a refusal to embrace God given responsibility to care for and rule over creation.

How should we understand marriage? Within the ideal, marriage is good and appropriately exists between one man and one woman. Any alternative to this ideal is a twisting and contortion of God's good design. Homosexual relationships and/or marriage are a distortion of God's good design.

How should we understand work and rest? (1) Within the ideal, humanity works amid creation. A refusal to be productive is a denial of God's good design. (2) Within the ideal, man experiences a seven-day week with one day of rest. (cf. Exodus 20:11). Refusing to work is a distortion of God's ideal. Refusing to rest is as well a distortion of God's ideal.

Questions for Wednesday Bible Study

1. What is the evidence for six 24-hour days? Do literal 24-hour days matter?

Search as I might, I could not find any reference to a day (Hebrew *yôm*) in Genesis 1 meaning any more than a literal 24-hour period. Some of the Rabbis did debate about Genesis 2:4, which says, "This is the account of the heavens and earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven." However, in this case, *yôm* is prefixed by the preposition *be*, so *beyôm*, and was just an idiom for "when". The days in Genesis 1 had no preposition, and had the phrase "evening and morning" and a number, which are always indicators of ordinary days everywhere else in the Old Testament. None of the rabbis tried to juggle this "day" (in Genesis 2:4) to suit pagan philosophy (the Greek philosophers held to a long-

ages understanding). Instead, most of them correctly took “day” here to mean “at the time when” creation took place.¹²

Irenaeus. For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded. And for this reason the Scripture says: “Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all their adornment. And God brought to a conclusion upon the sixth day the works that He had made; and God rested upon the seventh day from all His works.” This is an account of the things formerly created, as also it is a prophecy of what is to come. For the day of the Lord is as a thousand years;⁷ and in six days created things were completed: it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousand year. (*Heresies*, 5:28:3)¹³

Hippolytus. Since, then, in SIX days God made all things, it follows that 6,000 years must be fulfilled. (Commentary on Daniel 4) ¹⁴

Methodius. For when a thousand years are reckoned as one day in the sight of God, and from the creation of the world to His rest is six days, so also to our time, six days are defined, as those say who are clever arithmeticians. Therefore, they say that an age of six thousand years extends from Adam to our time. For they say that the judgment will come on the seventh day, that is in the seventh thousand years. (*Fragments, Extracts From the Work on Things Created*)¹⁵

Augustine. The notion was that the saints were destined to enjoy so protracted a sabbath of repose, a holy leisure, that is, after the labors of the six thousand years stretching from the creation of man, his great sin and merited expulsion from the happiness of paradise into the unhappiness of this mortal life. The interpretation

¹² Paul James, “Creation Days and Orthodox Jewish Tradition,” *Creation* 26, no. 2, (2004): 53-55. This article was not digital through the library but was published by Answer In Genesis. Accessed March 3, 2021.
<https://answersingenesis.org/days-of-creation/creation-days-and-orthodox-jewish-tradition/>

I did find this article somewhat problematic in that he regularly acknowledges that the Talmud and the Rabbis are wrong in many areas but fully embraces the one area in which he agrees. I suppose, James does accomplish the goal of revealing that Jewish tradition embraced literal creation days. However, what value does this provide if you think they are wrong on everything else?

Interesting sidenote: Jews consider the present year as 5781 and date this from what Maimonides, the 12th century Jewish philosopher, considered to be the biblical date of Creation.

¹³ Irenaeus of Lyons, “Irenæus against Heresies,” in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 557.

¹⁴ Hippolytus of Rome, “Fragments from Commentaries on Various Books of Scripture,” in *Fathers of the Third Century: Hippolytus, Cyprian, Novatian, Appendix*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, trans. S. D. F. Salmond, vol. 5, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1886), 179.

¹⁵ Methodius of Olympus, “Fragments,” in *Fathers of the Third Century: Gregory Thaumaturgus, Dionysius the Great, Julius Africanus, Anatolius and Minor Writers, Methodius, Arnobius*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, trans. William R. Clark, vol. 6, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1886), 381.

was worked out in the light of the Scripture text: 'One day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.' Thus, there was supposed to follow upon the six thousand years taken as six days a seventh day or sabbath taking up the last thousand, and to be given over to the resurrecting saints for celebration. (*City of God* 20:7)¹⁶

(1) Whenever *yom* is used with a number (410 times) it always means an ordinary day. (2) Whenever "evening and morning" are used together (38 times) without the use of *yom* they refer to an ordinary day. (3) Whenever "evening" or "morning" are used with *yom* (23 times each) they refer to an ordinary day. (4) Whenever "night" is used with *yom* (52 times) they refer to an ordinary day.

2. Does the plural of *Elohim* imply plurality in the godhead or "signify his majestic potentialities"?

The plural form of the word, a specialized use of the plural to signify his majestic potentialities, adds to the emphasis on his sovereign power.¹⁷

3. What is the significance of Moses using *Elohim*?
4. If it is not good that man is alone, how do we process singleness? Paul's statement that singleness is good?
5. Is there anything theologically significant in God separating the darkness and the light?
6. God established the ideal design in His creation. In which ways is man corrupting this ideal in our current culture?

¹⁶ Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God, Books XVII-XXII*, ed. Hermigild Dressler, trans. Gerald G. Walsh and Daniel J. Honan, vol. 24, *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1954), 265.

¹⁷ Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 105.

Message 3:

My Soul Rests in God (2:1-3)

March 14, 2021

Do we still keep the [Mosaic] law? Some of you may want to offer a caveat, drawn from your personal study, a message, or a Sunday School class. You conclude, “we do not keep all the law of Moses.” Through Moses, God divided the law into three parts: moral, civil, and ceremonial. You might respond, “we don’t keep the ceremonial or civil, but we keep the moral.” Most clearly seen, God synthesized the moral law in the ten commandments.

So then, do we keep the moral law? Do we keep the ten commandments? You may reply, “yes.” But do we actually still follow the fourth commandment which consists of “remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God” (Ex 20:8-10). From creation, the Sabbath was on Saturday. We don’t observe the Sabbath in the same way God did following creation and we don’t observe the Sabbath in any form similar to the Jews on Saturday.

“Okay, we still observe the Sabbath, but in the New Testament, the Sabbath rest was moved to Sunday.” But was it? And even if it was, do we observe it the way God intended for us.

What should our Sabbath rest look like today?

Purpose statement. On the seventh day of the creation week, God established the ideal of rest that would manifest in both physical rejuvenation and spiritual delight.

God establishes a Sabbath rest.

God ceased from His good and complete work.

God did not rest because he was exhausted and needed a nap. When Moses writes of how God “rested on the seventh day,” he does not imply God exhausted himself by working hard for six days. Rather, God’s work came to an end. God ceased working.¹

¹ Ross, 113–14. Walton, *Genesis*, 2001, 146. Victor P. Hamilton, “שָׁבַת 2323,” Harris, Jr, and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 902. | Ross. The word actually means “cease,” more than “rest” as understood today. It is not a word that refers to remedying exhaustion after a tiring week of work. Rather, it describes the enjoyment of accomplishment, the celebration of completion. | Walton. Lexicographers and commentators have reached a consensus that the Qal of the verb *šbt* means “to cease” rather than “to rest.” | TWOT. The basic thrust of the verb is, when transitive, “to sever, put an end to,” and when intransitive, “to desist, to come to an end...The translation “to cease, desist” can be illustrated in the following verses: “Day and night shall not cease” (Gen 8:22); “The seed of Israel shall cease from being a nation (Jer 31:36); “So these three men ceased to answer Job” (Job 32:1).

God completed his task and paused to fully appreciate his finished and perfect work.²

God blessed and consecrated the 7th day.

God blessed the 7th day. God typically blesses people. In this case, uniquely, God blesses a day. In doing so, God determined and declared the 7th day to be a blessing and to set aside for a noble purpose.

Piper. What does it mean for God to bless a day? I think it means that he makes the day a time of blessing. When God blesses a man, the man becomes rich with blessings. When he blesses a land, the land becomes rich with blessings. So when he blesses a day, that day becomes rich with blessings.³

The noble purpose? The sabbath blesses man by offering a day for man to (1) rest from his work, and (2) revel in the perfect and complete work of God.⁴

Israel displays sabbath rest (and sabbath breaking).

Manna: the precursor. God offered a precursor to Israel's sabbath observation in outlining how to gather manna (Ex 16:22-30). After outlining the method of collecting twice as much manna on the sixth day, Moses explains to the people the reason for the Lord's command, "Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord" (Ex 16:23). In so doing, Moses connects their day of rest to a day set aside for holy purposes – that being the worship of God.⁵

The Law: Sabbath rest codified. Four chapters later, in Exodus 20, while the people gather at the bottom of Mount Sinai, God delivers the Law to Moses. Part of this law – the fourth commandment – God codifies Israel's observance of the Sabbath. Moses writes "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates" (Ex 20:10).

² Walton, *Genesis*, 2001, 147. | the lexical information suggests that the seventh day is marked by God's ceasing the work of the previous six days and by his settling into the stability of the cosmos he created, perhaps experiencing refreshment as he did so. By blessing it, he extends his favor to it.

³ John Piper, "Remember the Sabbath Day to Keep it Holy," from *Sermons from John Piper (1980-1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007). Message was preached on October 6, 1985.

⁴ James G. Murphy, *Notes on the Old Testament: Genesis* (Boston: Estes and Lauriate, 1873), 70-71. | *Murphy.* he blessed the seventh day. Blessing results in the bestowment of some good on the object blessed. The only good that can be bestowed on a portion of time is to dedicate it to a noble use, a peculiar and pleasing enjoyment.

Piper, "Remember the Sabbath Day to Keep it Holy." | And what does it mean that he hallows the day? "Hallows" is the same word as "sanctifies." It means set the day aside for special focus on what is holy, namely, God and his holy works.

⁵ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:36. | "Exod 16:22-30 suggests that Israel first learned about the Sabbath in the wilderness, though Exod 20:8, like this passage, asserts that the Sabbath idea is as old as creation itself. In observing the seventh day as holy, man is imitating his creator's example."

Sabbath intended to provide rest and refreshment. Again, in Exodus, Moses further explains the purpose of the Sabbath rest. He writes, “Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest (*tisabbat*); that your ox and your donkey may have rest (*nahat*, rest), and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed (*napas*, take breath, refresh oneself)” (Ex 23:12).

Sabbath intended to allow for worship. Moses reveals this aspect of sabbath worship in a couple text. (1) In Exodus he declares “the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death” (Ex 31:15). (2) Also, in Deuteronomy, he informs Israel God commanded the Sabbath rest so that Israel “shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm” (Deut 5:15). In Genesis, God ceased from his work and celebrated this good and completed work. In Deuteronomy, Moses adds a good work which Israel should celebrate on the Sabbath – God’s deliverance of Israel from Egypt.⁶

Captivity: sabbath rest ignored. Israel suffered serious consequences for ignoring God’s sabbath rest.

Israel’s seventy years of Babylonian Captivity offer one such dramatic example. Jeremiah warned Judah that their whole land would “become a ruin and a waste” due their idolatry. Babylon, sovereignly directed by God, would come and take Judah captive for seventy years (Jer 25:11-12)⁷. Why seventy years? The author of 2 Chronicles answers that question. He writes, “to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years” (2 Chron 36:21). For 490 years, Judah had chosen to not observe the sabbath rest for the land. Judah should have allowed the land to rest every seventh year. They refused. As a result, God removed them from the land for 70 years, allowing the land to rest.⁸

These dramatic consequences likely offer a backdrop to the legalism surrounding the Sabbath during the life of Jesus. History offers evidence that the Jews learned to observe the Sabbath.

⁶ Victor P. Hamilton, “שַׁבָּת 2323,” Harris, Jr, and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 903. | TWOT. Exodus then connects the Sabbath with creation described in Genesis and Deuteronomy connects the Sabbath with deliverance from Egypt described in Exodus. Thus every Sabbath, Israel is to remember that God is an emancipator, a liberator. The early Christians were on target, it seems, when they connected the day of rest with the remembrance of Christ’s resurrection. He is the one who gives freedom.

⁷ This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the LORD, making the land an everlasting waste. (Jer 25:11-12).

⁸ Bryan C. Babcock, “Sabbath,” John D. Barry et al., *Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012). | The events described in Nehemiah likely occur in the fifth century bc after some Israelites have returned to Judah from exile in Babylon. Apparently, many people had abandoned the celebration of the Sabbath and many of God’s ordinances. The passages in Nehemiah stress the importance of the Sabbath celebration (9:14). Nehemiah 10:31 reiterates a prohibition against commerce on the Sabbath as well as the sabbatical rest for the land and the remission of debts every seven years. Nehemiah 13:15-22 specifies the prohibition against commerce includes: treading wine, loading, transporting, selling grain, grapes, or figs, buying goods from foreigners. These acts are said to “profane the Sabbath” and were part of the reason for God’s prior judgment upon Judah.

During the intertestamental period, foreign invaders chose to attack on the Sabbath, in part, because they knew the Jews would be “at rest and quietness” and would not be prepared to defend themselves on the Sabbath.

Josephus on Alexander's defeat of Jerusalem (323-283 BC). He also seized upon Jerusalem, and for that end made use of deceit and treachery; for as he came into the city on a Sabbath day, as if he would offer sacrifice, he, without any trouble, gained the city; while the Jews did not oppose him for they did not suspect him to be their enemy; and he gained it thus, because they were free from suspicion of him, and because on that day they were at rest and quietness; and when he had gained it, he reigned over it in a cruel manner.⁹

Maccabees on Apollonius capturing Jerusalem (168 BC). Who coming to Jerusalem, and pretending peace, did forbear till the holy day of the sabbath, when taking the Jews keeping holy day, he commanded his men to arm themselves. And so he slew all them that were gone to the celebrating of the sabbath, and running through the city with weapons slew great multitudes (2 Mac 5:25–26).¹⁰

Jesus expands significance of sabbath rest.

Jesus' interaction throughout the gospels, indicates a few things. (1) Jesus observed the Sabbath. The gospel authors indicate Jesus' normal custom of going to the synagogue on the Sabbath (Mark 1:21, 6:2; Lk 4:16, 31, 13:10). Jesus followed the patterns and customs outlined in the OT regarding the Sabbath. (2) The Jews had imposed expectations on the Sabbath beyond what God intended. On several occasions, Jesus purposefully acted in a way that drew the ire of the religious leaders over his observance of the Sabbath: plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath (Matt 12:1-8; Mk 2:23-28; Lk 6:1-5), the healing of the man with a withered hand (Matt 12:9-14; Mk 3:1-6; Lk 6:6-11), a woman with a disabling spirit for 18 years (Lk 13:10-17), Jesus confronting the Pharisees about whether it's acceptable to heal on the Sabbath (Lk 14:1-6), and the case of a man born blind (John 9). (3) Jesus does not do away with the Sabbath, rather he more fully fulfills the Sabbath. In Mark, Jesus indicates the value of the Sabbath for mankind. Jesus says, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27).¹¹

In connecting the Sabbath to Genesis, Jesus extends its value beyond just Israel to all mankind.

⁹ Titus Flavius Josephus, *The Works of Josephus: Complete & Unabridged*, trans. William Whiston (Peabody, MS: Hendrickson, 1987), 308.

¹⁰ *The Apocrypha: King James Version* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1995), 2 Mac 5:25–26.

¹¹ Moisés Silva, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis, Volumes 1-5* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 225–26. | The material discussed so far leads us to conclude that, though Jesus broke through the rabbi[nical] traditions about the Sabbath, he was not seeking to annul the observance of the day. In the pericope treated above under (a), moreover, we find a positive statement by Jesus regarding the Sabbath. According to Mark 2:27, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” Here its institution is stated to have been for the good of humanity, and it would seem that there is at least an indirect ref. to the account in Gen 2:1–2

At this point, other than possessing an awareness of Jesus resurrection on the first day of the week, we would have no biblical rationale for changing the “sabbath rest” to a Sunday instead of a Saturday. God rested on the seventh day. God commanded Israel to rest on the seventh day. Jesus and his disciples observed sabbath on the seventh day. Based on this evidence, we should be observing the sabbath on the seventh day.

But we do not. We observe the sabbath on the first day. Why?

The church observes sabbath rest differently.

To better understand the shift in sabbath rest, let us consider a few passages through the rest of the New Testament. Before addressing these verses, let’s acknowledge that throughout the NT, we find no command to change the sabbath to Sunday. However, a few verses appear to indicate that the early church made this transition.

[Luke informs the reader of Acts that Paul customarily went to the synagogue on the Sabbath and preached (Acts 13:5, 42, 44, 16:13, 17:2, 18:4). In these passages, Luke references Saturday as the Sabbath, yet Paul’s ministry appears to primarily be spent in preaching in the synagogue.]

Paul practices and instructs the early church to worship on Sunday.

On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight. (Acts 20:7).

On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. (1 Corinthians 16:2).

Paul seems to indicate a lessened importance for the seventh day (Sabbath?) in his letter to the Colossians (2:16)¹². Paul tells the believers to not pass judgment on one another in how each other observes a Sabbath. Again, in Galatians, Paul confronts those influenced by the Judaizers. Some were strictly observing “special days and months and seasons and years” (Gal 4:10). He cautions them from being enslaved to the Mosaic law.

Silva. Much controversy surrounds the question of the proper Christian view of the fourth commandment. On the one hand, it is clear that if the Sabbath is treated only as an element in the Mosaic economy or as a Jewish ritual, those who place their faith in Christ have been freed from it. And certainly the NT writers show no interest whatever in detailed or ceremonial regulations concerning its observance. On the other hand, Christians acknowledge that they are not free to disobey the other commandments of the Decalogue (“You shall have no other gods before me”; “You shall not commit adultery”; etc.). Moreover, the rationale that the Decalogue itself gives for the fourth commandment, far from being ceremonial in nature, involves

¹² “Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ” (Col 2:16–17).

the great theological themes of creation (in Exod 20) and redemption (in Deut 5)... the eschat. significance of Christ's resurrection is reflected in the change from the seventh to the first day of the week. At the same time, it preserves continuity with the celebration of a day that calls to mind God's creative and redeeming work.¹³

If it is true that God intended for the church to practice the sabbath rest differently, what event could have resulted in such a change? Let us go back to the initial institution of this day of rest. God had created all things. His work was perfect and complete. He then ceased from his work and took a moment to celebrate the glory of his complete work.

Similarly, when Jesus accomplished his redemptive work on the cross and then rose from the dead, the day of his resurrection became a significant moment of celebrating the completed and perfect work of God. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus – his perfect and completed work – becomes the impetus which drives the early church – and consequently the following 2,000 years – of church worship being on Sunday, the first day of the week.

Conclusion

Let me outline the few overriding principles drawn from this brief study. (1) God gifted man the sabbath in order that man (and animal) may rest and be physically refreshed. (2) God always intended for the sabbath to be an opportunity to pause in order to marvel and celebrate the amazing, perfect, and completed work of God. (3) God intended for the sabbath to be a delight not a duty.

Some cautions. (1) Our inability to rest displays a lack of trust in God. (2) If you observe the sabbath rest as a duty, you have completely misunderstood its intended purpose. If you consider the worship part of Sunday as an inconvenience, keeping you from the pleasures of this world, you need to pause for a while and consider your imbalance. (3) If God is not part of your sabbath rest, you have completely missed the purpose. The sabbath is intended to provide physical refreshment for man but also includes worship of God. If all you is rest you are missing one of the two primary components to the sabbath.

¹³ Silva, *NIDNTTE*, 227.

Questions for Wednesday Bible Study

1. Did Jesus do away with the Sabbath?
2. What about people who must work on the sabbath (police, nurses, etc.)?
3. Should our observance of Sunday and our Sunday worship in anyway reflect Israel's observance of the Sabbath (ie. don't go too far, don't cause anyone else to work, don't do any physical labor, conduct formal worship, etc.)
4. Should NT believers hold to the 10 commandments? If not the fourth (Sabbath) why that one only?
5. Is it possible that the height of God's creation is actually the day or rest on which all are supposed to pause and marvel in God – instead of seeing man as the height of creation?
TWOT. Only the Sabbath, however, he sanctified, indicating perhaps that the climax of creation was not the creation of man, as is often stated, but the day of rest, the seventh day. The Sabbath is thus an invitation to rejoice in God's creation, and recognize God's sovereignty over our time.¹⁴
6. God originally designed the Sabbath rest to be on the 7th day. What biblical rationale can you offer for our changing that observance?
7. How does Hebrews 3-4 play into this discussion?

Hamilton quotes Westermann, "The sanctification of the Sabbath institutes an order for humankind according to which time is divided into time and holy time.... By sanctifying the seventh day God instituted a polarity between the everyday and the solemn, between days of work and days of rest, which was to be determinative for human existence."¹⁵

¹⁴ Victor P. Hamilton, "שבת 2323," Harris, Jr, and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 903.

¹⁵ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, 143.

Five Views of the Sabbath

[This information was taken, in 2011, from an online article by John Reisinger, an article that I can no longer find. Likely this information is in Reisinger's book, "The Believer's Sabbath." At the time of this lesson, the book was inaccessible, but a hard copy could be purchased from Amazon.]

Consistent Sabbatarian. A Consistent Sabbatarian accepts the Bible as the Word of God. He believes it, "Says what it means, and means what it says." He is wholeheartedly committed to the belief that once God gives a law, that law is forever in force until later revelation specifically rescinds that law. The Ten Commandments are the unchanging moral law of God and one of those laws clearly command the observance of the seventh day as Gods ordained day of worship (Exodus 20:8-11). Nowhere does the Word of God suggest that God means one in seven instead of seventh, nor did either Jesus or any of His apostles ever either rescind the fourth commandment or specifically command that the Sabbath be changed from the seventh day of the week to the first. I label these people consistent Sabbatharians because they sincerely try to consistently follow the Fourth Commandment exactly as God wrote it on the tables of stone. In my mind, there is no question at all that these people are dead right if the Sabbath commandment is part of the unchanging moral law of God. They have the actual commandment itself on their side.

Skip MacCarty in his discussion on Hebrews 3-4. First, Gane rightly points out: "If God instituted the Sabbath for human beings before the Fall (Gen 2:2-3), the function/applicability of the Sabbath cannot be dependent upon its belonging to the system of temporary types which God set up after the Fall in order to lead human beings back to belief in him ... if the OT Sabbath were a mere historical type of the divine, antitypical "rest" experience—an assured present salvation and heavenly hope—offered to NT believers in Hebrews 4, then that "rest" experience should not have been available to the OT believers who had the seventh-day Sabbath type, because "the type and the antitype do not function at the same time." ¹⁶

Inconsistent Sabbatarian. An Inconsistent Sabbatarian totally agrees with the consistent sabbatarian up to the point of seventh versus one in seven part. At this point he changes the "unchanging" moral law in two ways. He first changes the day from the seventh to first, and then also changes the God given reason(s) for remembering the day. We now keep the Christian Sabbath (a term and concept totally unknown in Scriptures) holy to remember the resurrection of Christ. The view has no clear and compelling New Testament evidence for either of these changes. However, to his credit, the inconsistent sabbatarian does honestly try to be consistent with the specific rules that God gave to Israel concerning Sabbath behavior. The Puritans nearly all held this view.

Antinomian Sabbatarian. An Antinomian Sabbatarian is a creature of recent origin. Like the inconsistent sabbatarian, he agrees that the Fourth Commandment is part of Gods unchanging law, and also agrees in changing it in the same two ways. However, at this point he parts company with his revered Puritan forefathers. This new breed will not allow any specific rules of conduct to

¹⁶ Charles P. Arand et al., *Perspectives on the Sabbath: Four Views*, ed. Christopher John Donato (B & H Academic, 2011), Kindle location 650.

be made for Sabbath behavior. In fact, he will not even lay down specific principles that enable one to evaluate and establish for certain whether any specific thing is permitted or disallowed. He will preach a powerful sermon, often the fifth in a series of nine or more, and adamantly insist that keeping the Sabbath holy is the moral duty demanded in this unchanging moral commandment of God. If, in true godly concern, you ask this leader whether you are sinning if you take your wife out to dinner that (Sabbath) day, this solemn bishop of your soul will say, We do not make rules. That is entirely up to your Christian liberty. There are no rules because, We do not want to become legalists. Now that is nothing less than a conscious form of anti-nomianism. That is fervently preaching that keeping the Sabbath is a moral absolute, while insisting at the same time that how you actually keep it is entirely up to your Christian liberty. That is treating a moral absolute as if it were a flexible principle. That is leaving the subjective judgment of individuals decide how they are to personally obey an absolute unchanging moral commandment. That is anti-nomianism!

Utilitarian Sabbath. The Utilitarian Sabbath view was held by both Calvin and Luther as well as nearly all of the early Reformation churches. This view holds the following: (1) The Sabbath, as a holy day, was totally done away in Christ. There are no longer any holy days any more than there are holy vestments, holy sacrifices, holy places, or holy nations. (2) one in seven days of worship is a good thing, especially since it is essential that the church have specific and consistent times set apart for worship and teaching. We should do everything possible to protect Sunday, not as a "holy" day but for the pragmatic reasons just mentioned. (3) The Lord's day (Sunday) is in no way connected to the fourth commandment and cannot be either established or defended as moral law with Scripture.

Promise/Fulfillment Lord's Day. The Promise/Fulfillment view is in basic agreement with Calvin and Luther in the Utilitarian view. The major differences are as follows:

(1) There is a greater emphasis on the fact that the Sabbath was the Covenant sign (Exodus 31:12-17) written on the Tables of the Covenant, the Ten Commandments (Deut 9:9), that established Israel's nationhood. Since the Old Covenant was done away in Christ, the sign ended when the covenant ended (when the veil was rent from top to bottom) and the New Covenant established in the blood of Christ was ratified. The rending of the veil of the temple ended the holy place, the holy priests and their holy vestments, the holy sacrifices and altars, and both the holy covenant and the holy box that housed it. Of necessity, the sign of that covenant, the holy Sabbath, along with every other holy thing associated with it, ended that day when the Promise was perfectly Fulfilled. Just as everyone of those things pointed to Christ, and were each perfectly fulfilled in Him, so the holy Sabbath day of rest pointed to Him and His work and it was forever fulfilled in Him. Christ is our Sabbath!

(2) This view also insists on a constant and clear application of the 'grace principle.' The 'grace principle' sees the New Covenant as literally fulfilling and replacing the Old Covenant. However, this view, also known as New Covenant Theology, sees an integral relationship between the specific promises in the old as they are spiritually fulfilled in the new. This means that grace will not only always require more and higher obedience than the law could ever demand, it also means that grace will enable the child of the New Covenant to actually accomplish the very things that they were unable to under the law.

The heart of New Covenant theology is summed up this way; 'What the law could not do, God did in sending His Son and then His Holy Spirit.' The Promise/Fulfillment advocate never says, 'Grace delivers the believer from the duty of obeying the law of God.' To the contrary, we strongly insist that, 'Grace can never lead us to do less than the law demanded, but grace always 'teaches us' (Titus 2:11-14) to look to a much higher standard of duty than that given to Moses. Grace, that is true New Covenant grace, must push us far beyond the law of Moses. If Christ is the true fulfillment of the Sabbath, then grace tells us that instead of one day belonging to our Lord, every day belongs to him in its totality.

Message 4:

Dust and Glory (2:4-25)

March 21, 2021

Introduction

In compiling Genesis, Moses organizes a compilation of newspaper articles rather than a comprehensive biography. In preparation for this sermon, I recalled a scrapbook I have filled with news articles and pictures from various moments of high school. Hardly do these brief articles offer much as to my life, personality, character, or much of anything. They fall far short of the many biographies we may read of various notable characters (whether Metaxas' 608-page biography about Dietrich Bonhoeffer or Lewis Drummond's 896-page biography on Spurgeon).

We expect too much of Genesis if we perceive of it to be an exhaustive biography – or even if we perceive of it as a compilation of biographies. Truly, Genesis includes some biographical sketches. For instance, chapter 12-50 outline parts of four men's lives: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. The longest biographical sketch consists of fourteen chapters surrounding Joseph, and yet I would argue these chapters are not primarily about these men at all. Each of these biographical sketches outline very little of any of these men's lives. Their value consists almost entirely of God working his redemptive plan through these men.

May I propose, these sketches offer something like lengthy newspaper articles. Each of these stories highlights a significant moment in God's overall redemptive plan. In perusing a scrapbook filled with various newspaper articles, most people would be able to deduce the primary figure in the scrapbook. Other characters are likely present, but one overarching character will be present throughout.

So then, if you accept my proposition that Genesis is like a scrapbook (of sorts), let me propose this question. Who is the scrapbook about? Who is the center of attention? More specifically to Genesis 2, who would the newspaper headline feature? Might it read "Adam Oversees Naming All Indigenous Animals"? Is Adam the center of attention? Or might it read "Elohim Creates Man" or "Elohim Brings Life from Dust"? Is God the center of attention?

Of course, Israel plays an important role. Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph all play important roles. They however are not the primary characters. God is the primary character. God uses all these people to unfold his story.

Purpose statement. God abundantly provides for and directs dependent man.

Before jumping into Genesis 2, let me offer a few challenges:

1. Seeming conflicts with order of chapter 1. Vegetation created on day 3 in chapter 1, yet in chapter 2, “no bush or small plant of the field had yet sprung up” (vs. 5) and God made to spring up every tree” (vs. 9) following the creation of man.

I will only acknowledge this seeming conflict and offer little explanation other than to say that (1) the purposes of chapter one and two are different and (2) while chronology seems to matter in chapter one it may not matter in chapter two and (3) the emptiness described in verse 5 may correlate to the chaos within the first three days of creation in chapter 1, and (4) God may have created vegetation on day 3 and further developed vegetation for mankind on day 6.

2. While I thoroughly love the change of God’s name from chapter one to chapter two, it should be acknowledged that there is a change from *Elohim* to *YHWH Elohim*. I think this points to God’s relating to man in chapter two in contrast to his general role of the Creator of all things in chapter one.

God abundantly provides amid man’s dependence.

- I. God provides by breathing glorious life into dusty man.
 - A. The humility of dirt.
 - B. The glory of God’s life-giving breath.
- II. God provides by creating, organizing, and situating everything. Man just names stuff.
 - A. God is active. Man is rather passive.
 - B. God produces trees that offer food.
 - C. God provides water for the garden and the whole world.
 - D. God brings everything to man to be named.
- III. God independently exists while man displays dependence.
 - A. Man needs God to provide all the raw supplies for man to accomplish anything.
 - B. Man, alone, is not complete. He needs woman. God provides this need.
 - C. Independent God graciously engages dependent man.
 - i. He walks with him the garden.
 - ii. Moses uses *YHWH Elohim* in this chapter instead of simply *Elohim*.

I have this image of Adam just sitting alone in the garden – wondering what is going on, what he’s supposed to do – completely incapable of accomplishing anything – until God enters the scene. I realize this is a little silly because God created the scene and was present in creating man prior to Adam being on the scene. However, without God, Adam would be lost and alone.

God offers direction for man's obedience.

- I. This is what I want you to do: work and keep.
 - A. Oversee your environment.
 - B. Adam worked prior to the Fall. Work has always been a positive assignment, not inherently part of the curse.
 - C. Work became a burden after the Fall in that we now must work to provide for ourselves.
- II. This is what I do not want you to do: you shall not eat.
 - A. God gave Adam boundaries – extremely gracious boundaries – “you may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but one”
 - B. The tree was an opportunity for Adam to offer loyal devotion and worship to God. God was not attempting to entrap Adam and Eve.

Mathews. The prohibition against eating the fruit of the “tree of knowledge” gave Adam opportunity to worship God through loyal devotion. Luther likened the tree to “Adam’s church, altar, and pulpit. Here he was to yield to God the obedience he owed, give recognition to the Word and will of God, give thanks to God, and call upon God for aid against temptation.”¹
 - C. God offered immense provision in every other tree. He simply chose one tree for Adam to avoid to show his submission to God.
- III. God offers significant incentive to obey. Death comes on disobedience.

Conclusion

This chapter situates everything in its proper place.

- *YHWH Elohim* is superior in his role as God and creator.
- Mankind is a special part of creation, superior to the animals, equal to each other, yet far inferior to God. (The end of this chapter reveals the equality between men and women.)
- Animals are inferior to humanity but are to be cared for by humanity.

Crispin Sartwell recently wrote a New York Times opinion piece entitled, “Humans are Animals. Let’s Get Over It.” In his article he responds to the tendencies flowing from Western thought that humans are better and/or superior to animals. He proclaims the following:

I’d like to publicly identify this dualistic view [from Western thought] as a disaster, but I don’t know how to refute it...And I’d like to repudiate every political and

¹ Mathews, *Genesis 1-11*, 1a:210–11.

environmental conclusion ever drawn by our supposed transcendence...There is no doubt that human beings are distinct from other animals...But maybe we've been too focused on the differences for too long. Maybe we should emphasize what all us animals have in common.²

You may find this logic off putting and likely assume that this sort of thinking leads to odd if not inappropriate interaction between animals and humanity such as the animal psychics in Littleton, CO who have been "revealing animals' inner thoughts" to their owners. Did you know "The miniature steer is miffed that the male pig has a female companion and he doesn't. The alpacas divulge that cliques are forming among the volunteer ranch hands. The hens complain that the rooster is abusive."³

You likely shake your head and wish we could go back to our Western thought. However, you would be wrong. True, Western thought made clear distinctions between humanity and animals, but they did so for the wrong reasons. And these wrong reasons have led to some serious abuses.

To help you follow my train of thought, let me ask a question. Why are we superior to animals? Are we superior due to our inherent morality and heightened intellect? In an oversimplified way, this is the argument of Western thought. We are superior to animals because, unlike them, we make decisions not based on our base appetites but instead on our heightened intellect. Immanuel Kant, the 19th century German philosopher and enlightenment thinker, argues this point in his book "Critique of Practical Reason." He believed moral law "infinitely elevates my worth as an *intelligence*" and "reveals to me a life independent on animality."⁴

Kant inevitably was impacted by Aristotle's teaching on this topic. Living in the 4th century BC, Aristotle, similarly taught how the intellect ruled over (or should rule over) the emotional and base nature. Following this logic, Aristotle concluded "tame animals are superior in their nature to wild animals" but agrees that animals should be ruled by man. In fact, "it is advantageous to be ruled by man." However, according to Aristotle's logic, this same principle should be applied within humanity. Aristotle writes, "between the sexes, the male is by nature superior and the female inferior, the male ruler and the female subject." But Aristotle doesn't stop there. He concludes even further "in the case of mankind as a whole; therefore all men that differ as widely as the soul does from the body ... these are by nature slaves, for whom to be governed by this kind of authority is advantageous...slavery is an institution both expedient and just (Aristotle, *Politics*, Bk 1, Ch. 5).⁵

² Crispin Sartwell, "Humans are Animals. Let's Get Over It," *New York Times*, February 23, 2021, Accessed March 20, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/23/opinion/humans-animals-philosophy.html>.

³ Michael M. Phillips, "What do Dogs Really Think? Pet Psychics Are Standing By," *Wall Street Journal*, March 8, 2021. Accessed March 20, 2021. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/what-do-dogs-really-think-pet-psychics-are-standing-by-11615222623>

⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Kant's Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics*, trans. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, Fifth Edition, Revised (London; New York; Bombay: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1898), 260.

⁵ Aristotle, *Aristotle in 23 Volumes, Translated by H. Rackham.*, vol. 21 (Medford, MA: Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1944).

This Western thought has been the logic that justified and fueled colonization. After all, if other cultural groups are not as moral or intelligent (according to our standards) it is only expedient and advantageous for us to come in and rule over them.

It is this western thought that allowed Americans to justify chattel slavery. And it is this western thought that allows men to justify their heavy handedness over women. After all, women make decisions based on their feelings and emotions, whereas men base their decisions on the intellect. Therefore it is expedient and advantageous for men to rule over women. 😊

Let me offer an alternative. Man is not better than animals because humanity display a moral compass or possesses a heightened intellect. Rather, God created man in his image, and as a result, man displays morality and heightened intellect. God established humanity as superior to animals and part of this superiority included a moral compass and heightened intellect.

The ramifications for mixing up this order are immense. If we begin with the presence of morality (or heightened culture) being the indicator for superiority, various cultures will justify superiority over others manifest in such things as slavery, racism, and misogyny. However, if we begin with every person is inherently and extremely valuable because they were created in the image of God, no person inherently claims superiority over another. Additionally, the lack of morality is not evidence of not having been created in God's image but instead a rejection or twisting of God's truth.

Resources for Bible Study

Geisler, Norman L. "Adam, Historicity Of." *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Baker Reference Library. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999.

Rosenzweig, Michael L. 1986. "A Helper Equal to Him." *Judaism* 35 (3): 277-80.

Ross, Allen P. (Chapter 5 of) *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998.

Questions for Bible Study

1. How might we explain the seeming discrepancies in the created order from chapter 1 to chapter 2? According to chapter one, God created vegetation on the third day, and yet in chapter two, "no bush of the field was yet in the land."

The first creation account (1:1-2:3), beginning with the first day and extending to day seven, follows a pattern or formula. The second account (2:4-25), basically begins with the creation of man, serves as a preface to man's fall.

There are differences between the two creation accounts. (1) The first account simply states that God created man and woman without explaining any reason, whereas the second account explains that God determined that it was not good for man to be alone. (2) The first account goes through all seven days whereas the second account only offers further insight into day six and avoids all other days. (3) The ordering appears to be a little different in the

two accounts. In the first account, trees are created on day three. In Genesis 2, it appears that vegetation is created after Adam.

Hamilton. We suggest that the reference to shrub and plant in 2:5 is anticipatory and is explained further by 3:18, where God says to Adam: “thorns and thistles [the *śîah?*] it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants [*ēśēb*] of the field.” The “plants” referred to in Gen. 1 must be those that grow wild, those that reproduce themselves by seed alone. The *plants* referred to in Gen. 2 must be those that grow only as a result of human cultivation through planting and artificial irrigation. Neither of these kinds of growth appears in the fields until after the creation of man and after man’s transgression.⁶

Cole. Some critics have said that the order of verses 5–8 contradicts the order of creation presented in chapter 1. Here man is seemingly created after the plants. But chapter 2 is not a chronological order, but a logical one. The plants referred to are not all the plants, but rather cultivated plants (“shrub of the field,” “plant of the field”). The text is only saying that plants which are cultivated by man for food were not yet planted by God in the garden, because man was not yet there to tend them. Apparently, God even had installed an automatic sprinkler system!⁷

2. What might explain the change from “God” (*Elohim*) in chapter one to “the LORD God” (*YHWH Elohim*) in chapter two? Does it matter?

Cole. *Yahweh Elohim* (“LORD God”)...is used 20 times in Genesis 2 & 3, but only one other time in the entire Pentateuch (Exod. 9:30) and less than 10 times in the other books of the Old Testament⁸

Wenham. “The LORD God” יהוה אלהים: This particular divine title occurs only once in the Pentateuch outside Gen 2–3, in Exod 9:30. Within these two chapters it is used consistently, apart from 3:1–5 in the dialogue between the snake and the woman. There (3:1–5) in conversation they simply use the ordinary word for divinity אלהים “God,” not his personal name יהוה “Yahweh” that was unique to Israel. Genesis in other passages uses either אלהים or יהוה, singly, not combined as here... On the basis of an examination of the twenty examples of the use of “Yahweh Elohim” in Gen 2–3 and its sixteen occurrences elsewhere in the OT, L’Hour argues that the Yahwistic author has deliberately used this form to express his conviction that Yahweh is both Israel’s covenant partner and the God (*Elohim*) of all creation.⁹

⁶ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, 154.

⁷ Cole, *Genesis*, Ge 2:4-17.

⁸ Cole, Ge 2:4–17.

⁹ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:56–57.

3. Why did God put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden? Why allow for the potential of man's disobedience? It kind of seems like a trap.
4. How is the image of God displayed in man? How is this significant?

Message 5:

Marriage Blueprints (2:18-25)

April 18, 2021

Introduction

Within the eight verses of Genesis 2:18-25, Moses offers a concise and extremely accessible narrative about the creation of Eve and her connectedness to Adam. It is simple. Not hard to understand. And yet, within these same eight verses, God lays a groundwork and the ideal and in so doing addresses many current cultural challenges. Let me offer an overly simplified summary of Genesis 2:18-25. (1) Adam was alone. (2) God made Eve. (3) Adam was not alone.

Yet, the theological implications inherent in the terms God directed Moses to write, lay the ground work for such topics as homosexuality, monogamy, transgender issues, divorce, definition of marriage, singleness, gender equality, complementary roles within a marriage relationship, and likely a host of others I had not thought of.

Before jumping into Genesis 2:18-25, let's quickly consider the overall flow of the broader context and Genesis at large.

Simplified Outline of Genesis

- A. Human history from Adam to Abraham:
The human race (chap. 1–11).
 - 1. Creation (1–2)
 - 2. Fall (3–5)
 - 2. Flood (6–9).
 - 3. Babel (10–11).
- B. Human history from Abraham to Joseph:
The chosen race (12–50).
 - 1. Abraham (12–24)
 - 2. Isaac (25–26)
 - 2. Jacob (27–36)
 - 3. Joseph (37–50)

- 3. Judgment: Death and Ejection (3:9–24)
- 4. Promise: Messiah through Eve (3:15)
- 2. Act 2: Cain to the Flood
 - 1. Choice: Cain, Lamech . . . (4:1–5:32)
 - 2. Corruption: Up to Noah's Day (6:1–8)
 - 3. Judgment: World Destroyed (6:9–8:22)
 - 4. Promise: Never Flood World (8:21–22)
- 3. Act 3: Noah to Babel
 - 1. Choice: Noah, Canaan . . . (9:1–10:32)
 - 2. Corruption: Up to Babel (11:1–6)
 - 3. Judgment: World Dispersed (11:7–9)
 - 4. Promise: World Blessed Through Abraham (12:1–2)

Creation and Corruption in Three Acts

- 1. Act 1: Adam to the Fall
 - 1. Ideal Creation/Choice: Adam and Eve (1:1–2:25)
 - 2. Corruption: Adam and Eve (3:1–8)

Simple outline of Genesis 2:18-25. (1) The Problem (2:18): "It is not good that man should be alone." (2) The Reason (2:18-20): "Not found a helper fit for him." (3) The Temporary Solution (2:21-22): "So the LORD God made a woman and brought her to the man." (4) The Permanent Solution (2:24-25): "A man shall leave...and hold fast to his wife...become one flesh."

Purpose statement. God created Eve as a suitable companion for Adam so he would not be alone and so they could accomplish God's purpose for mankind.

The Problem

What is the problem? Adam is alone. God knows he cannot appropriately fill the role of Adam's suitable partner or corresponding companion. God knows the animals cannot appropriately or sufficiently fulfill that role. Adam remains unaware of his defect/need until God brings the animals before him. As Adam names the animals he becomes aware of the fact that each of them have a suitable partner and the narrator concludes, "But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him" (Gen 2:20).

The Reason

Why is this a problem? Adam needs a suitable partner or a "helper fit for him."¹

Defining ezer (helper). This term is not complicated. The term simply means "helper." However, the challenge comes in the cultural baggage of our understanding of "helper." We tend to consider a helper as lower and inferior.

God is our helper. Let me first correct that thinking by pointing your attention to a few passages in which biblical authors use the term. The psalmist writes, "I am poor and needy; hasten to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer" (Ps 70:5). Another psalmist writes, "I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth" (Ps 121:1-2).

Of the sixteen times biblical authors use *ezer*, 11 of them refer to God.² One lexicon defines the term as "a person who contributes to the fulfillment of a need or furtherance of an effort or

¹ English Translations: (ESV, RSV) a helper fit for him, (KJV 1900, Geneva) an help meet for him, (NASB95, NIV) a helper suitable for him, (GNB, CJB) a suitable companion to help him, (NET) a companion for him who corresponds to him, (NLT) a helper who is just right for him, (D-R) a help like unto himself, (HCSB) I will make a helper as his complement

² Two are used in Genesis 2:18, 20. Three times, the word refers to help of man in some fashion (Isa 30:5; Dan 11:34; Eze 12:14). The remaining occurrences refer to God (Ex 18:4; Dt 33:7; Ps 20:2, 70:5, 89:19, 121:1-2, 124:8, 146:5). There are additional forms of the term as well – such as *ebenezer* – for example 1 Samuel 7:12, "Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, 'Till now the LORD has helped us.'"

Michael L Rosenzweig, "A Helper Equal to Him," *Judaism* 35, no. 3 (1986): 280. "He [L.J. Swidler] points out that God Himself is referred to as an *ezer* in Psalms...and in the Torah itself....To be an *ezer* is to have a Godlike quality. Luckily for us men, since we are equal to women, it follows that we have the same divine trait."

purpose.”³ Another author simply titles *helper* as “indispensable companion.”⁴ Hardly a negative or lowly term. In fact, in this context, man is incapable of fulfilling God’s purpose for his life by himself; therefore, God creates a woman to help accomplish that which the man could not do alone. Before taking this further than the context would intend, the reverse is as well true. Man provides for woman something she would lack on her own. Woman, additionally, could not accomplish God’s will for mankind by herself.⁵

Defining neged, “fit.” Many lexicographers translate *neged* as “opposite” or “in front of” or “in the presence of.”⁶ With “opposite,” they appear to mean something like “she sat down opposite him.” In other words, she was in front of him or in front of his face to some degree. George Landes and Robert Thomas similarly define *neged*, “that which is opposite, corresponds to; in front of, before; opposite to.”⁷ These two authors include the idea of “that which corresponds.” In other words, as Brian Peterson writes, “God seems to be declaring that the man needs a helper that, when standing “in front of him”, is his opposite.”⁸

Inherent meaning of neged connotes equality. The Jewish people, by means of their Mishnah, indicate that *neged* minimally connotes equality if not superiority. In one section of the Mishnah, the author acknowledges several means by which a person enjoys the world (honoring father and mother, righteous deeds, acts of peace). In his translation, Neusner finishes this section with “But the study of Torah is (*neged*) as important as all of them together” (*Mishnah. Peah 1:1*).⁹

Therefore ‘ezer neged’ means: Adam did not have a corresponding companion or a suitable partner. Adam was not accompanied by an equal, reciprocating, partner that could correspond to him physically, socially, and spiritually.¹⁰

³ Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017).

⁴ Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 2:18. “Usage of the Hebrew term does not suggest a subordinate role, a connotation which English “helper” can have. In the Bible God is frequently described as the “helper,” the one who does for us what we cannot do for ourselves, the one who meets our needs. In this context the word seems to express the idea of an “indispensable companion.” The woman would supply what the man was lacking in the design of creation and logically it would follow that the man would supply what she was lacking.”

⁵ Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 126. “The word essentially describes one who provides what is lacking in the man, who can do what the man alone cannot do... human beings cannot fulfill their destiny except in mutual assistance... What he lacked (“not good”) she supplied; and it would be safe to say that what she lacked, he supplied, for life in common requires mutual help.”

⁶ F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977); James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997); William Lee Holladay and Ludwig Kohler, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: E.J. Brill and Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2000); LXHEBANLEX.

⁷ George M. Landes, *Building Your Biblical Hebrew Vocabulary: Learning Words by Frequency and Cognate*, vol. 41, Resources for Biblical Study (Atlanta, GA: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2001), 56.

⁸ Brian Neil Peterson, “Does Genesis 2 Support Same-Sex Marriage?: An Evangelical Response,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 60, no. 4 (2017): 688.

⁹ Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 15.

¹⁰ Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 126. Ross writes of Eve, “The man and the woman thus corresponded physically, socially, and spiritually.”

Why does Adam need a suitable helper? To accomplish God's mandates and satisfy man's relational needs.

Incapable of fulfilling God's mandate. God had given Adam a mandate that could not be accomplished without a complementary mate – “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it” (1:28). Adam could never do these tasks alone.¹¹ He needed Eve in order to “be fruitful and multiply,” and he needed the product of their reproductive fruitfulness in order to “fill the earth and subdue it.” God knew he nor the animals could be the suitable companion for Adam in order for Adam to accomplish the purposes God had for all mankind.

Incapable of satisfying God's designed relational needs. Additionally, God created man with relational needs. Man needs companionship. God knew he could never provide the relational companionship that man needed. Man needed an equal although complementary companion. God would never be Adam's equal. God is independent and self-sustaining and complete. God would never need Adam in the same way that Adam would need God.¹² Their relationship would never be relationally reciprocal. God would often be a helper to mankind, but he would never be the suitable companion Adam needed. Additionally, the animals could never be the suitable companion that man would need. They too would, at times, offer a form of companionship. They would, often, offer assistance and help. But they would never be a sufficient suitable companion.

Although the loneliness of the man is a central idea in this section of chapter 2, the incompatibility of the animals for the man bespeaks the duality of the sexes (i.e. male and female) and the man's total aloneness in this regard. What is more, the aloneness of the man makes it impossible for him to be “fruitful and multiply;” an obvious concern of God.¹³

So then, Adam needed a suitable helper so that he could fulfill the mandate given to him by God and satisfy the relational needs created in him by God.

God is not all I need. You may have heard, “God is all I need.” While sounding really spiritual and mature, it's not true. God has given us mandates (“be fruitful and multiply,” and “go into all the world”) and, we cannot accomplish them on our own. Also, God created us as relational beings and this good and healthy inner need for others can only be appropriately satisfied with other people.

It looks like an overstatement to say to Adam in the garden, “God is all you need.”
Let's make the case stronger by adding a few other texts, like 1 Corinthians 12:18–21:

¹¹ Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 2:18. “Within the context of creation, in which God instructs humankind to be fruitful and multiply, the man alone cannot comply. Being alone prevents the man from fulfilling the design of creation and therefore is not good.”

¹² Philo, *Philo*, trans. F. H. Colson, G. H. Whitaker, and J. W. Earp, vol. 1, The Loeb Classical Library (London; England; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann Ltd; Harvard University Press, 1929–1962), 225. Philo wrote, “It may mean that neither before creation was there anything with God, nor, when the universe had come into being, does anything take its place with Him; for there is absolutely nothing which He needs.”

¹³ Peterson, “Does Genesis 2 Support Same-Sex Marriage?,” 687.

God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”

So, there is God Almighty in his word saying flat out, “You dare not say to another member of the body of Christ, ‘I don’t need you.’” That is a sin to talk like that. In other words, God forbids us from saying, “I have God. I don’t need members of the body of Christ.”¹⁴

The Solution

The Temporary Solution: (Eve) The LORD God made a woman. Adam is alone. He lacks a suitable companion by which to accomplish God’s mandate and satisfy his innate relational desires. Therefore, God addresses this immediate issue for Adam by creating, out of Adam, a suitable, compatible companion – Eve.

Upon seeing the woman, Adam erupts with exaltation, “At last! This one is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh” (Gen 2:23).

The Permanent Solution: (Marriage) Leave...hold fast...become one. Now that the immediate solution to Adam’s problem has been offered and joyously received, the narrator of the story adds an additional important point – an important timeless principle. He writes, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Gen 2:24). Based upon God’s design and good creation of man and woman as suitable and compatible companions, Moses offers the timeless principles and foundation for marriage for all time.

First, the man left his family. This leaving was not necessarily a physical leaving, due the fact that often both the husband and new wife would physically dwell in the man’s home. In fact, most likely, the wife would physically leave her family. This leaving refers more to the man leaving a certain arena of priorities and newly embracing a new set of priorities and responsibilities. “For the sake of the wife the man leaves the strong bond of his parents and unites with her.”¹⁵ And the reverse is as well true.

Hold Fast. The man significantly lowered the bond and the priorities typically extended to his parents, and instead would “hold fast to his wife.” He would cling to her, cleave to her, be glued to her.¹⁶ This clinging would involve both a physical aspect (a sexual union) that would effectively fulfill God’s mandate for man to “be fruitful and multiply,” but also, they would cling to one another relationally in order to fulfill God’s intent for their companionship.

¹⁴ See Appendix D.

¹⁵ Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 127.

¹⁶ Friedrich Wilhelm Gesenius and Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *Gesenius’ Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2003), 185. “TO CLEAVE, TO ADHERE, specially firmly, as if with glue, TO BE GLUED,”

A pastoral note: For those who are married, be careful not to seek to satisfy your *core* relational needs with someone other than your spouse. Of course, our relationships extend beyond our spouses and beautifully so. God intended for humanity (and in the church specifically according to 1 Corinthians 12:18-21) to be made up of all kinds of people relating to one another, enjoying one another, and benefitting from one another. However, God's immediate solution to Adam's loneliness was not a community but a single complementary partner. First and foremost, God intended our companionship to be satisfied in our spouses, then, and only then, do our additional relationships bring color, joy, and value to our already firmly established relational existence. Here is my concern and potential charge – I have too often seen people who struggle in their relationships with their spouse invest a lot of time in other relationships. I completely understand. When your marriage is hurting, you desire a place for relationship and companionship, and you do not feel like your marriage is the place for that to be found. Let me just encourage you, first invest all the effort that might be expended in other relationships and expend it in your marriage.

Although not definitely stated, all this leaving and cleaving seems to strongly imply some type of formal declaration. Inherent in this leaving and cleaving lies covenant keeping. A man and woman covenant with one another (or commit to one another) that they no longer are clinging to something or someone else but instead clinging to one another.

Become one flesh. This newfound covenant/commitment finds concrete expression in “becoming one flesh.” Becoming one flesh likely means much more than sexual union, but it most certainly includes sexual union.¹⁷ In so stating, the narrator of this sidenote establishes that sexual union resides in the marriage relationship once a man and a woman have covenanted with one another their intention of leaving all others and cleaving singularly to one another.¹⁸ This sexual union is

¹⁷ Note Paul's use of this text in Genesis. He discusses a man having sex with a prostitute and then writes, “Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh” (1 Cor 6:16). In using this Genesis text, Paul seems to introduce some challenging implications (“one flesh” is connected to marriage in Genesis, however, hardly is Paul saying that someone is married to everyone they have sex with). Regardless, “one flesh” clearly involves sexual union.

Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:71. “‘They become one flesh.’ This does not denote merely the sexual union that follows marriage, or the children conceived in marriage, or even the spiritual and emotional relationship that it involves, though all are involved in becoming one flesh. Rather it affirms that just as blood relations are one's flesh and bone (cf. *Comment* on v 23), so marriage creates a similar kinship relation between man and wife.”

¹⁸ Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 127. The divine plan for marriage, then, is one man and one woman becoming one flesh and living together in their integrity.

In two passages, Jesus refers to this passage. His brief discussion in the two Gospel passages indicate both permanence and monogamy.

‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” (Matt 19:5-6). and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. (Mark 10:8).

Mathews, *Genesis 1-11*, 1a:223. “Our human sexuality expresses both our individuality as gender and our oneness with another person through physical union. Sexual union implies community and requires responsible love within that

intended to be physically gratifying and enjoyable, resulting in joined pleasure and a more stable marriage. Gregory Powell states well, “the one flesh union as a creation ordinance means the one flesh union “transcends culture and time. They constitute God’s ideal for sexuality and marriage.”¹⁹

Transition into chapter 3. Chapter two ends with the simple statement, “And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.” This statement acts as a narrative bridge from the ideal garden scenario to the point of the fall – in which after they would be aware of each other’s nakedness and experience acute shame.

Theological implications next week. For sake of time and to not cram too much into one moment, next week we will be discussing some of the theological implications which flow from Genesis 2:18-25. (1) God designed the first marriage as a man and woman. Does this passage forbid homosexuality? What about people who have experienced same-sex attraction throughout their lives – is that natural to them and should be accepted – if not embraced? (2) What about singleness? Does this passage imply that single people are not whole or complete? How should a single person process this passage? (3) Did God providentially address the transgender issues of our day by creating male and female? Is gender binary? (4) Even though the passage seems to clearly establish Adam and Eve as equal, is there inherent levels of authority within this equality? Before the Fall, did God intend for Adam to lead Eve?

But let me conclude with a few practical statements drawn from our discussion this morning.

1. Aloneness is bad and we need to purposefully pursue relationships with others. God created us as relational beings and does not intend for us to be alone.
2. While not the only way to experience wonderful relationships, the penultimate context for intimate relationship exists within the marriage relationship. The “one flesh” nature of marriage provides an element distinct (should be distinct) to this relationship.
3. God designed, prior to the fall, for sex to be enjoyable and part of the marriage relationship. People, culture, etc have twisted sex and made it other than beautiful, but it is inherently beautiful within its God designed context.

Resources for Bible Study

union. The sexual union of the couple is, however, only symbolic of the new kinship that the couple has entered. The sexual act by itself does not exhaust marriage; marriage entails far more.”

¹⁹ Gregory H. Powell, “Coming Together: The Ethical Implications of the One Flesh Union” (Dissertation, Wake Forest, NC, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 5. Powell quotes James Eckman: Janies P. Eckman, *Biblical Ethics: Choosing Right in a World Gone Wrong* (Biblical Essentials Series; Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 48.

Powell, 6. “One can and should argue that the one flesh union was designed to be created, sustained, and flourish only within the covenant of marriage. However, Gen 2:24 and Jesus’ quotes of the creation ordinance do not limit the creation of the one flesh union to the institution of marriage. To argue that sexual intercourse only strengthens the one flesh union or that it is merely a symbol of this union is to ignore or minimize Paul’s teaching in 1 Cor 6:16.”

Peterson, Brian Neil. "Does Genesis 2 Support Same-Sex Marriage?: An Evangelical Response." *JETS* 60, no. 4 (2017): 681–96.

Powell, Gregory H. "Coming Together: The Ethical Implications of the One Flesh Union." Dissertation, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015.

Rosenzweig, Michael L. "A Helper Equal to Him." *Judaism* 35, no. 3 (1986): 277–80.

Ross, Allen P. *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.

Questions for Bible Study

1. What is the purpose of marriage according to Genesis 1:27-28 and 2:18-25? Are there different (or multiple) purposes for marriage according to these two different texts?
2. Does God's design established in Genesis 2 prohibit homosexual marriage? If so, how? (By the way, saying, "God made them Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve" is not helpful and overly simplifies the discussion.)
3. Where else throughout Scripture are these verses referenced? Do those additional scripture passages shed light on the context in Genesis?
4. Paul refers to homosexual relationships as "contrary to nature" in Romans 1:26. However, most homosexuals would argue their inclination is natural for them. Could it be true that their same sex attraction is natural to them? If so, to what does "contrary to nature" refer? How might this discussion of Paul's connect to God's creation in Genesis 2?
5. If it is not good for man to be alone (with the implication that it is not good for woman to be alone), how might we process singleness? Are unmarried people not whole?
6. Does the fact that God "created them male and female" imply a binary and by implication confront the transgender movement of our day? Is this an appropriate implication or conclusion to draw from this text? (Maybe for further study – how might this impact our care or conversation with someone born with both male and female reproductive organs?)
7. Adam needed a "helper fit for him." Often, in our context, a helper often implies subordinate or less important. What passages in Scripture discuss a "helper" and do those contexts better help us understand the role of Eve as helper? Hint: who is often referred to as our helper?

Message 6:

Theological Implications of Marriage Blueprints

April 25, 2021

Introduction

By way of introduction, let me draw your attention to a few newspaper articles from this week. First, a Christian college in Missouri sues the Biden administration, and secondly, a conflict between the students and faculty of Seattle Pacific University as they confront the board of trustees.¹

Regarding the first conflict, Brandon Showalter, of *The Christian Post*, writes the following:

A Missouri Christian university is suing the Biden administration over a federal directive that its lawsuit claims requires religious schools to open their dormitories and showers based on “gender identity.” The College of the Ozarks ... filed a lawsuit in response to a February order from the Department of Housing and Urban Development that forces any entities that receive federal dollars ... to place transgender-identified biological males into female dormitories and assign them as females’ roommates.²

The College of the Ozarks is responding to the memorandum sent out on February 11, 2021 by Jeannine Worden (Acting Assistant Secretary) of The Office of Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity. Worden “determined that the following actions are necessary...[the government] shall accept for filing and investigate all complaints of sex discrimination, including discrimination because of gender identity or sexual orientation ... [and] organizations and agencies that receive grants ... must interpret sex discrimination ... to include discrimination because of sexual orientation and gender identity.” This memorandum includes “public and private not-for-profit entities.”³

¹ Al Mohler drew my attention to these two articles via his Friday podcast of *The Briefing*. I did not quote from his podcast, but his podcast was the inspiration for this introduction. <https://albertmohler.com/2021/04/23/briefing-4-23-21>

² Showalter, Brandon. “Christian University sues to block HUD order forcing male student placement in female dorms,” *The Christian Post*, April 20, 2021. <https://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-university-sues-to-block-hud-trans-housing-order.html>

³ Worden, Jeanine. “Implementation of Executive Order 13988 on the Enforcement of the Fair Housing Act,” U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. February 11, 2021. Accessed April 23, 2021. <https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/FHEO/documents/WordenMemoEO13988FHActImplementation.pdf>

Worden responds or expounds on President Bidens “Executive Order on Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation,” January 20, 2021. Accessed April 23, 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-preventing-and-combating-discrimination-on-basis-of-gender-identity-or-sexual-orientation/>

The legal nonprofit, Alliance Defending Freedom represents the school and argues that “the government cannot and should not force schools to open girls’ dorms to males based on its politically motivated and inappropriate redefinition of ‘sex.’”⁴

Secondly, *Religion News* reported Tuesday, this week, of the students and faculty of Seattle Pacific University confronting the board of trustees over the board’s refusal to hire LGBTQ staff and faculty. Yonat Shimron wrote the following in *Religion News*.

The faculty of Seattle Pacific University, a Christian school associated with the Free Methodist Church, has taken a vote of no confidence in its board of trustees after members of the board declined to change its policy prohibiting the hiring of LGBTQ people. The no-confidence vote, approved by 72% of the faculty, was the latest in a series of escalating clashes between faculty, students and the school’s governing board.⁵

Elise Takahama of the *Seattle Times* reported “the SPU community have voiced concerns about the policy for years.” Although the school has experienced the conflict for years, “a turning point in the conversation came in January, when adjunct nursing professor ... Rinedahl sued the university, saying it did not hire him for a full-time position because he’s gay.”⁶

To my point. Christians can no longer consider these discussions as distant or abstract or disconnected. Too long have we thought – too bad liberal Europe must deal with these issues (oh yeah! And Canada, eh!) – then, too bad liberal secular universities must deal with these issues – then suddenly, we realize our private, religious institutions and churches are being sued and closed because they refused to ever engage the topic. Topics such as the above are resulting in Christian universities suing the government – Christian university professors resigning – Christian college students protesting outside the homes of university leadership, etc. If we, as believers, are not purposeful in solidifying our position in these areas, culture will happily define them for us and direct our actions and institutional practices accordingly. As believers who hold Scripture as our final authority, we must be willing to align our opinions and practices to the dictates of Scripture.

The Framework

Now on to Genesis. Last week I ended the message with a few questions concerning the implications of Genesis 2:18–25 on topics such as homosexuality, singleness, and transgenderism. While I intend to address those topics, I have clearly realized that not only can I not answer all the questions posed, but my message will also likely raise other questions. Therefore, I desire to offer

⁴ Blake, Julie Marie. “The School of the Ozarks dba College of the Ozarks v. Biden.” Alliance Defending Freedom (blog) April 15, 2021. <https://adfmmedia.org/case/school-ozarks-dba-college-ozarks-v-biden>

⁵ Shimron, Yonat. “Seattle Pacific University faculty vote no confidence in board over LGBTQ exclusion.” *Religion News*, April 20, 2021. <https://religionnews.com/2021/04/20/seattle-pacific-university-faculty-vote-no-confidence-in-board-over-lgbtq-hiring-exclusion/>

⁶ Takahama, Elise. “Nursing Professor sues Seattle Pacific University, says he was denied full-time job ‘because he’s not heterosexual.’” *Seattle Times*, January 15, 2021. <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/nursing-professor-sues-seattle-pacific-university-says-he-was-denied-full-time-job-because-hes-not-heterosexual/>

a framework by which we will answer some of those questions, and you will be able to hopefully answer additional questions that arise.

The Framework. (1) First, understand and accept the teaching of the text (in this case, Genesis). (2) Secondly, as you draw an inference from the text, consider additional Scripture passages to determine the accuracy of your inference. (3) Finally, if Scripture offers little or no additional evidence, the teachings from the original text must stand.

To flush out this framework, I want to first state the truth found in Genesis 2:18—25 and then address three different inferences drawn from the text – singleness, homosexuality, and transgenderism.

Genesis 2 summation. Let us start with a definition of marriage drawn from Genesis 2:18—25.⁷ Marriage consists of one man and one woman covenanting together in a monogamous, heterosexual, committed, life-long relationship, resulting in a one-flesh union. I draw this definition from the inherent meaning of the words within “God created man in his own image ... male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27), “a helper fit for him” (Gen 2:18,20), and “a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Gen 2:24).

Implications

Let me now address three different implications that might naturally be drawn from this definition and the text of Genesis 2.

God denigrates singleness.

⁷ I am personally drawing this somewhat concise definition from my own study of Genesis 2:18—25. However, many authors offer varied definitions for marriage that differ from my own – specifically in that most of them include the idea of marriage somewhat depending on what the social group allows. Thomson argues “that in the OT polygamy is not sexually immoral, since it constitutes a recognized married state; though it is generally shown to be inexpedient.” Additionally, Bower and Knapp conclude marriage consists of a committed relationship between those who live in a “sexual relationship under conditions normally approved and witnessed to by their social group or society.” Finally, Elwell and Comfort write, “The joining together of male and female in matrimony, as practiced by various cultures.”

Thomson. Marriage is the state in which men and women can live together in sexual relationship with the approval of their social group. Adultery and fornication are sexual relationships that society does not recognize as constituting marriage. This definition is necessary to show that in the OT polygamy is not sexually immoral, since it constitutes a recognized married state; though it is generally shown to be inexpedient.

ISBE. Marriage may be defined as that lifelong and exclusive state in which a man and a woman are wholly committed to live with each other in sexual relationship under conditions normally approved and witnessed to by their social group or society.

Elwell and Beitzel do not include the culturally component and define marriage as a “Union between man and woman, sanctified by God as a means of maintaining family life.”

J. G. S. Thomson, “Marriage,” I. Howard Marshall et al., eds., *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 732. Walter A Elwell and Barry J Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 1405. R. K. Bower and G. L. Knapp, “Marriage; Marry,” Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised* (Chicago: Eerdmans, 1979), 261. Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001), 861.

Naturally from this text, someone might infer that singleness is bad or that a single person is not whole or complete. Our established framework now requires us to consider other biblical texts that might illuminate further understanding.

Old Testament understanding. Throughout the Old Testament, God primarily interacted and blessed his covenant people through physical means and blessings. The building and forming of His people came primarily through physical procreation.⁸ The blessings of obedience to God manifest in physical means – marriage, children, material prosperity (land, animals, etc.), and an inheritance (which symbolized “the location of God’s provision of rest”⁹). “Thus, for an individual in Israel to be devoid of spouse, children, and land, such as Naomi on her return to Israel, was to feel the weight of divine judgment (Ruth 1: 20– 21).”¹⁰

Danylak. To marry and have offspring was, to an individual, a mark of God’s covenantal blessing, and by extension a validation of his obedience to the covenant stipulations. Conversely, to be devoid of children with the result of having one’s name “blotted out” of Israel was a mark of his subjection to the covenant curses and by implication a sentence of divine disapproval.¹¹

Therefore, in coming to the end of the Old Testament, we might not conclude that singleness is inherently sinful, but it most certainly is not a good thing or a blessed state.

New Testament understanding. The initial observation of Jesus and Paul’s single status would indicate some potential paradigm shift. While both Jesus and Paul happily acknowledge the blessing of marriage, Paul as well indicates that it may be better for some to not marry at all (1 Cor 7:1, 7–9). If marriage play such a key role in God’s covenant relationship with his people, and if the covenant blessings are primarily passed down through one’s offspring, why were Paul and Jesus never married? Why did Paul encourage others to remain single?

Throughout the New Testament, Paul on several occasions offers a paradigm shift in that heirs of the covenant relationship are no longer defined by a physical relationship but instead a spiritual union in Christ (Rom 8:17; Gal 4:7; Eph 3:6; Titus 3:7; James 2:5; 1 Pet 3:7).¹² Prior to this transition, the people of God grew by means of physical reproduction. However, following Christ’s earthly ministry and the formulation of the church, the people of God became spiritual and grew by means of spiritual birth. Danylak writes, “in the New Testament we are not given any explicit mandate to marry and procreate physical human beings, we are given a new mandate to create more spiritual human beings.”¹³

⁸ Barry Danylak, *Redeeming Singleness: How the Storyline of Scripture Affirms the Single Life* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2010), 76.

⁹ Danylak, 63–66.

¹⁰ Danylak, 81.

¹¹ Danylak, 62.

¹² Danylak, 126.

¹³ Danylak, 148–49.

Therefore, in coming to the end of the New Testament, we conclude marriage remains a blessing and single people are whole and complete as they fulfill God's mandate of producing a spiritual offspring and finding companionship within the body of Christ.¹⁴

This reality does not diminish the inherent joy and fulfillment that come in marriage and children, nor does it diminish the profound gospel witness potential that a Christian marriage can exhibit to the unsaved world. But it does mean that marriage itself is not fundamental to our life in the new covenant in the way it was under the old Sinai covenant of the Old Testament.¹⁵

Might I go so far as to acknowledge that we each stand as single people before God's throne and live in this state throughout eternity.¹⁶

God forbids homosexuality.

Secondly, we might naturally infer from Genesis 2 that homosexuality conflicts with God's determined design (ie. God made a woman for the man; she was a proper fit for him; and they became one flesh)¹⁷. Once again, let us go to additional scriptural passages that might help us further understand.

Leviticus. Moses addresses many behaviors that conflict with God's perfect design in Genesis 2. He first addresses (by means of 13 verses) the sinfulness of incest. He acknowledges the sin of adultery in commanding them to not sleep with "your neighbor's wife." Moses finishes the section by commanding the men to not "lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. And you

¹⁴ "In addition, we must realize that marriage is not the only way in which the unity and diversity in the Trinity can be reflected in our lives. It is also reflected in the union of believers in the fellowship of the church—and in genuine church fellowship, single persons (like Paul and Jesus) as well as those who are married can have interpersonal relationships that reflect the nature of the Trinity. Therefore, building the church and increasing its unity and purity also promote the reflection of God's character in the world." Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity; Zondervan, 2004), 456.

¹⁵ Danylak, *Redeeming Singleness*, 139.

¹⁶ Danylak, 165–66. "There is sometimes a tendency, especially among the idealistic young who presume to have most of their years yet before them, that singleness is a temporary period of one's life until one finds an eternal soul mate in marriage. This passage is a reminder that in the scope of eternity the opposite is actually the case; marriage is for a season and time, until, as the traditional marriage vow reads, "death do us part." It is as single and free individuals that we will stand before his throne and live for all eternity."

¹⁷ Peterson explains a counterargument to the position that Genesis 2 inherently requires a heterosexual relationship. He writes, "Because Gen 2:18–25 focuses on the *aloneness* of Adam, marriage, at least as presented in Genesis 2, was basically ordained by God to combat this condition. Marriage, in this context, was not for procreation, as some propose, but to establish a "family" through the bonds of kinship ties. As such, any pairing of individuals (male-male; female-female, male-female) can meet the criteria set forth in Genesis 2 to eliminate loneliness and establish a kinship bond which in turn reflects a nuclear "family." (Peterson, "Does Genesis 2 Support Same-Sex Marriage?," 683.)

shall not lie with any animal and so make yourself unclean with it, neither shall any woman give herself to an animal to life with it: it is perversion" (Lev 18:22–23).¹⁸

Moses, as well, writes in 20:13, "If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them" (Lev 20:13). This passage is clear but disturbing. We must be careful that this law was to be carried out by Israel under their theocratic government. Therefore, the punishment should not be carried out in any other context, but the weight of the sin remains.

Sodom and Gomorrah and Gibeah. In Genesis 18 and Judges 19, two stories unfold in which homosexual rape occurs (or at least attempted) and this behavior underlies the destruction of these towns (Jude 1:7 corroborates that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed due their homosexual behavior¹⁹). The weight of evidence due these two stories lessen in that other reasons for their destruction (ie. inhospitality) are introduced and the inclusion of rape.

Therefore, in coming to the end of the Old Testament, we conclude that God condemns homosexual behavior. Yet, the evidence lies within text that are part of the Mosaic law and two dramatic stories involving homosexual rape. With that we venture into the New Testament texts.

Jesus discusses marriage. Both Matthew and Mark unfold a story of Jesus interacting with the Pharisees about marriage – specifically about divorce. The Pharisees ask Jesus "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" (Matt 19:3). The Pharisees are asking Jesus about his understanding of Moses statement in Deuteronomy 24:1, in which Moses allows for the writing a certificate of divorce.²⁰ Jesus, however, somewhat evades the question and jumps beyond Deuteronomy and reiterates God's original design in Genesis 2. Jesus says the following:

Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate. (Matt 19:4–6; cf. Mark 10:1–10).

In so doing, Jesus reaffirms the ideal of one man and one woman but also adds that the marriage between one man and one woman should be permanent. Powell draws the same conclusion when he writes, "specifically, by quoting Gen 1:27, Jesus is teaching that marriage is to be strictly

¹⁸ "While homosexuality and bestiality are very different sins, they both are similar in that they create one flesh within a category that God never intended. Since God created the one flesh union in the context of a monogamous, heterosexual, permanent marriage, it is a sin for a person to have sex with another person of the same gender." (Powell, "Coming Together," 34.)

¹⁹ "just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire" (Jude 7).

²⁰ "When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, (Deut 24:1).

monogamous and heterosexual. Any relationship that cannot be classified by these two foundational characteristics do not agree with Jesus' teaching on marriage."²¹

Paul addresses homosexuality. Paul offers a more direct and clear discussion concerning homosexuality. Paul refers to homosexuality, in Romans 1, as "contrary to nature" and "giving up natural relations" and "committing shameless acts" (Rom 1:26-27).²² Additionally, Paul condemns homosexual behavior in his first letter to the Corinthians. He writes, "do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality" (1 Cor 6:9).

On two other occasions, Paul connects his theology of marriage back to Genesis 2. (1) In 1 Corinthians 6:16, Paul quotes Genesis 2:24 in his condemnation of sex with a prostitute because it defiles the "one flesh" nature of marriage. (2) Secondly, Paul links the idea of "one flesh" to his discussion to marriage in Ephesians 5. Husbands should love their wives, "for no one ever hated his own flesh but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church" (Eph 5:28-29). Two verses later he adds to the narrative note of Genesis 2 by quoting Genesis 2:24 and then adding, "This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church" (Eph 5:32).

By example, Paul and Jesus frequently connect their discussions about marriage back to the ideal established by God in Genesis 2. Therefore, Genesis continues to be the ideal and goal to which every marriage (and sexual relationship) should conform.

Sidenote: argument regarding nature. Let me address one potential argument that plays an important role in multiple discussions. What about those who claim their homosexual lifestyle is natural to them? For example, Matthew Vines proposes, "Paul might have taken a different view of same-sex behavior practiced by those who were naturally attracted to those of the same sex."²³ So then, what about those who would resolutely declare their same sex attraction has existed as long as they can remember? Is homosexuality natural for some people? If homosexuality is natural to some people, how can we expect them to be anything other than they naturally are?

Two text initially come to mind. Paul refers to homosexuality in Romans 1 as "contrary to nature" and the "giving up natural relations." Jude discusses the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and

²¹ Powell, "Coming Together," 47.

²² "For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error" (Rom 1:26-27).

Matthew Vines, a self proclaimed "Gay Christian" addresses each of the passages in Scripture that condemn homosexuality. Specifically, I offer here a few quotes to show his train of thought in recasting the traditional view of Romans 1. Vines writes, "So how should we understand Paul's words? Do they apply to all same-sex relationships? Or only to lustful, fleeting ones? (99) ... Paul might have taken a different view of same-sex behavior practiced by those who were naturally attracted to those of the same sex. (101) ... same-sex relations in the first century were not thought to be the expression of an exclusive sexual orientation. (103) ... Remember, the most common forms of same-sex behavior in the Greco-Roman world were pederasty, prostitution, and sex between masters and their slaves." (104) (Matthew Vines, *God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships* (New York: Convergent Books, 2014), 99-104.)

²³ Vines, 101.

attributes their destruction to their sexual immorality in which they “pursued unnatural desire” (Jude 7).

However, Paul clearly connects his discussion in Romans to the words used by Moses in Genesis 1-2.²⁴ In doing so, Paul defines “natural” as God’s pre-Fall ideal order. However, most people, when defining “natural,” describe their natural state after the Fall.

If by nature, someone means their natural disposition to sin, same-sex attraction may come naturally to someone as part of our broken and fallen state. Homosexuality (and even same-sex attraction) is not natural in light of God’s original design, pre-Fall. However, same sex attraction may come naturally to fallen man, post-Fall. Even if this is true, Scripture never justifies an action simply because it comes natural in our fallen state. It is exactly our fallen state that condemns us and needs to be made new in Christ. So, if someone naturally possesses same sex attraction, or naturally possesses gender confusion, or is naturally motivated by greed, or anger, or lust or dishonesty – acting on those inclinations²⁵ is still sinful and requires God’s forgiveness through Christ.

Therefore, as we culminate Scripture’s discussion on homosexuality, the inferences drawn from Genesis 2:18–25 remain true. Homosexuality conflicts with God’s original design. As culture has and will continue to push hard against God’s biblical design, we need to be committed to Scripture.

God rejects transgenderism.

Let me address one final inference drawn from Genesis. We might naturally infer, from Genesis, the current cultural understanding of transgenderism conflicts with God’s ideal design. Moses writes, “God created man in his own image ... male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27). The most direct statement to the binary nature of men and women can be found in Genesis. God created men and women.

Unlike the other two discussions on singleness and homosexuality, the rest of Scripture says little about the transgender discussion. No biblical authors outright condemn or even discuss the transgender debate as articulate in our present circumstances.

Two Old Testament texts. Although no biblical texts directly address the current transgender discussion, a couple of texts indirectly touch on related topics. First, Moses, in Deuteronomy, addresses cross-dressing as “an abomination to the Lord your God” (Deut 22:5).

²⁴ “For Paul, nature is not defined by secular sources (as Vines suggests) but by the Old Testament. In fact, there are numerous linguistic links between Romans 1:26-27 and the creation narratives of Genesis 1-2. For example, Paul’s use of the relatively unusual words *thelys* for females and *arsen* for males strongly suggests he is relying on the creation account of Genesis 1 where the same two words are used.... Thus for Paul, “against nature” means that homosexuality goes against God’s original design.” (James M. Hamilton Jr et al., *God and the Gay Christian?: A Response to Matthew Vines*, ed. R. Albert Mohler Jr (Louisville: SBTS, 2014), Kindle location 447.)

²⁵ I am purposefully making a distinction between a tendency or proclivity to a certain behavior and the actual act of committing the behavior. For instance, someone may possess same-sex attraction and never choose to act on that temptation or proclivity. Someone may possess gender dysphoria but never choose to function as another gender or have transition surgery.

Some ask, “Why is cross-dressing such a big deal? All we are discussing is clothes.” While many people think the biblical prohibition of cross-dressing is obscurantist, the clothing of the cross-dresser acts as a proxy for embodiment and a corresponding rejection of God’s will. The body’s appearance is transformed by the clothing, cosmetics, or other accessories and paraphernalia. God desires for men and women to carry themselves in such a way so that each particular gender is celebrated and easily identifiable, while taking into account certain cultural differences for gender-appropriate apparel.²⁶

Moses’ condemnation seems to indicate God’s desire for stark distinction between genders – which directly conflicts with the core ideology among transgender advocates.

Additionally, Moses presents genital mutilation in a negative light. He writes, “No one whose testicles are crushed or whose male organ is cut off shall enter the assembly of the LORD” (Deut 23:1). In ancient times, men would castrate themselves to appear more feminine. J. Alan Branch quotes Stephanie Dalley’s translation of the “Erra and Ishum” which criticizes,

the party-boys and festival people who changed their masculinity into femininity to make the people of Ishtar revere her. The dagger-bearer, bearers of razors, pruning knives and flint blades who frequently do abominable acts to please the heart of Ishtar.²⁷

Both texts appropriately connect to various transgender topics, but neither offer a clear condemnation similar to texts regarding homosexuality. Therefore, when we find little evidence in the rest of Scripture for a biblical principle, we go back to the original clear passage and embrace its’ teaching. In this case, we go back to Genesis clear teaching that God distinctly created male and female. God designed two genders, and we reject God’s good and ideal design when we reject this distinction.

Conclusion

A summation of our three topics. (1) We infer from Genesis 2 that singleness conflicts with God’s ideal order. However, in going through the rest of Scripture, we find that an unmarried person can become one with Christ and with other believers through a spiritual union, and within this one body (the church), fulfill God’s mandates for our lives. (2) We infer from Genesis 2 that homosexuality conflicts with God’s ideal order. Additionally, that implication consistently rings throughout Scripture. Therefore, in submission to Scripture we accept that God does not bless or condone homosexuality or homosexual marriage. (3) We infer from Genesis 2 that the current transgender ideology conflicts with God’s ideal order. While a couple passages throughout Scripture touch on related issues, we find little on this topic in contrast to the other topics.

²⁶ J. Alan Branch, *Affirming God’s Image: Addressing the Transgender Question with Science and Scripture* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 44–45.

²⁷ Branch, 45–46.

Therefore, we go back to the implications of Genesis 2 and conclude that God did in fact create only two genders – male and female.

A restatement of our framework. This morning we addressed only a few of the implications from the text in Genesis 2. So then, we must apply the framework discussed to the additional topics that may derive from this study. What about polygamy, divorce, bestiality, or pre-marital sex. God's ideal, as laid out in Genesis 2, conflicts with each of these areas (and more).

In each of these we must apply the framework to these varied discussions. (1) Mine the initial text for its clear teachings and implications. (2) Search the rest of Scripture for text that would either refute or support the implications and meaning you find. (3) At that point, either embrace the teachings found spread throughout Scripture or accept the teaching of the initial text.

A final challenge. Likely, most of us agree on these areas today. However, I would like to leave you with one challenge. I think the church, at large, has done a poor job of loving people who fail to meet up to the ideal – while failing to realize we all fail to meet up to the ideal. We are good at determining whether people are right or wrong – and telling them they are right or wrong. However, we are not good at offering them hope. Condemnation? Yes. Hope? Not so much.

What about the young man who has only ever experienced same-sex attraction? Do we extend Christ to him and commit to walk with him? What about the 25-year-old who has gone through gender reassignment surgery? She comes to our church looking for hope. How do we love her well? What about the gay man who has faithfully lived with his male partner for 2 decades? He comes to church desiring truth and spiritual relationships. How do we love him well?

Obviously, an important step in this discussion is to first determine what we believe. But equally important – we must learn how to love well and extend the hope found only in Christ.

Resources for Bible Study

Branch, J. Alan. *Affirming God's Image: Addressing the Transgender Question with Science and Scripture*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019, Chapter 3, "Scripture and Transgenderism."

Jr, James M. Hamilton, Denny Burk, Owen Strachan, and Heath Lambert. *God and the Gay Christian?: A Response to Matthew Vines*. Edited by R. Albert Mohler Jr. Louisville: SBTs, 2014. Chapter 3, "Suppressing the Truth in Unrighteousness: Matthew Vines Takes on the New Testament."

Peterson, Brian Neil. "Does Genesis 2 Support Same-Sex Marriage?: An Evangelical Response." *JETS* 60, no. 4 (2017): 681–96.

Questions for Bible Study

1. While Scripture may be clear on many of these issues, what expectation should we have as believers that culture will conform to God's design? Should we desire to promote advocacy in order to have laws reflect our biblical understanding? Can we hold to marriage between a man and a woman while simultaneously accepting gay marriage laws?
2. How do I love my family member that is homosexual?

3. What about the transgender man who comes to Christ and doesn't know how to move forward?
4. What about the gay man that comes to church and wonders what he should do about his partner of 2 decades?
5. What about the single person who feels alone and that the church has made them feel like they are less than whole?

Message 7:

The Temptation and Fall (3:1-7)

May 2, 2021

Introduction

Pink. The third chapter in Genesis is one of the most important in all the Word of God. What has often been said of Genesis as a whole is peculiarly true of this chapter: it is the “seedplot of the Bible.” Here are the foundations upon which rest many of the cardinal doctrines of our faith. Here we trace back to their source many of the rivers of divine truth. Here commences the great drama which is being enacted on the stage of human history, and which well-nigh six thousand years has not yet completed. Here we find the Divine explanation of the present fallen and ruined condition of our race. Here we learn of the subtle devices of our enemy, the Devil. Here we behold the utter powerlessness of man to walk in the path of righteousness when divine grace is withheld from him. Here we discover the spiritual effects of sin—man seeking to flee from God. Here we discern the attitude of God toward the guilty sinner. Here we mark the universal tendency of human nature to cover its own moral shame by a device of man’s own handiwork. Here we are taught of the gracious provision which God has made to meet our great need. Here begins that marvelous stream of prophecy which runs all through the Holy Scriptures. Here we learn that man cannot approach God except through a mediator.¹

Challenges

Origin of evil. There is no attempt to discuss the origin of evil in the passage. Moses, in the first verse, declares the serpent to have been made by God. However, beyond that creative act – which was good – Moses offers no discussion as to the origin of evil itself. Additionally, the author and original recipients seem indifferent to the question. Moses focuses rather on the origin of human sin and guilt.

By means of a brief point of application – God often does not answer the questions that plague our minds. If God does not answer the question throughout Scripture, we do not need to know the answer. I understand that may not satisfy and may even come off as a copout. Regardless, God has revealed all things sufficient for the equipping and maturing of every believer. If God has not revealed something, we do not need to know it.

¹ Arthur Walkington Pink, *Gleanings in Genesis* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2005), 33.

Satan the serpent.² Moses does not indicate, anywhere in the text, the serpent was Satan.³ In his commentary on Genesis, Mathews offers several opinions concerning the serpent. The serpent may have been a mythical creature symbolizing human curiosity or evil and chaos. Potentially the serpent represented Eve's inner thoughts. However, the traditional view remains that the serpent was an instrument used by Satan.⁴

Even though Moses does not reveal the identity of the serpent – maybe because he did not know – both Paul and John, in the New Testament, appear confident that the serpent was in fact Satan. (1)

² Many commentators either directly connect the discussion of the serpent in Genesis 3 to Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 12 or minimally acknowledge the tendency of authors to do so. Lamar Cooper offers three (or four) interpretations of the text in Ezekiel 28. (1) Metaphorical, describing the king of Tyre with bold and exaggerated terms, (2) allegory, in which another real character is addressed and connecting to the king of Tyre indirectly, or (3) a loose rendering of the Genesis account. (4) Cooper also offers a variant of the third interpretation in which the text of Ezekiel offers the background to the account of Genesis. (Lamar Eugene Cooper, *Ezekiel*, vol. 17, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 264–265.)

Tremper Longman acknowledges this debate but concludes, “While space does not permit a rebuttal, arguments presented on the basis of Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 are not credible. The serpent simply appears with no explanation of its origin.” (Tremper Longman III, *How to Read Genesis* (Westmont, IL: IVP Academic, 2005), 167).

John Calvin, more directly, proposes that such connections of Satan to Ezekiel and Isaiah “arise from ignorance.”

The exposition of this passage, which some have given, as if it referred to Satan, has arisen from ignorance; for the context plainly shows that these statements must be understood in reference to the king of the Babylonians. But when passages of Scripture are taken up at random, and no attention is paid to the context, we need not wonder that mistakes of this kind frequently arise. Yet it was an instance of very gross ignorance, to imagine that *Lucifer* was the king of devils, and that the Prophet gave him this name. But as these inventions have no probability whatever, let us pass by them as useless fables. (John Calvin and William Pringle, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, vol. 1 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 442.)

Joe Thomas, in his study of Ezekiel, also offers four interpretations. (1) A human ruler or rulers of Tyre (Ralph Alexander, although controlled by Satan[1978] and human ruler [1986]; Joe Thomas, Peter Cragie; Ronald Clements; Iain Duquid; Lamar Cooper; Leslie Allen (says that the interpreter who applies vv 11-19 to Satan is “guilty of detaching the passage from its literary setting”); Christopher Wright; Daniel Block; Calvin) (2) A description of Satan (Warren Wiersbe, although he conveniently says nothing of the final three descriptions; Ronald Clements; Lamar Cooper; Origen; Tertullian, Jerome; M. Unger; Lewis Chafer; J. D. Pentecost; Charles Ryrie; Millard Erikson; Charles Fienberg). (3) A mythological rendering (Peter C. Cragie, sees this as a compilation of the biblical story of Eden and the Caananite story of creation; Walther Eichrodt) (4) Jerusalem's priesthood (Steven Tuell).

Norman Habel offers a compelling interpretation which would connect Genesis 3 to Ezekiel. (Habel, Norman C. “Ezekiel 28 and the Fall of the First Man.” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 38, no. 8 (September 1967): 516–24.)

³ Bryna Brodt, in her Master's Thesis, offers a comprehensive study of the literal, allegorical, and mythical interpretations of the serpent in Genesis 3. I struggled finding commentaries that addressed the issue in any length. However, Walton, in his commentary on Genesis, does offer a helpful section in regards to the identity of the serpent. [Bryna Brodt, “The Serpents Identity in Genesis 3: A History of Jewish Interpretation from the Bible Through the Thirteenth Century” (MA Thesis, Montreal, Canada, McGill University, 2002); Walton, *Genesis*, 2001, 207–10.]

⁴ Mathews, *Genesis 1-11*, 1a:233.

“We may interpret the role of the serpent in the same vein as Peter's resistance to Jesus' death, where the Lord responded to Peter: “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me. You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men” (Matt 16:23). Jesus does not mean Peter is possessed with Satan as Judas was when “Satan entered” him (Luke 22:3), nor was he threatened with possession (Luke 22:31). But Peter unwittingly was an advocate for Satan's cause.” [Mathews, 1a:234.]

God condemns the serpent in Genesis 3:14–15. God told the serpent someone would come from the women that would “bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.” In Romans, Paul references this condemnation and reveals the serpent to be Satan. He writes, “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you” (Rom 16:20). (2) The apostle John as well identifies the serpent as Satan. In Revelation, John writes, “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him” (Rev 12:9).⁵

Therefore, mirroring the confidence of the New Testament authors, we proceed forward with the assertion that – in some sense, indirectly or directly – Satan tempted Eve.⁶ We do not need to know the particulars as to how this was accomplished.

A talking serpent. The author offers no explanation as to why the serpent talks or why Eve seems unphased by the talking. Authors, scholars, and preachers offer plenty of speculation. (1) Adam and Eve were new and naïve. Everything around them was new. A talking serpent may not have prompted any suspicion. (2) Others have denied the literalness of the serpent and thereby would attribute the serpent’s speech to something such as Eve’s inner thoughts. (3) Others seem to explain the serpent’s speech as the personification/vocalization of ANE cultic thought.

While speculation abounds, let us settle a couple things and leave this alone. In the New Testament, Paul indicates that the serpent deceived Eve (2 Cor 11:3). In so doing, Paul appears to acknowledge the historical reality of this conversation and the distinctness between Eve and the serpent. Moses displays little concern over the identity of the serpent or the serpent’s ability to talk or Eve’s lack of awareness. Moses, instead, emphasizes the substance of the conversation between the serpent and Eve.

Adam for real? Like the historical reality of the serpent and his ability to talk, many doubt the historical reality of Adam (along with the historicity of the entire passage).⁷ However, the New Testament assumes Adam’s historical reality. The genealogy in Luke traces Jesus’ lineage back to Adam (Luke 3:23ff.). Additionally, Paul acknowledges Adam as a real man who committed a real

⁵ A couple other New Testament texts indirectly reference the serpent. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians, “But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ” (2 Cor 11:3). Also, the author of Hebrews, although not as clearly, connects Christ’s work on the cross to the destruction of Satan which likely connects to the “crushing of the head.” He writes, “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery” (Heb 2:14–15).

⁶ Possibly, if the serpent was not Satan or indwelt/guided by Satan, Satan was still responsible. Maybe Satan’s responsibility in this text compares to his role in the interaction between Jesus and Peter. Peter rebukes Jesus, and Jesus says, “Get behind me Satan! You are a hindrance to me” (Matt 16:22–23). Peter was not indwelt by Satan, but he still ends up being a voice of Satanic lies and temptation.

⁷ James M. Boice offers four alternative perspectives of Genesis 3: fable, legend, myth, or parable. He states that he drew these descriptions from E. J. Young’s book *In the Beginning*. Boice does simply explain all the different views, and while it does offer a simple overview of alternative views, he doesn’t go into any kind of depth. (James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expositional Commentary*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 160.)

trespass, requiring another real man to live a perfect life and pay the payment of that trespass (Rom 5:18-19; 1 Cor 15:20-21).⁸

Temptation's Traits

So then, we move forward with the assumption two real people (Adam and Eve) lived in an actual place, in which a serpent initiated an actual conversation with Eve – of which maybe Adam was present.⁹

Moses reveals his emphasis in the passage by means of time spent on each of the components. In the first 6 verses, Moses discusses the temptation of Eve by the serpent. The following eighteen verses (and arguably much of the rest of Scripture) outline the devastating consequences of Adam and Eve's sin. Almost as a passing statement, in the second half of verse six, Moses acknowledges the actual sin of Eve and then Adam. He writes, "she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate" (Gen 3:6).

The story of the sin that resulted in the corruption of the entire creation and resulted in every following person's individual corruption, brokenness, and sinfulness consists of four phrases in the latter half of one verse in Genesis 3. Eve ate. Gave the fruit to Adam. Adam ate. Everything fell apart from then on! The sin that has ravaged the world and resulted in all creation groaning was the simple act of eating a piece of fruit.

And yet behind the eating of that fruit lies a host of other problems.

Before we look at these other problems (what I have termed "temptation's traits") let me ask you to consider one thing. Be careful to not rank sin in your life according to your perception of its level of evil or abhorrence. All Adam and Eve did was eat a piece of fruit, and the consequences have extended to the death of every created thing. Consider the deserved consequences of your sin in light of Adam and Eve's sin and following consequences.

Now then, to temptations traits. We can draw the following purpose from this passage.

Purpose statement. Succumbing to Satan's temptations results in devastation.

Before acknowledging the traits of temptation outlines in this text, let me qualify a couple of things. (1) Moses' intention is not to outline the traits of temptation or to offer the progression from temptation to a sinful action. Rather, Moses concisely unfolds the moment in which sin entered humanity and the ramification of that sin on mankind. In this moment, all following

⁸ "it may still be an open question whether the account transcribes the facts or translates them: i.e. whether it is a narrative comparable to such a passage as 2 Samuel 11 (which is the straight story of David's sin) or to 2 Samuel 12:1-6 (which presents the same event translated into quite other terms that interpret it)." [Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1967), 71.]

⁹ Moses does not indicate whether Adam was present for this conversation. The conversation only takes place between the serpent and Eve, but Eve offers the fruit to Adam – and Moses does not indicate that she had to go find him. Additionally, he immediately takes the fruit. Why would he unless he had already processed the lies and alternate proposal of Satan?

corruption and sin finds its birth, and in this moment, the need of a Savior manifests. However, Moses successfully outlines the first temptation and from it we learn a great deal.

Questions God's instructions (3:1).

The serpent begins his conversation with a question of doubt, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" (Gen 3:1). In this case – God did not actually say that. God said, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden" (Gen 2:16). He does warn Adam and Eve to not eat of one singular tree in the garden, but He allows every other tree. In this instance, Satan twists God's command to make it sound more demanding and harder than it truly was.

Temptation often begins with a seemingly innocuous question of God's instructions. Did God really say that? Does God really not want you to be happy? Does God really not want you to find love? Does God really want you to always be holy? Does God really not want you to just be yourself?

In posing these questions of doubt, subtly, Satan insinuates that our opinion matters in these decisions. We begin to think God's commands are somewhat dependent on our own circumstances or understanding – and sadly too often we conclude that God's commands aren't relevant to our particular circumstances.

Exaggerates God's commands (3:3).

Both Satan and Eve model this exaggeration. First, Satan exaggerates. God says, "there is one tree I don't want you to eat from." Satan asks, "Really! You can't eat of *any* of the trees!" No. That's not what God said.

While somewhat correcting Satan, Eve adds her own exaggeration. First, she corrects Satan by saying, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden.'"¹⁰ But then, Eve exaggerates. She says, "neither shall you touch it, lest you die" (Gen 3:3). That is not what God said. God said nothing about touching it. He also didn't say you'd die if you touched the tree.

Is this not what we do with God's commands though? We tend to exaggerate them.

- God says, "love everyone." We say, "Ok! God just wants me to be a doormat!"
- God says, "be holy as I am holy." We say, "So, I'm supposed to only and always be reading my bible and thinking about God."

We exaggerate God's commands and then conclude that his expectations are unreasonable and unbearable.

Magnifies God's strictness (3:3).

In the exaggeration of God's commands, we tend to magnify God's strictness. Both Satan and Eve magnify God's strictness. Satan acts as if Adam and Eve can't eat from any of the trees when God

¹⁰ There is question as to whether the tree was in the midst of the garden. Moses does not tell us in Genesis 2 that the tree was in the midst of the garden. Potentially Eve is over emphasizing this tree – as if it were the most prominent and best tree that God forbid them to eat. However, this is speculation.

only said they could not eat from one of them. And, Eve magnifies God's strictness when she adds, "we can't even touch the tree lest we die!"

In God's defense – as if he needed any defense – God allowed Adam and Eve access to the fruit of every tree except one. Apparently, they could even enjoy, on some level, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as long as they did not eat from it. However, Eve over dramatizes the command. With eyes furrowed, and hand to brow, Eve acts as if God placed the best tree right smack dab in the middle of the garden and then told her and Adam – DON'T EVEN TOUCH IT!" That's not what God said.

Frederick William Faber writes, in 1862, of this in his hymn "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy." He writes in the third verse, "we make God's love too narrow by false limits of our own, and we magnify its strictness with a zeal God will not own."¹¹

Amid temptation, we tend to magnify God's strictness.

Denies God's promises (3:4).

Rarely does temptation start with outright denial of God's commands and promises, but it almost always works its way to denial. In verse four, Satan quickly rebukes Eve and says, "You will not surely die." In one sense, Satan is right. Adam and Eve do not ultimately, physically die that day. God said, "in the day that you eat of it you will surely die" (Gen 2:17). However, we know Adam lived another 900+ years (Gen 5:5). Satan is also correct in that Eve would not die by touching the tree.

Satan's half-truths and conniving manner of speech falsely directed Eve to denying God's promises. Satan is so shrewd. He hints at things – forcing the naïve to draw inaccurate conclusions about God's desires.

So then, what did God mean by death? While Adam and Eve did not ultimately, physically die that day, they did begin to physically die. More serious, they immediately spiritually died. They were immediately separated from God's presence and the garden which was the source of life.¹² Paul references this death when he writes in Ephesians, "you were dead in the trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1).

Augustine. When, therefore, it is asked what death it was with which God threatened our first parents if they should transgress the commandment they had received from Him, and should fail to preserve their obedience,—whether it was the death of soul, or of body, or of the whole man, or that which is called second death,—we must

¹¹ Frederick William Faber, "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy," Hymnary. Accessed April 30, 2021. https://hymnary.org/text/theres_a_wideness_in_gods_mercy

¹² "Though the man and woman did not die immediately upon eating the fruit, the expectation and assignment to death were soon enough. Furthermore, they experienced expulsion from the garden, which was indicative of death. Later Israel experienced excommunication when any of its members were discovered ceremonially unclean; such victims were counted as dead men in mourning (e.g., Lev 13:45). Expulsion from the garden, which represented the presence of God as did the tabernacle in the camp, meant a symbolic "death" for the excommunicated (cf. 1 Sam 15:35–16:1)." [Mathews, *Genesis 1-11*, 1a:237.]

answer, It is all. For the first consists of two; the second is the complete death, which consists of all.¹³

Doubts God's motives (3:5).

Satan offers a reinterpreted plan. Satan proposes an alternate explanation. Satan tells Eve, "Not only are you not going to die, God knows that when you eat the fruit your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Once again, Satan offers a half-truth. When Adam and Eve ate the fruit, their eyes were open and they did come to understand evil. However, Satan presented this package as a wonderful thing God was keeping from them – when in fact, their opened eyes and awareness of evil was an awareness of their own act of evil.

God is good. However, Satan presents God as someone keeping them from happiness. Satan always presents God's good gifts in a negative light. Satan presents God's love as God holding back from man. Satan presents man's service to God as oppression not a place of blessing. Satan presents ultimate destruction as liberation and freedom.

Appeals to our desires (3:6).

Following this repackaged lie of Satan, Moses tells the reader that Eve "saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise" (Gen 3:6).

Similarly, two New Testament authors acknowledge this progression. The apostle John defines the passions of the world by "the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world" (1 John 2:16). Similarly, James writes, "each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death" (James 1:14-15).

Eve, like all mankind, makes decisions based on her own assessment of the situation instead of the clear commands of God.

Leads to devastation (3:7).

As a result of Adam and Eve eating one piece of fruit, all mankind died. That is dramatic! However, this reality ought to prompt us to seriously weigh the consequences of our own sin. Our own sins sufficiently condemn us eternally to death.

Additionally, our present sins never result in lasting blessing. I say, lasting blessing because at times it appears that our sins did not necessarily immediately result in destruction. God's blessings never follow from our sinful actions.

¹³ Augustine of Hippo, *St. Augustin's City of God and Christian Doctrine*, vol. 2, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1887), 250.

Resources for Bible Study

Tremper Longman III, *How to Read Genesis* (Westmont, IL: IVP Academic, 2005). (Chapter 10: Section – Genesis 3:15: The Protoevangelium)

Walton, John H. *Genesis*. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001. (“Bridging the Context” section of Genesis 3:1-7). Walton offers a concise discussion on the identity of the serpent and Satan.

Questions for Bible Study

1. What other scripture passages would indicate to you that this story in Genesis 3 is to be understood literally, not metaphorically or as a parable or myth?
2. Who/what is the serpent in Genesis 3:1? What other biblical text would you use to support your conclusion? Does it matter?
3. What issues might you take with Eve’s reply to the serpent? How does Eve’s response reflect mankind’s natural tendency to process God’s commands?
4. How have you understood death in this context? What other biblical passages might indicate the type of death spoken of in this passage?
5. Does Satan lie at all in this story? I’m suggesting that Satan doesn’t lie. How might I conclude that?

Message 8:

God Pursues Man (3:8-13)

May 9, 2021

Introduction

How often have you felt that God's approval or pleasure with you is dependent on your ability to sustain a modicum of a consistent spiritual life? While we may quickly acknowledge God's love for mankind, we quickly spiral into an overemphasis on his wrath. As believers we know God must love us, but we most certainly don't think he likes us.

How many of you – Christians – consistently live in fear of God's wrath? How many of you feel the regular burden of God's impending disapproval and anger over your failures and sins? Amid your sin or immediately following, do you desire God's presence or his distance? Do you assume his presence would bring with it his anger?

If you feel this way (which let's be honest, probably all of us feel this way regularly) you are surrounded by a host of others – including Adam Eve – who have and continue to feel the same way.

However, I would like to propose to you, based on this text in Genesis, that our natural inclination to run and hide out of fear of God is the wrong response. And, in fact, God approaches and pursues us with purposeful and intense love and a desire to restore, and yet our inclination is to run, hide, and blame.

Purpose statement. God pursues his people even though they typically run from him.

William Cushing, a minister and hymnists of the nineteenth century, wrote "Hiding In Thee" which well reflects what our tendency ought to be.

O safe to the Rock that is higher than I
My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly
So sinful so weary Thine, Thine, would I be
Thou blest Rock of Ages I'm hiding in Thee.

Motivated by love¹, God graciously pursues.

God pursues his people by means of his presence and inquiry. God comes to the garden and he calls out to Adam and Eve.

¹ I use "love" as an umbrella term with the intention of implying God's grace, mercy, kindness, goodness, etc. The emphasis in this point is God's pursuit not the attribute that prompts the pursuit.

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." (Gen 3:8–10).

Note in this case that God does not come in wrath. Of course, at times, God comes in wrath. We see this a couple chapters later as he floods the world. However, this wrath comes because of continual rejection of his gracious outreached hand.

In Proverbs, Solomon offers a contrast between two women – woman folly and woman wisdom. Woman folly sneaks around and entices in dark corners and hides her real intentions – ever luring in the naïve fool into her destructive path. Woman wisdom, however, stands "on the heights beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand" (Prov 8:1). She is present, and she calls out to "children of men," pleading with them to come to her for life and blessing. Wisdom, the personification of God, comes to the "children of men" and pleads with them to follow him.

In Ezekiel, God rebukes the "shepherds" of Israel who have fed and clothed themselves while rejecting and neglecting the weak, sick, and injured. As a result, the sheep were scattered, wandering the hills, with "none to search or seek for them" (Eze 34:1-6). In contrast, God declares, "Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out" (Eze 34:11, cf. Eze 11:17). The people of Israel display no inclination to seek God, but God pursues them. Ezekiel writes:

As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness.... I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice. (Eze 34:11–16).

Hosea offers a lived out parable of God's dramatic and sacrificial pursuit of his people. God directs Hosea to "take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom" (Hosea 1:2).² On numerous occasions, Gomer defiles their marriage as she sleeps with other men. Hosea names their third child "Loammi" which means "not my people." Hosea, throughout chapter two, unfolds Gomer's ongoing pursuit of various lovers (2:7) and his own ongoing provision for her (2:8). While Gomer suffers the consequences of her decisions – and Hosea allows her to suffer the consequences of her decision – Hosea ultimately "brings her into the wilderness and speaks tenderly to her" (2:14). Hosea gives her vineyards and a "door of hope" (2:15).

² Paul apple offers the three following options for "take a wife of whoredom" in his "Overview of Hosea." (1) actually marry a prostitute – but nothing seems wrong in the early stages of birth of first son; this would be very strange – would not picture the condition of a redeemed people who subsequently would commit spiritual adultery; question whether the next two children are really his ... you can see the decline in the relationship (2) symbolic only; an allegory – does not give the power to the illustration; details of the narrative read like a literal story 3) Gomer chaste initially – but God foretelling what her character and actions would be; this is the preferable view.

And the LORD said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.” So I bought her... (Hosea 3:1-2).

The people of Israel continually rejected God and sought-after other gods and desired to find satisfaction by other means. Yet, God displays his natural affinity for his people and pursued them.

Isaiah laments Judah’s destruction. He writes of how Judah has “become a wilderness” and “Jerusalem a desolation” and the beautiful temple has been burned (64:10-11). Isaiah pleads with God to not be “so terribly angry...remember not iniquity forever” (64:9). Immediately preceding, Isaiah describes the people.

we sinned; in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved? We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities. (Isaiah 64:5-7).

However, in chapter sixty-five, God informs Isaiah of his consistent demeanor towards his people.

I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, “Here I am, here I am,” to a nation that was not called by my name. I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices; a people who provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens and making offerings on bricks; (Isa 65:1-3).

In each instance, the biblical authors describe mankind as sinful, rejecting God, and fleeing from his presence. Yet, God, while allowing the natural consequences of sin, appears physically (whether through supernatural means or by means of a spokesperson) and calls out to man – and in so doing extending hope amid brokenness.

In the New Testament we see the clearest and most profound extension of God to mankind. He sends Jesus to “seek and save the lost” (Lk 19:10). Throughout his life, Jesus both models and teaches about God’s natural inclination to pursue mankind.

In Luke 15, Jesus teaches about God’s passionate pursuit of lost man. The religious leaders grumble about Jesus because he “receives sinners and eats with them” (Lk 15:1). Jesus responds by offering three parables, starting with the parable of the lost sheep. Jesus implies any good shepherd would leave his flock and go search out one lost sheep and abundantly rejoice over the return of the lost sheep.

Similarly, a woman who lost a precious coin would diligently search throughout her house to find it. She would rejoice in finding the lost coin.

Jesus ends his three-fold parable with the parable of the prodigal son. The son takes his father’s inheritance and blows it all on wasteful living. However, when the son comes back, the Father runs

to greet him and rejoices in that his son “was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found” (Lk 15:32).

Jesus not only taught about God’s dramatic pursuit of man but embodied God’s pursuit of man. The apostle John writes, “for God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Similarly, Paul writes, “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21).

Throughout the scriptures, biblical authors consistently display God as a God who pursues his people. God’s natural response to sinful man is not wrath but instead an extension of himself in grace and hope. Only following man’s rejection of God’s grace does man experience God’s appropriate and divine wrath.

We are called to pursue others. Let me draw a brief theological implication. God pursues us. We ought to pursue others. The goal of mankind ought to be glorifying God by declaring and/or reflecting his character. Therefore, if God is a gracious God who pursues broken and shame-ridden people, we should desire to pursue broken and shame-ridden people as well in order to extend to them the grace and hope of God.

Prompted by shame, man foolishly retreats.

God naturally pursues sinful man. However, sinful man naturally flees from God (and others). Notice Adam and Eve’s actions amid God coming to them in the garden.

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” (Gen 3:8–13).

In this brief exchange, we see mankind’s natural disposition to flee in shame and blame when caught.

Shameful retreat. In the moment of Adam and Eve’s sin, man’s long battle with shame began. Let me briefly define shame and make a distinction between shame and guilt. Shame is an awareness of a failure before the eyes of someone.³ We can feel shame from others as they communicate

³ David Powlison, Julie E. Lowe, and Andrew Ray, *What Is the Difference between Guilt and Shame?*, 2012, <http://www.ccef.org/resources/podcast/what-difference-between-guilt-and-shame>.

disappointment or criticism⁴, directly or indirectly. We sense shame when we think we may have disappointed someone or did not meet up to their expectations.

Welch. Shame and guilt are close companions but not identical. Shame is the more common and broader of the two. In Scripture you will find shame (nakedness, dishonor, disgrace, defilement) about ten times more often than you find guilt. Guilt lives in the courtroom where you stand alone before the judge. It says, “You are responsible for wrongdoing and legally answerable.” “You are wrong.” “You have sinned.” The guilty person expects punishment and needs forgiveness. Shame lives in the community, though the community can feel like a courtroom. It says, “You don’t belong—you are unacceptable, unclean, and disgraced” because “You are wrong, you have sinned” (guilt), or “Wrong has been done to you” or “You are associated with those who are disgraced or outcast.” The shamed person feels worthless, expects rejection, and needs cleansing, fellowship, love, and acceptance.⁵

Initially, shame manifest itself in Adam and Eve’s awareness of their nakedness. They felt exposed. They desired to cover themselves. They did not want one another to see their defilement. This sense of shame becomes most acute as they are cast out of the garden – rejected, separated, and cast away. They were unclean and they felt unclean.

Welch. Shame is the deep sense that you are unacceptable because of something you did, something done to you, or something associated with you. You feel exposed and humiliated. Or, to strengthen the language, you are disgraced because you acted less than human, you were treated as if you were less than human, or you were associated with something less than human, and there are witnesses.⁶

Foolish blaming. And for Adam and Eve, just like us, we want to shed ourselves of the shame, so we do all we can to shift the blame. Shame places on our shoulders an unbearable weight, and we do all we can to remove it. “When you feel dirty because you have caked the mud on yourself, you try to say that other people have been slinging mud at you.”⁷

⁴ Powlison, Lowe, and Ray.

⁵ Edward T. Welch, *Shame Interrupted: How God Lifts the Pain of Worthlessness and Rejection* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2012).

⁶ Welch seems to emphasize the feelings of shame and the lasting and negative consequences of shame within the context of shame generated by ourselves and others. On the other hand, Thomas Watson, in his book *The Doctrine of Repentance*, establishes that shame is the main ingredient of repentance. He concludes that sin “breeds shame...[that] in every sin there is much unthankfulness, and that is a matter of shame...[that] our sins have put Christ to shame [and that should put us to shame]...[that] sin...turns men into beast...[and that] in every sin there is folly.”⁶ For each and all these reasons we should feel shame. While Watson and Welch’s views may seem contradictory at first glance, I don’t believe they are. Welch focuses on the shame we feel from ourselves and others. This sense of shame can be debilitating and does not lead to godly repentance. On the other hand, Watson focuses on the shame we feel in not meeting up to God’s expectations. This shame does and should lead us to biblical repentance.

Edward T. Welch, *Shame Interrupted: How God Lifts the Pain of Worthlessness and Rejection*, 2; Thomas Watson, *Doctrine of Repentance*, sec. 353-387. Kindle Edition.

⁷ Welch, *Shame Interrupted*.

Blame shifting does not ultimately work because we are typically self-aware enough to know where blame actually lies. We do all within our power to shift the blame, make everyone look at someone else, and for at least a moment feel a little better about the whole situation.

However, God in his grace, simply asks us to acknowledge we have mud on our faces so that he can graciously cleanse it. He doesn't want to point fingers. He wants to forgive and our relationship be restored.

Conclusion

1. There is an appropriate place for shame. While God does not desire us to live in or wallow within ongoing shame. We ought to sense shame when we don't meet up to God's expectations. However, God extends a quick resolution to that shame.
2. God's pursuit and quick forgiveness do not remove natural consequences for sin.
3. We are to move toward others in the same way that God moved towards us in Christ.

Move Toward Others. God takes the initiative and moves toward us; we take the initiative toward others. This is simple teaching with endless applications. (1) Jesus pursues us, we pursue each other. He says "I love you" first, even when we respond with an indifferent shrug or the equivalent of a passing, "Oh, thanks." And in this we discover why it might be hard for us to move toward others: the one taking the initiative in the relationship—the one who loves most—is the one who risks humiliation. . . . Too often we are silent when we know of someone's trouble. Silence is the same as turning away. (2) Jesus listens, we listen. The extroverts among us seem to make it look easy. The more shy might be intimidated by the potential awkwardness or silence. But loving pursuit is neither easy nor natural to anyone. (3) We listen. This means we are undistracted, engaged, and affected by what they say. We share, in some small way, the delights of the good things and the burdens of the hard things.⁸

Resources for Bible Study

Foh, Susan T. "What Is the Woman's Desire." *The Westminster Theological Journal* 37, no. 3 (1975): 376–83.

Welch, Edward T. *Caring for One Another: 8 Ways to Cultivate Meaningful Relationships*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2018. ("Move Toward Others," Chapter 2)

Welch, Edward T. *Shame Interrupted: How God Lifts the Pain of Worthlessness and Rejection*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2012. ("When God Touches the Untouchables," Chapter 14)

⁸ Edward T. Welch, *Caring for One Another: 8 Ways to Cultivate Meaningful Relationships* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), Synthesis of Chapter 2.

Message 9:

Waring Offspring (3:14-15)

May 16, 2021

Introduction

"The Hatfields and McCoys. Mere mention of their names stirs up visions of a lawless and unrelenting family feud. It evokes gun-toting vigilantes hell-bent on defending their kinfolk, igniting bitter grudges that would span generations."¹ Two families. Hatfields led by "Devil Anse" and the McCoys led by "Old Ranel." Arguably, in 1878, the feud began when Randolph McCoy accused Floyd Hatfield of stealing his pig. A Hatfield presided over the case, and a Hatfield played the role of key witness. Of course, the case was dropped. Two years later this key witness was killed by a McCoy who was as well acquitted.

Only months later, a Hatfield impregnated a McCoy who he would quickly abandon to marry her first cousin.

Just a couple years later, in 1882, three McCoy sons fought two of Devil Anse's brothers and eventually stabbed and shot one of them in the back. The Hatfields beat the authorities to these three McCoys and ended up tying them to some bushes and shooting all three. Somehow, even though the authorities determined the Hatfields should be prosecuted, they were not and the McCoys were outraged that the Hatfields walked free – once again.

Motivated by a desire to end the McCoys once and for all, a group of Hatfields determined to go and kill Randolph and his entire family. They failed to kill Randolph but did kill his son and daughter and badly beat his wife.

A few days later, a bounty hunter chased down two of this group, killing one. He eventually caught nine of the family members and hauled them all off to jail, where eight of them would spend their lives and one would be hung.

I would imagine whenever a Hatfield walked near a McCoy, both felt a certain uneasiness if not outright rage and contempt. Each family constantly and irritatingly pressed down upon the other. And it all started because of a pig – maybe.

And yet, a weightier family feud began one day when a woman ate a piece of fruit. From that day, the offspring of Eve would be at constant battle with the offspring of Satan. The battle would be unrelenting. There would be significant moments in this family feud; however, these two families would constantly sense the pressure and the animosity from the other. [Read Genesis 3:14-15.]

¹ "The Hatfield & "McCoy Feud," History Channel, n.d., <https://www.history.com/shows/hatfields-and-mccoys/articles/the-hatfield-mccoy-feud>

Clarification on participants.

The serpent and Satan: visible and invisible participants. (1) Some believe the entire interpretation is meant for the snake and should hold no messianic significance.² (2) Some of the early church fathers interpreted the text allegorically and understood each of the elements to be condemnation singularly on Satan.³ (2) Others have seen the curse applying to both the serpent and Satan. Anecdotaly,⁴ some conclude God addresses the serpent in verse fourteen and Satan in verse 15. However, while the emphasis does seem to shift, God directs all his statements to both the serpent and to Satan.⁵ As has already been discussed, we hold to a literal interpretation of this story. We believe this event actually happened. Adam and Eve were two real people who lived in an actual garden and were tempted by an actual serpent. We also believe Satan was the primary force behind this deception. In Romans, Paul references this condemnation and reveals the serpent to be Satan (Rom 16:20), and John also identifies the serpent as Satan (Rev 12:9).

Therefore, there are two recipients to this curse – both the serpent (physical and visible instrument of deception) and Satan (spiritual and invisible power behind deception).

Dual fulfillment and transition of emphasis. Due the conclusion of two recipients, let me propose God intends to direct both verses (14-15) to both the serpent and Satan. Even though

² “This verse is one of the most famous cruxes of Scripture. Interpreters fall into two categories: those who see in the decree a messianic import and those who see nothing of the kind. The more conservative and traditional writers (e.g., Schaeffer, Leupold, Vos, Kidner, Aalders, and Stigers) opt for the first approach, but the bulk of authors in the critical camp (e.g., Skinner, von Rad, Speiser, Vawter, and Westermann) fail to see any promise of a Messiah in this verse and agree that far too much has been read into it.” [Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, 197.] Josephus also appears to consider this entire passage as directed to the serpent. He writes, “He also deprived the serpent of speech, out of indignation at his malicious disposition towards Adam...” (Ant. I.1.50) [Josephus, *The Works of Josephus: Complete & Unabridged*, 30.] “Westermann disagrees with those who understand Gen 3:15 to be a reference to Christ. He argues that “seed” (*zera'*) should be understood collectively as a reference to the entire line of the serpent’s and woman’s descendants. He views this aspect of the curse as pointing to humanity’s relationship with animals generally.” [Mangum, Custis, and Widder, *Genesis 1-11*, Ge 3:1-24.]

³ “Neither do we approve the views of those fathers who allegorically apply these words to the devil, that he goes upon his belly when he tempts us to gluttony and lechery (of which the belly is the instrument), and he eats earth by having power over earthly-minded people—for after this manner, the whole story may likewise be allegorized.” [George, Timothy, Scott M. Manetsch, and John L. Thompson, *Genesis 1-11*, vol. 1, Reformation Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Academic, 2012), 155–56.]

⁴ I did not find any commentators who proposed God directed verse fourteen to the serpent and verse fifteen to Satan. However, my personal experience seems to indicate that and a couple of people I discussed this with also had previously understood the text that way. This may be a common understanding for the average lay person.

⁵ “If we do not look beyond the serpent, these words have in them something incomprehensible, inasmuch as the serpent is destitute of that responsibility which alone could justify so severe a sentence.” [E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament and a Commentary on the Messianic Predictions*, trans. Theodore Meyer, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1858), 14.]

“If there could be any doubt that the language addressed to the serpent involved a two-fold meaning—a reference to the spiritual as identified with the natural serpent—it must be removed by these words, which bear a far deeper significance than at first sight they seem to contain.” [Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical on the Old and New Testaments, Vol. 1: Genesis-Deuteronomy* (London; Glasgow: William Collins, Sons, & Company, Limited, n.d.), 57.]

each aspect impacts both the serpent and Satan, the emphasis does appear to shift from the serpent to Satan.⁶

For instance, verse fourteen emphasizes the visible curse on the snake and his humiliation of living in the dust, however, this curse and humiliation as well extend to Satan. Similarly, verse fifteen emphasizes the enmity between the seed of woman and the seed of Satan; however, this enmity as well physically exists between humanity and actual serpents. In general, mankind dislikes snakes. Maybe God has given mankind a constant reminder of the conflict between mankind and Satan in that every time we cringe at the presence of a serpent we are reminded to cringe at our conflict with Satan.

Two seeds. In verse fifteen, God addresses the seed of Satan and the seed of the woman. Moses writes, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Gen 3:15).

We will consider these phrases in more depth as we work through the text. Suffice it to say, not only are two actors discussed in these two verses (ie. the serpent and Satan), but also this curse extends to their offspring. Specifically, the curse drastically impacts the relationship between Satan’s offspring and Eve’s offspring.

In the previous discussion, I have shown my entire hand as to the intent of the passage. However, let us take a few more minutes to see the two dimensions of God’s curse on the serpent and Satan.

Humiliation Bestowed on Satanic Offspring (3:14)

Curse with no questions. Unlike the man and woman, God does not question the serpent. First, God’s questioning intends to draw to repentance and the serpent had no ability or need to repent. Secondly, Satan had already fallen, and repentance was not made available to him. God had no need to question Satan.⁷

Additionally, note that a curse is only declared on the serpent/Satan and not the woman or man. God curses both Satan and the instrument Satan used to corrupt mankind.

Eat Dust. God curses the serpent, and the curse first consists of the serpent being relegated to crawl on his belly in the dirt. God likely created the serpent to move in some form other than crawling on its belly – otherwise the curse “on your belly you shall go” would not have been

⁶ “Wherefore, many explain this whole passage allegorically, and plausible are the subtleties which they adduce for this purpose. But when all things are more accurately weighed, readers endued with sound judgment will easily perceive that the language is of a mixed character; for God so addresses the serpent that the last clause belongs to the devil.” [John Calvin and John King, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis* (Logos Bible Software, 2010), 165–66.]

⁷ Calvin. “He does not interrogate the serpent as he had done the man and the woman; because, in the animal itself there was no sense of sin, and because, to the devil he would hold out no hope of pardon.” [Calvin and King, 165.]

Johannes Brenz. “there was naturally no need to interrogate Satan, who had previously been judged and condemned when he sinned in heaven.... Let us also note that the things said against the serpent would pertain to the external and bodily serpent ... in such a manner that they would look above all to Satan, who was using the serpent as his tool.” [George, Timothy, Manetsch, and Thompson, *Genesis 1-11*, 1:153.] Johannes Brenz (1499-1570) was a German theologian and Reformer of the Duchy of Wurttemberg.

significant. Additionally, the statement “dust you shall eat” likely indicates something other than what the serpent would physically eat. We know that the serpent eats things other than the dirt.

Therefore, the serpent crawling in the dirt and eating dust references something other than just a physical positioning (although it includes the serpent’s physical position). Rather, God humiliated the serpent, and more importantly, God humiliated Satan.

Being assigned to eat the dust clearly delineates a position of humiliation. At least three times throughout the Old Testament, authors use the phrase “lick the dust” to refer to a group of people or person defeating and humiliating another group. The psalmist writes, “May desert tribes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust!” (Psalm 72:9). Isaiah writes, “Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. With their faces to the ground they shall bow down to you, and lick the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who wait for me shall not be put to shame” (Isa 49:23). And finally, Micah writes of humiliated nations, “they shall lick the dust like a serpent, like the crawling things of the earth; they shall come trembling out of their strongholds; they shall turn in dread to the LORD our God, and they shall be in fear of you” (Micah 7:17).

The serpent was literally, physically condemned to crawl in the dirt. In so doing, God offers mankind a constant reminder of the moment in which Satan led mankind into sin and the moment in which God initially humiliated Satan and would continue to humiliate Satan.

Perpetual Conflict Initiated with Satanic Offspring (3:15)

Within verse fifteen, God declares the perpetual conflict between Satan’s offspring and Eve’s offspring. Moses writes, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Gen 3:15).

Bruise. Let me acknowledge two potential challenges in the second half of the verse. Let us take the easiest first. First, you may notice, in looking at different versions, that some translators use a word other than bruise and that some also use two different words – such as crush and strike or break and bruise or crush and bite.

it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel (KJV).

he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel (ESV, NASB, CJB, RSV).

He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel (HCSB, NLT).

he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel (NIV).

He shal breake thine head, & thou shalt bruise his heele (GEN).

her offspring will attack your head, and you will attack her offspring’s heel (NET).

Her offspring will crush your head, and you will bite her offspring’s heel (GNB).

she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel (DR, Wycliffe’s version also used “she”).

The Hebrew word for these two terms is the same and should be translated the same.⁸ The versions that use the same word throughout the verse offer a better option. Likely, translators attempted to translate meaning or interpretation motivated by a desire to emphasize that Eve's offspring would hurt the serpent more than the serpent would hurt Eve. Also, even though "bruise" is an accurate translation, the word likely seems soft to the modern reader. A bruise is not all that bothersome. I am hoping Eve's offspring hurts Satan a bit more than just a bruise on his head. As a result, you may notice that some translators have used words such as "crush" or "strike" or "attack."

Perpetual conflict. Additionally, this bruising consists of repeated and ongoing attacks – not a onetime event. Maybe like me, you have assumed that the bruise on the heel consisted of the piercing of Jesus' feet on the cross. However, consistently, commentators see a much broader application or implication to both bruises.⁹ At this point, a conflict began between Eve and Satan, between Eve's offspring and Satan's offspring – a conflict that would span all time until Christ would eventually return to annihilate once and for all Satan and all those who chose to follow him.

This passage unlikely points to a singular moment when Satan would hurt Christ (his death) and Christ would crush Satan (through his death and resurrection). The battle between Satan and Eve's offspring began immediately and would continue after Christ's death and resurrection. In Romans, Paul acknowledges that the church plays a role in this fulfillment when he writes, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (Rom 16:20). Additionally, we know that Satan is not ultimately cast down/crushed until Jesus' return – discussed in Revelation.¹⁰

⁸ *Hamilton*. "Presumably we should translate the verb the same way both times, there being no evidence in the Hebrew text to support divergent readings (cf. AV, RSV, NAB, NEB, Speiser). It seems unwise to translate the first *šûp* as "crush" and the second as "strike at," as is done in NIV and JB. For this creates the impression that the blow struck at the serpent is fatal—its head is crushed—while the blow unleashed by the serpent against the woman's seed is painful but not lethal—it comes away with a bruised heel. Such a shift in translation is not only artificial, but it forces on the text a focus that is not there.... In order to maintain the duplication of the Hebrew verb, whatever English equivalent one decides on must be used twice. We have already suggested a reason why "crush" would not be appropriate. *strike at* covers adequately the reciprocal moves of the woman's seed and the serpent's seed against each other rather than something like: 'He shall lie in wait for your head' and 'you shall lie in wait for his heel.'" [Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, 197–98.]

⁹ *Wenham*. "The imperfect verb is iterative. It implies repeated attacks by both sides to injure the other. It declares lifelong mutual hostility between mankind and the serpent race. Of more moment for interpretation is the question whether one side will eventually prove victorious in the battle, or whether the contest will be never-ending." [Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:80.]

Walton. "Given the repetition of the verb and the potentially mortal nature of both attacks, it becomes difficult to understand the verse as suggesting an eventual outcome to the struggle. Instead, both sides are exchanging potentially mortal blows of equal threat to the part of the body most vulnerable to their attack. The verse is depicting a continual, unresolved conflict between humans and the representatives of evil." [John H Walton, *Genesis*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 226.]

¹⁰ *Hamilton*. "Taken in the context of the OT and the fulfillment of promise, the verse finds a partial unfolding at Calvary. It is, however, not until Rev 20 that the implications of the verse reach their climax (cf. also Rom 16:20)." [Victor P. Hamilton, "2349 שׁוּפַ", Harris, Jr, and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 912.]

Her offspring. A second challenge presents itself. You may as well notice, in the various translations, differences in pronouns in the second half of the verse. Some translators have chosen “he,” others chose “her offspring,” and even a couple chose “her.”

I have understood the “he” to be a singular masculine noun – specifically Jesus Christ – who is the best of Eve’s offspring. Jesus, as Eve’s offspring, will come and crush the serpent’s head as he defeats sin and death on the cross and through his resurrection.¹¹

However, in so doing, we “violently distort” the collective noun in the previous phrases.

Calvin. Gladly would I give my suffrage in support of their opinion, but that I regard the word *seed* as too violently distorted by them; for who will concede that a *collective* noun is to be understood of one man *only*? Further, as the perpetuity of the contest is noted, so victory is promised to the human race through a continual succession of ages.¹²

¹¹ I, in large part, draw this interpretation from the translation choices of modern translators. There are three variants – he, it, and she. Arguably, the desire to retain “she” flows from Mariology.

“The fact is also well known that the LXX chose to render the Hebrew pronoun *hu*³ with *autos*, making it a masculine, whereas the Hebrew does not demand anything more than a neuter. The Vulgate, on the other hand, rendered this same pronoun with the feminine *ipsa*, thus giving support to a mario-logical understanding.” [Marten Hendrik Woudstra, “Recent Translations of Genesis 3:15,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 6, no. 2 (November 1971): 195.]

The translation “her offspring” appears contextually correct but does include translated words not in the Hebrew. The use of “he” changes “offspring” to a singular masculine – likely attempting to translate the messianic fulfillment into the passage. Notice the varied translation options.

it shall **bruise** thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel (KJV). **he** shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel (ESV, NASB, CJB, RSV). **He** will strike your head, and you will strike his heel (HCSB, NLT). **he** will crush your head, and you will strike his heel (NIV). **He** shall breake thine head, & thou shalt bruise his heele (GEN). **her offspring** will attack your head, and you will attack her offspring’s heel (NET). **Her offspring** will crush your head, and you will bite her offspring’s heel (GNB). **she** shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel (DR, Wycliffe’s version also used “she”).

“Grammatically **וְהָיָה** is masculine, but actually it is a collective noun of which the natural gender is neuter. The proper translation in English of **וְהָיָה** would be either “it” or “they” (meaning “the descendents of Eve”).” [Raymond Albert Martin, “Earliest Messianic Interpretation of Genesis 3:15,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 84, no. 4 (December 1965): 425.]

This interpretation finds notable supporters. For instance, the Theological Wordbook appears to hold this interpretation. “Commencing with Gen 3:15, the word “seed” is regularly used as a collective noun in the singular (never plural). This technical term is an important aspect of the promise doctrine, for Hebrew never uses the plural of this root to refer to “posterity” or “offspring.” ... Thus the word designates the whole line of descendants as a unit, yet it is deliberately flexible enough to denote either one person who epitomizes the whole group (i.e. the man of promise and ultimately Christ), or the many persons in that whole line of natural and/or spiritual descendants. Precisely so in Gen 3:15. One such seed is the line of the woman as contrasted with the opposing seed which is the line of Satan’s followers. And then surprisingly the text announces a male descendant who will ultimately win a crushing victory over Satan himself.” [Walter C. Kaiser, “582 זָרַע,” Harris, Jr, and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 253.]

¹² Calvin and King, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 170.

The NET Bible and Good News Bible likely offer the best option in this verse as they translate the beginning of verse fifteen as “her offspring will attack your head, and you will attack her offspring’s heel” (Gen 3:15a NET). The crushing of the serpent’s head not only occurs when Jesus comes (which is clearly part of this) but occurs throughout all time as the people of God follow God and live in perpetual conflict with Satan and his offspring.

When righteous Noah obeys God and builds an ark and saves a remnant of mankind, Satan is suppressed. When Abraham believes God and follows his directions, Satan’s plan is foiled. When Moses obeys God and delivers the people of Israel, Satan feels the pressure of God’s people. When Jesus dies for the sins of the world, Satan is immensely destroyed. However, the church (the people of God) continues to be transformed by God and walk with him. In so doing, Satan’s head continues to be crushed (Rom 16:20). Ultimately, the day will come when Jesus returns and utterly and eternally annihilates Satan and crushes him.

Jesus addresses Satan’s offspring when he confronts the religious leaders. Jesus says, “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (Jn 8:44). More starkly, Jesus directly connects these religious leaders to the serpent when he says, “You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?” (Matt 23:33). Additionally, when Jesus explains the parable of the weeds, he acknowledges “The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one” (Matt 13:38).

Therefore, I would propose that the NET Bible offers the most helpful translation. “And I will put hostility between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring; her offspring will attack your head, and you will attack her offspring’s heel” (Gen 3:15).

Conclusion

Ultimately God’s people win and the climax of this victory came when Christ defeated Satan, sin, and death on the cross and through his resurrection. However, the battle continues. Hence, Paul urges God’s people to put on the whole armor of God.

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness,

“one might, while retaining something of the “offspring” notion, understand the two “seeds” to stand for two “races,” two “communities,” each marked by a moral quality. These communities are headed up by two distinct principals, the one principal being the woman, the other the serpent, each of which had just been set at enmity with the other by God himself. Upon this view both of these “seeds” could be found among the children of men. This would then alleviate the difficulty of having to take the word literally in the one instance and figuratively in the other.” [Woudstra, “Recent Translations of Genesis 3:15,” 198.]

“We may also understand by the seed of the woman, all the elect, and by the seed of the serpent, all the wicked, who are the sons of the devil, ... between whom (the elect and the wicked) there shall be perpetual enmity” [George, Timothy, Manetsch, and Thompson, *Genesis 1-11*, 1:158.]

against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. (Eph 6:11-13).

God obviously had in mind Jesus' future earthly work and the even more distant ultimate defeat of Satan (in Revelation). God knows all things and He full well knew his plan. However, the emphasis in this passage seems more about the daily battle that Satan would have with God's people rather than only two significant future events. Therefore, consider a few closing thoughts:

1. Do not be surprised at the perpetual attack of Satan in your life or the regular animosity of those who don't follow God. Expect to be assaulted.
2. Glory in the marvelous work of Christ on the cross, but don't limit your understanding of our spiritual battle to that most important of moments.
3. Therefore, put on the whole armor of God. Every day is a spiritual battle. Since the dawn of time and the initial fall, everyday has been immersed in Satan's ongoing efforts to thwart God's purpose in his people. And each day, as the people of God have walked with him and obeyed him, Satan has been consistently crushed. Keep up the work!
4. God intended to encourage Adam with the condemnation on both the serpent and Satan. This encouragement extends to every believer.

Reconnect to Hatfields and McCoys. Let me offer one more interesting aspect of the feud between the Hatfields and McCoys. Family loyalties were not necessarily determined by blood. Quite often loyalties were determined by employment and proximity. The families did intermarry at times and even switched loyalties. Some of the McCoys even worked for the Hatfields and placed their loyalties accordingly.

The same is true for the family feud between Eve's and Satan's offspring. The ultimate choice is not determined at birth but instead by a choice to which side one will commit. Everyone of us chooses a side, and whether we like it or not, we will experience friction and constant pressure from the other. God has already determined which family ultimately achieves victory, and in one very real sense, through Jesus, God's people have already won. Therefore, I strongly plead with you. The choice is yours. Choose Christ.

Anna Marie Van Schurman: God wants to snatch from the devil's jaws that weak and hapless prey, and turn the Serpent's guile and power into shame and dismay. God pronounces over him a curse filled with hell's own fire and gives a sign to that animal of his wrath and ire: God wants no peace between the woman and the Serpent or its seed, but the seed of this woman will, at the last, crush its head indeed. Behold, from the mouth of God now comes that promise, that great word in which the new covenant between God and mortals is heard! How earth and hell and heaven did then stand here astounded while God's voice rumbled and curses from heaven resounded! Here a wonderful light shines forth from God's gracious throne: the devil's highest punishment yields our highest crown. Satan is condemned, God lifts up the human race to live now without end in God's almighty grace through that wonderful covenant that the Lord did provide by the Son of man's

death— the Son of God at God’s own side! No greater work of love could God’s grace anoint, wherein God’s virtues meet in a single point.¹³

Resources for Bible Study

Tremper Longman III, *How to Read Genesis* (Westmont, IL: IVP Academic, 2005). (Chapter 10: Section – Genesis 3:15: The Protoevangelium)

Hengstenberg, E. W. *Christology of the Old Testament and a Commentary on the Messianic Predictions*. Translated by Theodore Meyer. 2nd ed. Vol. 1. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1858. (“The Protoevangelium,” pgs. 4-20)

Additional Quotes

Martin. If the above explanation is correct, the LXX becomes thereby the earliest evidence of an individual messianic interpretation of Gen 3 15, to be dated in the 3rd or 2nd century B.C. Of course, such an interpretative translation by the LXX does not mean that this is the correct understanding of the Hebrew text. Rather this LXX translation is further evidence of the intensification of messianic expectations among the Jews in the centuries immediately preceding the birth of Jesus.¹⁴

Calvin. This passage affords too clear a proof of the great ignorance, dulness, and carelessness, which have prevailed among all the learned men of the Papacy. The feminine gender has crept in instead of the masculine or neuter. There has been none among them who would consult the Hebrew or Greek *codices*, or who would even compare the Latin copies with each other. Therefore, by a common error, this most corrupt reading has been received. Then, a profane exposition of it has been invented, by applying to the mother of Christ what is said concerning her seed.¹⁵

Ambrose. there is discord between the serpent and the woman. Evil is at the base of discord; thus evil has not been taken away. Indeed, it has been reserved for the serpent, that he might watch for the woman’s heel and the heel of her seed, so as to do harm and infuse his poison. Therefore let us not walk in earthly things, and the serpent will not be able to harm us.¹⁶

Calvin. I interpret this simply to mean that there should always be the hostile strife between the human race and serpents, which is now apparent; for, by a secret feeling of nature, man abhors them....We must now make a transition from the serpent to the author of this mischief himself; and that not only in the way of comparison, for there truly is a literal *anagogy*; because God has not so vented his anger upon the outward instrument as to spare the devil, with whom lay all the blame....I therefore conclude, that God here chiefly assails Satan under the name of the serpent, and hurls against him the lightning of his judgment. This he does for a twofold reason: first, that

¹³ George, Timothy, Manetsch, and Thompson, *Genesis 1-11*, 1:158.

¹⁴ Martin, “Earliest Messianic Interpretation of Genesis 3:15,” 427.

¹⁵ Calvin and King, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 170.

¹⁶ Andrew Louth and Marco Conti, *Genesis 1-11*, ACCS (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 90.

men may learn to beware of Satan as of a most deadly enemy; then, that they may contend against him with the assured confidence of victory.¹⁷

Wolfgang Musculus. The simple and proper meaning of words is to be retained, so that the woman is still Eve; the woman's seed is her offspring, the human race; it should be a genuine and natural serpent that misled the woman; the serpent's seed is its offspring as well. The enmity between the serpent and the woman and between the seed of them both may be recognized as the enmity that even now endures between mortals and that cursed beast. At the same time, following Chrysostom, one may see in these certain things a certain image of Satan, the enemy of the human race, who used this serpent as an instrument of his evil.¹⁸

Augustine. There is no mention now of that condemnation of the devil which is reserved for the last judgment, that one the Lord speaks when he says, "Depart into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels"; rather it mentions that punishment of his against which we must be on guard. For his punishment is that he has in his power those who despise the command of God.¹⁹

¹⁷ Calvin and King, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 167–69.

¹⁸ George, Timothy, Manetsch, and Thompson, *Genesis 1-11*, 1:156.

¹⁹ Augustine of Hippo, *Saint Augustine: On Genesis: Two Books on Genesis Against the Manichees; and, on the Literal Interpretation of Genesis: An Unfinished Book*, ed. Thomas P. Halton, trans. Roland J. Teske, vol. 84, *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 121–22.

Message 10:

Curse Applied to Woman and Man

(3:16-19)

May 23, 2021

Kevin DeYoung writes the following in his book *Men and Women in the Church*, “If the husband is called to be the head of the family, then the wife is called to be its heart.” He continues. “This design is reflected not only in the ‘very good’ of Eden, but in the very bad as well. The sin in the garden was, among other things, a reversal of the family order. Eve took charge, and Adam followed her. Eve sinned not just as a person, but as a woman and a wife; Adam sinned as a man and a husband.”¹

[Sidenote: A message of this nature tends to prompt an apologetic approach. The few verses in Genesis 3 that we are going to look at this morning cut to the core of our identity as men and women. They also indicate distinction between the sexes. Whether we find ourselves amid a group of secular people or even a group of evangelicals, we typically avoid discussing the God designed roles for men and women. There tends to be a lot of baggage. In reality, we are afraid of holding a biblical position because a lot of conflict surrounds the biblical position. We must wrestle with graciously and honestly assessing a biblical position and its potential abuses, while at the same time embracing God’s best design because His blessings reside in his good design.]

DeYoung offers what I have found to be the most helpful analogy so far in a discussion about complementarianism and egalitarianism.

Suppose you have two identical basketballs—one you reserve for outdoor use and one you set aside for indoor use. The “rules” of complementarianism are not like the arbitrary labeling of two basketballs. They both work the same way and can essentially do the same thing, except that God has decreed that the two basketballs be set apart for different functions. That’s a capricious complementarianism held together by an admirable submission to Scripture, but in time it will lack any coherent or compelling reason for the existence of different “rules.” But suppose you have a basketball and an American football. They are similar things, used toward similar ends. You could even attempt to use the two balls interchangeably. But the attempt would prove awkward, and in the long run the game would change if you kept shooting free throws with a football or kept trying to execute a run-pass option with a basketball. The rules for each ball are not arbitrary. They are rooted in the

¹ Kevin DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church: A Short, Practical Introduction* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 134–35.

different structure, shape, and purpose for each ball. It's not the nature of a basketball to be used in football. In other words, the rules are rooted in nature.²

In a few minutes we will look more deeply into the consequences of Adam and Eve's sin and how those consequences cut to the core of a man and woman's identity. Before we do, let's address a clarification from last week. Were Adam and Eve cursed?

Under the Curse

Last week I offered the observation "that a curse is only declared on the serpent/Satan and not the woman or man. God curses both Satan and the instrument Satan used to corrupt mankind." I did not offer any implications to this observation. Just pointed out this observation. Wednesday evening, our bible study ended up going down a bit of a rabbit trail on the topic of *the curse* and whether just Satan was cursed or if the curse included Adam and Eve. To begin answering the question, let us offer a definition for *curse*.

Define curse. One wordbook defines curse as "binding utterances with negative and damaging connotations.... or realization of judgment from God."³ TWOT defines curse as invoking "harm or injury by means of a statement, by means of the power of a deity."⁴ My observation remains true. God does not use the word *curse* in addressing Adam and Eve but does when he talks with the serpent/Satan. However, if the definitions for curse are accurate, we would be hard pressed to not conclude that Adam and Eve were cursed.

TWOT offers the concept of hemming in with obstacles and rendering powerless to resist.⁵ Therefore, the serpent was banned to the dirt/ground. Satan was banned from heaven. Adam and Eve were banned from the garden, from the ease of childbirth, and the ease of working the soil.

Adam and Eve were cursed. If a curse consists of binding utterances with damaging connotations, then by all means, Adam and Eve were cursed.⁶ In fact, the apostle Paul would later

² DeYoung, 133–34.

³ Joshua G. Mathews, "Cursing," Douglas Mangum et al., eds., *Lexham Theological Wordbook* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

⁴ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)*.

⁵ Victor P. Hamilton, "אָר 168," Harris, Jr, and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 75.

⁶ A few commentators pointed out that Adam and Eve were not cursed (Boice, Carini). Boice writes, "It is significant that neither Adam nor Eve are said to have been cursed personally. God does curse Satan (v. 14) and the ground for Adam's sake (v. 17). Although they are not cursed personally—being objects still of God's tender concerns and mercy—Adam and Eve nevertheless experience the doleful effects of sin and thus participate in the curse of God against sin indirectly." Additionally, Carini, in the *Lexham Survey of Theology*, writes, "Strikingly, the first curse upon man after his fall is not a curse upon him but upon 'the ground,' the natural world itself (Gen 3:17–19)."

However, others term Adam and Eve's consequences as part of the curse. Elwell and Beitzel, in BEB, write, "we saw that God cursed the woman." Both John Macarthur and Steven Cole make nearly identical statements in their messages on the text.

write, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:23). As a result of their disobedience – their sin – Adam and Eve died spiritually and would eventually die physically. Not only would they die, but all their posterity would also be born in a spiritually dead state and would as well die physically.

While the word for curse is not used in the text, the consequences appear to equate to a curse. Also, the concept of curse is used in connection with Adam and Eve’s offspring in various contexts. (1) Just one chapter later, due to Cain’s disobedience, God curses Cain. Moses writes, “And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand” (Gen 4:11). (2) In the giving of the Law, Moses reminds the people of Israel that they will be cursed if they do not obey.

See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the LORD ... you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you ... But if your heart turns away ... you shall surely perish.... I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live (Deut 30:11–20).

Paul connects the blessings and the curses of the law to his readers in Galatians. He writes, “all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them’” (Gal 3:10-11).

Additionally, Paul acknowledges how every person is born under the curse that began with Adam and Eve’s sin. Paul writes, “just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” (Rom 5:12).

And yet, Christ takes our curse. However, as intimated by God when he clothes Adam and Eve and when he promises salvation through the offspring of Eve, Christ would come, born under the law (Gal 4:4) to take Adam, Eve’s, and our curse upon himself. Paul writes in Galatians, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree’” (Gal 3:12–13). As well, Paul writes in Romans, “as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous” (Rom 5:19).

Disobedience brings a curse. Adam and Eve disobeyed and were cursed. Cain disobeyed and he was cursed. Israel would often disobey and would experience curses instead of blessings. We are born sinful and under the curse. We have no ability to offer perfect obedience in order to avoid the curse and death. However, Jesus lived a perfect life and merits blessing instead of a curse. He then grants us his righteousness acquired through his perfect obedience and takes upon himself our curse.

[Boice, *Genesis*, 1:221; Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “Curse, Cursed,” Elwell and Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 560; Joel B. Carini, “The Effects of the Fall on Creation,” Mark Ward et al., *Lexham Survey of Theology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018); Steven J. Cole, “Lesson 10: The Curse and The Covering (Genesis 3:16–24),” Cole, *Genesis*, Ge 3:16-19.]

So then, worthy of note, God extends hope to Adam and Eve but not to Satan. While, both Satan and mankind were cursed at this point of disobedience. A difference remains. God immediately extends forgiveness and a promise of a solution. God does not extend forgiveness to Satan. God immediately clothes Adam and Eve, and in so doing pictures how he will consistently offer ways in which his people may address their sin. God will later offer the people of Israel a sacrificial system. The sacrificial system had serious limitations but did allow for a temporary way for God's people to address their sin. God clothing Adam and Eve and the sacrificial system all pictured the ultimate and perfect clothing of righteousness that Jesus would offer us in his perfect life and perfect death. None of this was offered to Satan.

The consequences of Adam and Eve's sin indicate and target their appointed roles. In the first chapter of Genesis God commands man to be "fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion" over it (Gen 1:28). Adam and Eve, created equal, needed one another to accomplish God's commands. While being equal, God designed each of them to excel in certain areas of his commands. Eve and following women have the beautiful and blessed ability to bear children. Obviously, men bear a role in procreation and ongoing care of children, but women possess a unique role in this area. On the other hand, God equipped men to excel in the weighty and hard work of subduing and holding dominion over God's creation.

Therefore, God created two (and only two) equal sexes and gifted them with complementary strengths. The consequences of their sin target these prominent areas.

Curse Applied to the Woman

The impact of the "curse" on the woman comes in two parts. First, the pain in childbearing multiplies, and secondly, her relationship with her husband becomes much more complicated.

Pain in childbirth. Not much need be said about the first of these two parts. Likely, prior to the Fall, Eve's body would have cooperated with her in such a fashion as to immensely limit or completely negate pain.⁷ Boice is likely correct when he concludes that the pain likely includes the pain experienced through the rearing of children as well.⁸

Your desire contrary to your husband. The second aspect of Eve's consequences will require a bit more time to develop. Let us first notice the challenges inherent in the second half of verse 16 by the many different ways translators have chosen to translate the verse.

The largest percentage of translators translate the phrase (woodenly) as "Your desire will be *for* your husband, and he will rule over you" (NIV, NASB, HCSB, RSV, and similar to KJV, YLT, GNB). The

⁷ Some do argue that Eve would have had pain prior to the Fall. They draw this conclusion from the fact that the verse states that her pain will multiply or increase. Increase from what? The pain she would have had?

⁸ Boice, *Genesis*, 1:221. Chrysostom offers an interesting perspective on this as well. He writes, "See the Lord's goodness, how much mildness he employs despite such a terrible fall. 'I will greatly aggravate the pain of your labor.' My intention had been, he is saying, for you to have a life free of trouble and distress, rid of all pain and grief, filled with every pleasure and with no sense of bodily needs despite your bodily condition. But since you misused such indulgence, and the abundance of good things led you into such ingratitude, accordingly I impose this curb on you to prevent your further running riot, and I sentence you to painful labor." [Louth and Conti, *Genesis 1-11*, 92-93.]

Complete Jewish Bible and the Geneva Bible offer a similar (although vaguer) but equally accurate translation with “Your desire will be *toward* your husband, but he will rule over you” (CJB) and “thy desire shal be subject to thine housband, and he shal rule over thee” (GEN).⁹ These translations all seem to imply that the object of the wife’s passion (or her affection) is for her husband. I am certain most husbands hope that is the accurate understanding 😊. These translations do offer an accurate literal translation of the Hebrew.

The accuracy of the translation is not in question so much as the meaning of the translation is in question. Consider. Is part of the curse on the woman that she will desire her husband? Maybe the curse comes in that her strong desire for her husband will be met with an affinity on the part of the husband to rule over her? If she desires her husband, what exactly about her husband does she desire? Does she desire her husband relationally? Does she desire leadership of her husband? What exactly does the woman desire?¹⁰ [That’s what husbands have been asking since this point.]

Potential interpretations of desire.¹¹ *Sexual.* Some have understood this desire to be relational or sexual. The woman would have a strong desire for intimacy, so much so that she was willing to endure the cost of painful childbirth. However, this interpretation seems to miss the lexical meaning of the word, and additionally seems to run contrary to most people’s experiences.

Submission as the consequence. Some appear to avoid the word desire entirely and interpret the whole phrase. For instance, both Chrysostom and Luther argue a wife’s submission to her husband constitutes the punishment. They would argue the husband did not possess any inherent authority prior to the Fall. As a result of the Fall, the wife lost her freedom. Chrysostom wrote, “In the beginning I created you equal in esteem to your husband, and my intention was that in everything you would share with him as an equal ... but you abused your equality of status. Hence I subject you to your husband.”¹² Luther also wrote, “If Eve had persisted in the truth, she would not only not have been subjected to the rule of her husband, but she herself would also have been a partner in the rule which is now entirely the concern of males.”¹³ “While this interpretation would

⁹ Both the Douay Reims and Wycliffe’s versions similarly translate the phrase as “thou shalt be under thy husband’s power, and he shall have dominion over thee” (DR) and “and thow shalt be vndre power of thi man, and he shal haue lordship of thee” (WYC). I’m struggling to see any support for such a translation. It seems like they are reading the intent of the second phrase into the translation of the first.

¹⁰ One of the reformers, Konrad Pellikan, concluded that a woman’s delights will be subject to her husband. In other words, instead of a woman being guided by her own desires or passions, she will be required to submit her desires to her husband’s control. [George, Timothy, Manetsch, and Thompson, *Genesis 1-11*, 1:163..]

¹¹ Susan Foh and Kenneth Mathews offer a very helpful and similar overview of the views and many of the objections. Neither address “submission as the consequence,” however, I used her article in organizing the other interpretations. [Susan T Foh, “What Is the Woman’s Desire,” *The Westminster Theological Journal* 37, no. 3 (1975): 376–83; K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, vol. 1B, NAC (Broadman & Holman, 2005), 251.]

¹² Andrew Louth and Marco Conti, eds., *Genesis 1–11*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 93.

¹³ The above quotation comes at the very end of the following quote. “Now there is also added to those sorrows of gestation and birth that Eve has been placed under the power of her husband, she who previously was very free and, as the sharer of all the gifts of God, was in no respect inferior to her husband. This punishment, too, springs from original sin; and the woman bears it just as unwillingly as she bears those pains and inconveniences that have been placed upon

definitely constitute a serious consequence for sin, man's leadership within the marriage seems to be determined prior to the Fall. Paul indicates male leadership in the home and the church as based on creation order not because of the Fall (1 Tim 2:13; Eph 5:22-23; 1 Cor 11:1-12). Additionally, God uses the loving leadership of a husband with a wife as a picture of Christ and the church. Unlikely would God employ a consequence of sin to then picture one of the most beautiful pictures of Christ and the church.

Relational security and need. Others have understood this desire to refer to, as Gini Andrews writes, an "immense, clinging, psychological dependence on man."¹⁴ Potentially, the woman so desires the security she finds in the man that she is willing to submit herself to his rule. Keil and Delitzsch consider the desire "a desire bordering upon disease."

The woman had also broken through her divinely appointed subordination to the man; she had not only emancipated herself from the man to listen to the serpent, but had led the man into sin. For that, she was punished with a *desire* bordering upon disease (תַּשׁוּקָה from שׁוּק to run, to have a violent craving for a thing), and with *subjection* to the man.¹⁵

This interpretation seems to require a willingness on the wife's part. However, the husband's leadership in the relationship is not part of sin's consequences, and a wife *willingly* submitting herself to his rule would not constitute much of a punishment – a divine consequence she could choose to experience.

Subservient desires. Some of the reformers considered *desire* to refer generically to the woman's desires but emphasize all the woman's desires would become subservient to the whim or will of the husband. John Calvin proposes this view when he writes, "The second punishment he imposes is subjection. For this form of speech ... is of the same force as if he had said that she would not be free and at her own command, but subject to her husband's authority and dependent upon his will—as if he had said, "You shall desire nothing but what your husband wishes..."¹⁶ Another reformer, Konrad Pellikan, seemed to hold a similar view. He wrote, "Your delights will be to be subject to your husband, to look always to him and to pay attention mindfully. Formed from his side, you were able to be his equal and his companion. You did not know how to govern: now learn to be a subject."¹⁷ Of the interpretations so far presented, this view seems most plausible but still contains some issues. Potentially, proponents agree that the husband's leadership precedes the Fall, and the consequences were that the wife's desires will now be subject to an overbearing leader. For instance, Keil and Delitzsch argue the "woman was made subordinate to him from the very first; but the supremacy of the man was not intended to become a despotic rule, crushing the

her flesh. The rule remains with the husband, and the wife is compelled to obey him by God's command...." [George, Timothy, Manetsch, and Thompson, *Genesis 1-11*, 1:162.]

¹⁴ Susan Foh quotes Gini Andrews. [Foh, "What Is the Woman's Desire," 377.]

¹⁵ Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 64.

¹⁶ Calvin and King, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 172.

¹⁷ George, Timothy, Manetsch, and Thompson, *Genesis 1-11*, 1:163.

woman into a slave.”¹⁸ However, that does not seem to be the way these proponents present their view. Their view, as presented, appears to assume that the husband’s leadership came about after the Fall (“you were able to be his equal...now learn to be a subject”). Additionally, common experiences seem to run contrary to Pellikan’s statement, “your delights will be to be subject to your husband.”

A desire to lead husband. Let us consider one final interpretation. In so doing, let us consider the only other passage in Genesis (only one other use in Song of Solomon) which uses the word for *desire*. In Genesis four, Cain becomes angry with Abel because God accepted Abel’s offering and rejects his own. In verse six, God says to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it” (Gen 4:7). The last phrase in verse seven is nearly identical to 3:16, “its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.” Little confusion surrounds the meaning of the verse in chapter four. Sin desires to rule over Cain, and Cain will consistently have to purpose to not let it rule but instead rule over it. If we were to draw a comparison to our discussion in chapter three, we might understand 3:16 to mean – a wife’s desire will be to rule her husband, but a husband will have rule over her.¹⁹

DeYoung. the desire is a desire for mastery...Just as sin desired to have mastery over Cain, so the woman, tainted by sin, desires to have mastery over her husband...The sinful husband, for his part, seeks to rule over his wife.²⁰

Some modern versions offer this interpretive translation. The ESV translators chose to translate the end of the verse as, “Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you” (ESV). Similarly, the NET Bible translates “You will want to control your husband, but he will dominate you” and the NLT as “you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.”

This final interpretation best suits the context and word usage elsewhere. Additionally, I find no arguments against this view.²¹ So then, most likely, the phrase intends to communicate that a woman will desire to rule her husband, but this desire will often conflict with her husband’s rule.

Meaning of rule over. Not only will the woman have an inordinate desire to rule, but the husband will naturally (in his sinful state) abuse his position of leadership. After telling the woman that her desire will be contrary to her husband, God then acknowledges “and he shall rule over you.”

¹⁸ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1:64.

¹⁹ Foh. “The woman has the same sort of desire for her husband that sin has for Cain, a desire to possess or control him. This desire disputes the headship of the husband. As the Lord tells Cain what he should do, i.e., master or rule sin, the Lord also states what the husband should do, rule over his wife.” Mathews. “The ‘desire’ of the woman is her attempt to control her husband, but she will fail because God has ordained that the man exercise his leadership function.” [Foh, “What Is the Woman’s Desire,” 381–82; Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 1B:251.]

²⁰ DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church*, 32.

²¹ Wenham does acknowledge Foh’s views and characterizes them as “logical simplicity” and “attractive” but due to such rare word usage concludes “certainty is impossible.” [Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:81–82.]

Wenham argues “It is therefore usually argued that “rule” here represents harsh exploitive subjugation, which so often characterizes woman’s lot in all sorts of societies.”²²

Grudem. The word [rule] certainly does not imply any “participatory” government by those who are ruled, but rather has nuances of dictatorial or absolute, uncaring use of authority, rather than considerate, thoughtful rule. It suggests harshness rather than kindness. The sense here is that Adam will misuse his authority *by ruling harshly* over his wife, again introducing pain and conflict into a relationship that was previously harmonious. It is not that Adam had no authority before the fall; it is simply that he will misuse it after the fall.²³

Prior to the Fall, God ordained that a husband would lead his wife. Therefore, this rule must speak of something other than simple leadership. Instead, *rule* describes the much harsher dominion, mastery, or lordship. Within these two simple phrases, God portrays the eruption of marriage and the ongoing challenge of mutual desire for control. Instead of marriage being defined by “to love and cherish,” marriage becomes characterized by “to desire and dominate.”²⁴

In following weeks, we will discuss a husband’s loving leadership – the type of leadership that reflects the leadership of Christ and his church. However, at this point, let us acknowledge the horrible tendency of men to distort God’s original leadership design by domineering over and abusing their wives with twisted and improper rule.²⁵

Curse Applied to Man

God then turns to Man and declares the consequences and impact of his sin. God says to Adam:

Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return. (Gen 3:17–19).

Although not complicated, let me simply address the three-fold challenge of these consequences. First, the ground itself is cursed. That which would have easily and plentifully produced fruit and plants in abundance will now experience the choking annoyance of thorns and thistles. No longer will the acquisition of necessary food be easy but will require additional painful work to gather.

²² Wenham, 1:81.

²³ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 464.

²⁴ “*he shall rule over you*, portrays a marriage relation in which control has slipped from the fully personal realm to that of instinctive urges passive and active. ‘To love and to cherish’ becomes ‘To desire and to dominate’.” [Kidner, *Genesis*, 1:76.]

²⁵ Ross. “the woman at her worst would be a nemesis to the man, and the man at his worst would dominate the woman.” [Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 147.] DeYoung. “Wherever husbands are domineering or abusive toward their wives, this is not a reflection of God’s design but a sinister perversion of it.” [DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church*, 33.]

Secondly, the work itself will become painful and burdensome. Prior to the Fall, Adam would have still worked but his work would have been easy and delightful. Now, his work would be accompanied by pain and exhaustion. Finally, and most dramatically, Adam would work his way to death. Adam would work long hard days. These long hard days would become more and more challenging with less and less ability. Then he would die.

Conclusion

Marriage is tough. Consider the theological implication from the phrase “her desire is for her husband and he will rule over her,” What was once a relationship characterized by equality between a gracious, loving leader and a caring, competent helper became a battle over control. And sadly, when this battle for control remains a constant, one of the spouses typically give up. A domineering husband crushes his wife, and she fails to flourish under his oppressive rule. A wife, who refuses to relent in her desire for control, drives her husband to yield to her every whim quietly and compliantly.

God’s design is often misapplied. While God’s good design is perfect, we live in a fallen world in which God’s good design is often manipulated and abused. The world has often, and many times accurately, charged Christians who hold to the above stated position with male superiority and abuse. They are often right. I have far too often experienced husbands who justify abusive behaviors with their wives and children because they wrongly apply God’s good design. Additionally, I have seen far too many men simply live misogynistic lives based on a lack of understanding God’s design for men and women. The solution is not a rejection of God’s good design but rather a better understanding of it.

Sin has consequences. God’s grace and hope and extension of forgiveness does not negate the natural consequences of our actions. Too often Christians have erroneously concluded that forgiveness negates the consequences. A husband who abuses his wife needs to be forgiven and still go to jail. Dishonesty in a relationship needs to be forgiven but will still result in a lack of trust. God extended forgiveness to Adam and Eve yet we still are suffering the consequences of their sin – pretty dramatic consequences might I add.

Life is painful. Note a key word – pain. Pain characterizes our lives. Pain upon multiplied pain – all because Adam and Eve chose to disobey God.

Yet, while our pain will continue in this life, God did send his Son, born of woman, to suffer our greatest pain. In so doing, he shines the brightest of lights from the end of our dark pain filled tunnel and announces an end can come to our pain. This is why we look with such great anticipation for the return of Christ and the end of our fight with sin and the physical torments placed on mankind at the Fall.

Resources for Bible Study

Foh, Susan T. “What Is the Woman’s Desire.” *The Westminster Theological Journal* 37, no. 3 (1975): 376–83.

Message 11:

Men and Women in Marriage and Church

May 30, 2021

[The organization and thought for much of this message flows from Kevin DeYoung's book *Men and Women in the Church: A Short, Biblical, Practical Introduction*. See Appendix G.]

Very little time would need to be invested in the Bible to feel like the Bible was misogynistic – or at least to conclude that the Apostle Paul was misogynistic. He writes several phrases that at face value (and maybe not even just at face value) seem a bit off to our present sensibilities.

- “The head of a wife is her husband” (1 Cor 11:3).
- “Woman is the glory of man” (1 Cor 11:7).
- “Woman was created for man” (1 Cor 11:9).
- “The women should keep silent in the churches” (1 Cor 14:34).
- “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection” (1 Tim 2:11 KJV).
- “Wives submit to your own husbands” (Eph 5:22).
- “Do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man; rather she is to remain quiet” (1 Tim 2:12).

Often, these phrases are discussed or cited separate from their context, but even within their context, they are challenging to understand or accept. Each of these phrases flow from a specific context, and Paul directly connects each statement back to the first three chapters of Genesis.

So then, I would like to quickly work from Genesis back to these New Testament passages. Before we jump back to Genesis, let us acknowledge a few varied ways in which Scripture guides us. (1) Often, biblical authors divinely direct us by offering nearly black and white commands. “Don’t lie.” That’s pretty straightforward. Pretty helpful guidance. (2) What we have experienced in Genesis, however, is God offering a paradigm or ideal pattern through which we are to view and assess life. These passages often do not give us a clear command. Instead, they offer principles needing to be applied to different context. For instance, God does not condemn polygamy in Genesis. He sets a pattern that a man leaves his family and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. We are supposed to draw principled conclusions from the paradigm (3) Let me acknowledge one similar but varied approach. God offers us a bunch of object lessons in order to see his divine patterns worked out. God gave us a pattern for marriage in Genesis but does not make a command about unacceptable marital patterns. He does, however, offer many examples in which men and women pursued alternatives to his divine pattern and in each of them, destruction and grief followed. God may not have condemned polygamy in Genesis, but he does offer a bunch of examples of men

with multiple wives, and in each of them the results are horrible. Therefore, we can appropriately conclude that polygamy breaks God's divine pattern.

Let's go back to Genesis and draw a few specific principles.

Men and Women in Genesis

As we end a discussion of God's creation and design of male and female in the first three chapters of Genesis, let us consider a few facts and/or principles. Other facts could be acknowledged regarding Adam and Eve's creation, however, I have chosen to only acknowledge the facts that are highlighted by the New Testament authors.¹

God created man and woman in his image as equals. Regarding inherent value, man and woman are equal. However, equality of value does not equate to uniformity of function.

God extended to both man and woman the command to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion..." (Gen 1:28). Man and woman need one another to fulfill these commands, however, they were each designed differently to primarily fulfill distinct roles within those commands.

God created man first. While the implications of this reality are not immediately or obviously flushed out in the text, the Apostle Paul will later acknowledge this reality as the grounds for the organization and roles within the New Testament church (1 Tim 2:12-14). Paul commands women to not "teach or to exercise authority over a man." He then offers the reason: "for Adam was formed first, then Eve." We will briefly consider this passage a little later.

God created man and woman differently. God created man from the dust and woman from the side of man. Within Genesis, the context indicates that God's creation of Eve from Adam's side correlates to the woman being a "helper" to the man (Gen 2:18-24). Additionally, Paul will acknowledge this reality in 1 Corinthians in his discussion on head coverings for women as they pray and prophecy in the gathered church assembly (1 Cor 11:8-9).

God established the husband as the head of the wife prior to the Fall. Male leadership is not a consequence of the Fall. Rather, abusive leadership becomes a consistent issue after the Fall (Gen 3:16b). God establishes Adam as the head when he gives Adam the command concerning the tree prior to the creation of Eve (Gen 2:16-17). Man's responsibility to lead is as well displayed in God's confronting man first, even though Eve was the first one to take the fruit (Gen 3:9). God treated Adam as the leader. New Testament authors acknowledge this reality as they saddle the responsibility for sin in the world on Adam. Paul writes in Romans, "sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned"

¹ There are several other important and practical facts. God created man and woman as distinct from but complementary to one another. God reveals these distinctions in the way he directs Adam differently than Eve. God was responsible for naming all the animals and as well named woman. God placed the man in the garden and commanded him to tend to it (Gen 2:15). As well, these complementary distinctions are implied within the one flesh nature of a man and woman.

(Rom 5:12). Simply put, God holds Adam responsible even though Eve was tempted and sinned first. A significant part of Adam's sin was in his failure to lead his wife.

God punishes man and woman at the core of their identity. The curse on man results in his pain and labor on the ground and his ongoing challenge to be overbearing with his wife. The curse on woman results in pain in childbearing and her ongoing challenge to control her husband. While they would both struggle with wanting control, they would distinctly experience the curse in their distinct roles.

Men and Women throughout Old Testament

Within Genesis God offers some specific commands but primarily God outlines the ideal pattern for a man and woman. He creates them equal while distinct complements of one another and establishes a pattern of authority with man as gracious, sacrificial, but strong leaders and women as equal, capable, and compassionate helpers. Within this ideal we draw principles – such as the few we just previously considered.

As we move throughout the rest of the Old Testament, we find few commands concerning manhood and womanhood, but we do find a lot of examples of men and women working out God's pattern – sometimes really well and at other times horribly. We need to be careful we do not draw biblical prescriptions from descriptions. However, we can draw inferences from many of the stories – inferences that support the ideal pattern God established in Genesis.

Only men exercise official leadership within Israel. I will acknowledge a couple of exceptions (kind of) to this rule, but simply stated, every official leader of Israel was a man: all the patriarchs, all the priests and Levites, all the judges with one exception, all the kings with one exception, all the writing prophets, and all those who occupied a governing position within Israel were men.

As I stated before, there are some exceptions. (1) Deborah did judge Israel for a time. And it's worth noting that she seems to have judged Israel well. However, scripture indicates the shame inherent in the reality that she needed to judge and that no men were spiritually mature enough or willing to fill the role. (2) Esther played an immense role in the protection of the Jews. However, she was not the king and she didn't rule in Israel. (3) Athaliah offers one additional exception. She was the monarch over Israel for a few years (2 Kings 11). Her rule began when she killed all the royal heirs and ended when one rightful, male heir was found and established as king.

Model women in the Old Testament. Even though men, in large part, led Israel, the Old Testament authors do not avoid offering many examples of godly women who left significant legacies within Israel. Esther risked her life to move the heart of a king for her people. The Apostle Peter offers Sarah as an example of a wife respecting her husband. Rahab is offered as a model of faith in her saving of two spies. Deborah stands out as the single female judge who strengthened Barak's weakness. Ruth boldly and forthrightly directs Boaz to care and protect her. Abigail displays immense wisdom in navigating her husband's foolishness and David's potential wrath.

There were some wicked women. Jezebel is presented as worse than Ahab. Delilah tricks Samson, Michal rebukes David for his awkward worship.

Also, there were some wicked men – a lot in fact, too many to mention. Shechem sees Dinah and is drawn to her. He speaks tenderly to her and then decides to rape her. King David abuses Bathsheba by drawing her to his home, impregnating her and then killing her husband. Judah horribly mistreats his daughter in law Tamar forcing her to deceive and entice him. Lot offers his daughters to the town. And in Judges a Levite forces his concubine to go out to the men of the city who then abused her all night until she lay dead at the door. He then proceeded to cut her up and send her various parts throughout Israel.

The Old Testament scriptures are full of good and bad examples of men and women adhering to or rejecting God's original good design. Each time God's design is ignored or rejected, destruction of some kind unfolds. Conversely, blessing follows adherence to God's good design. So then, while not a lot of OT authors offer commands involving manhood and womanhood, they do successfully outline the results of either following or rejecting God's good original design.

Men and Women in the Gospels

Before moving on to some passages in which Paul directly connects Genesis to marriage and the church, let us briefly consider Jesus' treatment and perspective on women. (1) Jesus treats women in a countercultural manner. He dismisses cultural expectations and criticisms. He interacts with women in places no other men would. He regularly cares for women amid their spiritual and physical pain and anguish. (2) Jesus regularly received care from women. Women cared for Jesus financially. Some consistently provided lodging and meals. (3) Jesus highly treasured women. He included them in the group of disciples that frequently traveled with him. He appeared first to them following the resurrection. Often, he used women as positive examples of discipleship. (4) Jesus treated women better than most within his culture. In his discussion on divorce, when most men saw women as a commodity or property, Jesus viewed them as precious people deserving of respect and fair treatment. When discussing lust, when most men justified mentally objectifying women, Jesus condemned not only adultery but lust.

However, Jesus never attempted to change or refashion God's original, ideal pattern of equality and distinction between men and women. Jesus had no problem confronting the social taboos of his culture. He would have had no problem correcting cultural confusion over equality or distinction, and yet he never attempts to change or address the common understanding that men and women are distinct and men and women are equal while functionally different. DeYoung writes, "Jesus takes a back seat to no one in being pro-woman. And yet his being pro-woman never necessitated being anti-men or against sexual differentiation."²

Men and Women in the Epistles

Three times, Paul connects the first few chapters of Genesis to guidance in his epistles. (1) In 1 Corinthians, Paul discusses the roles of husband and wife. He establishes "the head of a wife is her

² DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church*, 43.

husband" (1 Cor 11:3). Paul then goes on to discuss head coverings, prophetic utterances, and public prayer. Following his directions, Paul offers his biblical rationale:

For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. (1 Cor 11:8-10).

In so doing, Paul connects his directions to God's creation order. (2) In Ephesians, Paul commands wives to submit to their husbands "as to the Lord." He then outlines how a husband is to love his wife in the same way that Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Paul's rationale includes drawing the readers attention back to Genesis. He quotes Genesis 2:24, "Therefore a mans shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." (3) By means of a little longer discussion, Paul discusses the roles of men and women in the church in 1 Timothy 2 and 3. In so doing, Paul connects both a woman's involvement in the gathered church and the authority structure in the church back to Genesis.

I have chosen to not take the time to publicly exegete each of these three passages this morning. Instead I would like to just note a few principles within each which seem to be derived from our study in Genesis.

1 Corinthians 11:1-12; 14:33-35

Paul writes to the Corinthian church, "the head of a wife is her husband" (1 Cor 11:3). Paul employs a similar concept in Ephesians when he establishes that Christ is the head of the church (Eph 1:22). Clearly, the "head" possesses a certain level of authority. Additionally, Paul further delineates what he means by authority or headship when, in Ephesians 5, he likens the leadership of a husband to the way Christ sacrificially led and died for the church to protect her.

While this male headship conflicts with cultural sensibilities, even more so is culture disenchanted by Paul's statement in chapter fourteen commanding women to "keep silent in the church. For they are not permitted to speak" (1 Cor 14:33-35). Many remain confused by Paul's demand for women to be silent, especially since he seems to direct them to pray and prophecy in church in chapter eleven. While some conclude that Paul contradicts himself, a more plausible explanation rests in fully understanding each context.

In chapter eleven, Paul directs women to engage in both prayer and prophecy. He offers some instructions of how they should approach those moments of prayer and prophecy – specifically they need a visible symbol of submission. However, they are able to participate in public prayer and prophecy within the church setting.

In chapter fourteen, Paul directs women to be silent in the context of prophetic assessment. After directing the church to judge prophets and prophetic statements, Paul prohibits women from participation in that moment. The most plausible theory proposes the possibility of a man offering a prophetic word and his wife being the one responsible for assessing his prophetic word. In so doing, her assessment would sit as authoritative over her own husband. Instead of that potential conflict, women should remain silent in prophetic assessment and instead discuss any concerns or questions to their husbands later.

Ephesians 5:22-33

To women. Paul offers a challenging command when, in Ephesians, he commands wives to submit to their husbands. He also offers a near impossible challenge to husbands when he commands them to love their wives like Christ loved the church.

It may sound archaic, if not fundamentally sinister, but God's design for the home is a thoughtful, intelligent, gentle, submissive wife and a loving, godly, self-sacrificing, leading husband.³

Wives are to submit to their husbands, but ultimately their submission is to the Lord. "Christ is the supreme absolute authority; all other authority is only derivative."⁴

This submission is not dependent upon cultural norms or even a husband's love. Instead this submission roots itself in the theological principles that (1) a husband is the head of the wife and (2) her submission ought to reflect the church's submission to Christ.

Note, the command is given to the wife not the husband. The husband is not to demand submission. The wife is to freely follow, ultimately as an act of submission to Christ.

To men. Now consider husbands. "Husbands, in loving your wives, lead, sacrifice, and care for them as Christ does for the church."⁵ In this sacrificial love, remember that Christ continually calls idolatrous people back to himself. Christ never carries any guilt or responsibility in their broken relationship. Husbands, however, always carry at least some portion of responsibility in marital brokenness. Yet, they ought always to love sacrificially and selflessly.

Note, the command is given to the husband not the wife. The wife is not to demand love. The husband is to love freely and sacrificially, ultimately as an act of submission to Christ.

Men. Lead your families. Take the responsibility as a leader and initiate the spiritual dimensions of your home.

D. L. Moody once remarked, "If I wanted to find out whether a man was a Christian, I wouldn't ask his minister. I would go and ask his wife.... If a man doesn't treat his wife right, I don't want to hear him talk about Christianity."⁶

1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:1-13

Let us address one more pertinent text in which Paul connects distinctions between men and women back to Genesis. In 1 Timothy Paul discusses the roles of men and women in the church in 1 Timothy 2 and 3. Paul connects both a woman's involvement in the gathered church and the authority structure in the church back to Genesis. After stating that women should learn quietly, Paul states, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet" (1 Tim 2:11-12). Once again, Paul's biblical rationale for such a statement rests in

³ DeYoung, 64.

⁴ DeYoung, 65.

⁵ DeYoung, 68.

⁶ DeYoung, 73.

Genesis. Paul goes on to declare that these directives are because “Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor” (1 Tim 2:13).

First, consider the challenging statement concerning women being silent within the church. Once again, the context must be the determinate for the meaning. Immediately following Paul’s statement about women learning quietly, he offers important contextual information. Paul’s discussion surrounds the public teaching within the gathered church and the formal authority structure of the church. Within these two specific contexts, men are to teach and lead. Paul’s statement about silent learning is more clearly articulated as Paul writes, “I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man – and the context is specifically within the gathered church – which means this specific text is not talking about women teaching men in general or having authority over men in general.

Paul’s reason for such direction flows from his understanding of Genesis 2. Because Adam was created before Eve, Adam retains a position of authority. Additionally, because Eve succumbed to the serpent’s deceit, Paul concludes that women should not teach men or hold positions of authority over men within the church. I will admit that this seems like a severe consequence upon all women because of Eve’s decision. However, Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit declares such to be true.⁷

The immediately following context then directly addresses the quality of men that should hold positions of authority within the church. And, within these qualities, we see elders primarily hold two roles - teaching and leading.

Paul has just stated that women should not teach or to exercise authority over a man. He then immediately declares who should fill that role – men who possess certain character qualities, certain abilities, and certain leadership skills. Paul writes the following:

The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church? (1 Tim 3:1–5).

⁷ One possibility: Paul may be making a statement about the nature of women – that they are more easily deceived. Those who hold such a view do not view women as inferior, but rather assume that the general design of women (their heightened relational sensitivity and awareness of others) may make them more prone to doctrinal deception. Second possibility: Paul may be making a statement about what happens when the roles are reversed. Adam was supposed to be the head, responsible for loving leadership and direction. But he abdicated his role, and Eve’s leadership influenced him for evil. As a result of this role reversal, sin entered into the world. Regardless the view, Paul does not ground women’s silence in first century culture but instead God’s original design.

After outlining primary qualities of the primary teachers and leaders within the church, Paul then outlines one additional role – that of servant/deacon. Amid his discussion on deacons, Paul includes qualities of either deacons’ wives or women deacons.⁸ The word translated as *their wives* in the ESV has two potential meanings. Either *gunaikas* refers to *women* or *wives*. Either word offers an accurate literal translation, however the context must determine which is intended. I have no intention to solve that riddle this morning. However, we can draw at least one helpful conclusion.

Whether the verse is talking about wives who help their husbands in their diaconal work, or about women doing diaconal work as deaconesses, the outcome is that women are doing the same kind of work.⁹

Reflecting Jesus’ behavior and treatment of women, let us strive to follow two basic principles. (1) First, we must strive to liberate and facilitate women to engage and serve within the church in every possible area which scripture permits. (2) Secondly, we must, in keeping with both New Testament texts and God’s original design, limit the roles of corporate teaching and church leadership to men possessing appropriate character and abilities.

⁸ Paul either addresses *women* deacons as a subset of deacons or he addresses *wives* of deacons. Kevin DeYoung holds the second position. I’m not convinced. However, he offers the following for his position. (1) It would be strange to introduce another office at this point. (2) The discussion in verse 12 (husband of one wife) makes more sense immediately following the qualifications for those wives. (3) If Paul were giving were giving requirements for deaconesses, you would think that he would include something about their families, about being a one-man woman. (4) The deacons must be tested first (3:10), while this is not required of the women in verse 11. (5) The reason the character of elders’ wives is not mentioned is that, though they can partner with their husbands in important ways, the wives of elders would not assist in their teaching-ruling ministry in the same way that the wives of deacons would help in their service work. (DeYoung, 92-93).

⁹ DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church*, 93.

Message 12:

Two Worshipers: Cain and Abel

(4:1-16)

June 6, 2021

Introduction

Having just experienced being removed from the garden and the presence of God, Moses outlines the need for and the challenge inherent within once again approaching God. How does mankind approach God? Adam and Eve and their offspring desire to be back in God's good graces. How does that happen?

Let us consider the example of two brothers. The story of Cain and Abel literally happened, but Cain and Abel more importantly offer a paradigm or contrast of two worshipers. Will mankind attempt to come back to God through ritualistic and obligatory acts of "righteousness," or will mankind come back to God through obedience and faith?¹

Purpose statement. Approaching God through genuine sacrifice requires genuine faith. Self-reliance manifest in obligatory sacrifice resulting in separation with God.

Setting

- Cain and Abel born
- Cain a blessing from the Lord
- Contrast Cain as blessing in vs. 1 and his separation from the Lord in vs. 16.
- Cain and Abel's occupations – significant in leading to type of offering

Message Outline

I. God rejects Cain's offering. Cain becomes angry (1-5).

A. God rejects Cain's offering.

¹ Ross. "Cain and Abel provide us with archetypal representations of two kinds of people in a setting of worship.... The "way of Cain" (Jude 11), then, is unbelief that may manifest itself in envy of God's dealing with the righteous, in murderous acts, in denial of responsibility for one's brother, and in refusal to accept the punishment." [Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 153.]

1. Cain fulfills an obligation.²

Maurice. The sin of Cain—a sin of which we have all been guilty—WAS THAT HE SUPPOSED GOD TO BE AN ARBITRARY BEING, WHOM HE BY HIS SACRIFICE WAS TO CONCILIATE. The worth of Abel's offering arose from this: that he was weak, and that he cast himself upon One whom he knew to be strong; that he had the sense of death, and that he turned to One whence life must come; that he had the sense of wrong, and that he fled to One who must be right. His sacrifice was the mute expression of this helplessness, dependence, confidence.³

2. Grain offerings were an acceptable offering. The problem was not that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground and Abel brought a sheep. Moses uses the word *minha* to describe both Cain and Abel's offering. *BDB* acknowledges a *minha* is an "offering made to God, of any kind, whether grain or animals."⁴ Snaith goes even further and seems to determine that a *minha* was typically a grain offering.⁵ The issue was not the kind of offering but rather the attitude of the person making the offering.⁶

3. Abel's offering was his best.⁷

² "But whereas it is said of Abel that he offered the choicest portions of the animals to the Lord, an act reflecting his heartfelt commitment to him, it is merely said of Cain that he offered a *minhâ* from the fruit of the ground. The Lord rejected this formality. Cain's lack of true submission ... issued finally in sinful behavior (Gen 4:7f.)" [G. Lloyd Carr, "1214 מנח," Harris, Jr, and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 514–15.]

³ F. D. Maurice, ed. Joseph S. Exell, ed., *The Biblical Illustrator: Genesis*, vol. 1 & 2, The Biblical Illustrator (London: James Nisbet & Co., n.d.), 317.

⁴ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *BDB*, 585.

⁵ "Cain brought a [mnha] of the fruit of the ground. Here [mnha] is plainly a cereal-offering. But it does not say at first that Abel brought a [mnha], and he certainly brought animals ('the firstlings of his flock' etc.). But the second time the offerings of the two brothers are mentioned, the term [mnha] is used of both. Here the term may well be used in the general sense of 'tribute, present'." [Norman H. Snaith, "Sacrifices in the Old Testament," *Vetus Testamentum* 7, no. 3 (July 1, 1957): 315–16.]

⁶ "Cassuto concludes that, whereas the one worshiper went out of his way to please God, the other simply discharged a duty ... In each case the person is mentioned before the offering, which suggests that the kind of offering is not as important to the story as the attitude of the person making the offering." [Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 157.]

⁷ "Waltke argues against the views that God rejected Cain's offering because it was bloodless or agricultural (Waltke, "Cain," 364). Cain's voluntary grain offering was classified the same as Abel's voluntary fat offering. The gift brought forth would be based on the giver's social status and work—in this case, a farmer and shepherd. The key in the text is that Abel's offering came from the firstborn—and presumably best—of his flock. Cain's offering, however, only came from some of his crop, not the synonymous firstfruit. Additionally, Cain's anger in Gen 4:5 is an indicator of the condition of his heart, and his response to the Lord in Gen 4:9 serves as his own condemnation of his murdering Abel. Waltke also appeals to the New Testament's description of Cain and Abel to distinguish Cain's wickedness from Abel's righteousness. He points to Heb 11:4, which says that by faith Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain. Additionally, 1 John 3:12 describes Cain's actions as evil, and Jude 10–11 implies that Cain reasoned like an animal (Waltke, "Cain," 371)." [J. Chase Franklin, "Cain, Son of Adam," Barry et al., *Lexham Bible Dictionary*; Bruce K Waltke, "Cain and His Offering," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 48, no. 2 (1986): 363–72.]

- a. Abel's offering reflected his heart (cf. Heb 11:4).
- b. Cross reference Isaiah 1:13-15; Psa 51:16-17

Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations— I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. (Isaiah 1:13–15).

For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. (Psalm 51:16–17).

- B. Cain becomes angry. In so doing, reveals his heart.

We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. (1 John 3:12).

But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion. (Jude 10–11).

II. God offers Cain a warning. Cain kills his brother (6-8).

- A. God offers Cain a warning.

- 1. Why are you angry?
- 2. If you obey, you receive blessing.
- 3. If you disobey, sin will consume you.
- 4. Don't be consumed by sin!

- B. Cain kills his brother.

- 1. Anger gives birth to murder.
- 2. God, aware of the progression of sin, cautioned Cain.

each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. (James 1:13–15).

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. (Eph 4:31).

But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. (Col 3:8).

III. God probes Cain's heart. Cain rejects responsibility (9).

A. God probes Cain's heart.

1. God knew where Abel was.

Riemann. The threat is in the circumstance. It is, as some have observed, the sort of question we sometimes put to a child when we know perfectly well what has happened but want to give the child a chance to tell us about it in his own words. The child is asked to face up to what he has done without knowing for certain whether we already know of it or how we feel about it.⁸

2. God's questioning always intended to draw sinful man to repentance.

B. Cain rejects responsibility.

1. Not only does Cain lie but also rejects any form of responsibility.

2. Cain assumes a "no" to his question. Cain also assumes that a no response somehow vindicates him from responsibility. Less emphasis ought to lay on whether the answer to Cain's question is "no" and more emphasis placed on Cain's attempt to evade conviction and questioning.

Riemann offers a helpful article to the discussion surrounding "keeper." Riemann offers a more subversive meaning for keeper and concludes Cain was in fact not his brother's keeper. Cain's sin consisted of his murder and additional attempts to avoid guilt and punishment. Riemann writes, "So Cain stands condemned, not because he denies that he is his brother's keeper, but because he is his brother's murderer. And he has compounded his guilt by his infuriating pretense to a tender conscience, by the exasperating way in which he has turned an important moral consideration into a mere ploy."⁹

Many modern commentators acknowledge Riemann's article on this verse. However, while many agree Riemann adds value to the conversation, they additionally conclude the term "keep" can carry a less intense meaning than Riemann draws.¹⁰ Mathew's disagrees with Riemann and concludes,

⁸ Paul A Riemann, "Am I My Brother's Keeper," *Interpretation* 24, no. 4 (October 1970): 487.

⁹ Riemann, 491.

¹⁰ *Wenham*. "It may well be that Cain is overstating his responsibility toward his brother in order to deny it completely, for no man is called on in the OT to act as another's keeper (so P. A. Riemann, *Int* 24 [1970] 482-91). "To keep" a man would involve keeping an eye on him all the time, which could be somewhat intrusive. Yet biblical law expects a man's brother to be the first to assist him in time of trouble (Lev 25:48). Cain might not have expected to "keep" Abel, but as his brother

The Mosaic law would have given an affirmative answer to Cain's question. His crime would have been recognized as a particularly heinous violation of community solidarity, which was highly esteemed among the Hebrews. Community presupposed mutual responsibility that was foundational to covenant commitment (e.g., Lev 19:18; Gal 5:14).¹¹

Martin Luther. Cain believes that he has eloquently disclaimed any guilt when he refuses to be his brother's keeper. But the moment he calls him his brother, does he not confess that he ought to be his keeper?¹²

A couple authors offer a balanced view in that while ultimately Cain was not responsible for Abel, Cain did inherently possess responsibility to care for his brother. Murphy offers one such example.

Murphy. There is, as usual, an atom of truth mingled with the amazing falsehood of this surly response. No man is the absolute keeper of his brother, so as to be responsible for his safety when he is not present. This is what Cain means to insinuate. But every man is his brother's keeper so far that he is not himself to lay the hand of violence on him, nor suffer another to do so if he can hinder it¹³

Cain's deflection well reflects the natural tendency of man to redirect amid guilt.

IV. God punishes Cain's sin. Cain protests punishment (10-14).

A. God punishes Cain's sin.

1. Abel's blood cries out to God.

[Ross quotes Westermann.] The most important word in the sentence is יָלֵא, "to me." It is no empty sentence that the blood of the victim cries out;

he certainly should have been ready to act as redeemer and to avenge his blood when he was murdered (Num 35:12–28). His outright denial of responsibility shows he is "much more hardened than the first human pair" (von Rad, 106)."

Hamilton. "A study of the verb *šāmar* in the OT suggests to some that the answer to Cain's question is no. Nobody is ever charged with the responsibility of being "his brother's keeper." Nothing in Scripture tells us to "keep" our brother. This verb often appears in the OT to describe God's relationship to Israel. He is its keeper and as such he never slumbers or sleeps (Ps. 121:4–8, where 5 times God is called the one who "keeps" Israel). Moses' prayer for the people of Israel is that the Lord bless them and keep them (Num. 6:24). To *keep* means not only to preserve and sustain but to control, regulate, exercise authority over. For this reason today we say that zoos and prisons have keepers, that is, certain individuals who have authority over the occupants. Cain is called to be his brother's lover, claims Riemann, not his brother's keeper. We are not convinced, however, that *šāmar* must carry the nuance of "have authority over" in this verse. It may be that Cain is but disclaiming responsibility for knowing Abel's whereabouts. Thus, he is a liar, evasive and indifferent, when questioned by Yahweh."

[Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:106–7; Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, 230–31.]

¹¹ Mathews, *Genesis 1-11*, 1a:274.

¹² Martin Luther, ed. George, Timothy, Manetsch, and Thompson, *Genesis 1-11*, 1:198.

¹³ Murphy, *Notes on the Old Testament: Genesis*, 153.

there is someone there to whom it cries out. Cain cannot hide his deed.
[*Genesis*, vol. 1, p. 305]¹⁴

2. In similar fashion to the curse on Adam and Eve, Cain's punishment impacts him at the core of his identity. God curses Cain from the ground. Cain's life has been in working with the ground, and from this point on, the ground will no longer yield its fruit for Cain.
3. The curse as well contains an element of "fugitive and wanderer."

B. Cain protests punishment.

1. Unlike his parents who appear to accept the punishment extended to them by God, Cain refuses to accept God's punishment – not that he has much of a choice.
2. Cain accurately restates the elements of God's punishment, but does however, ironically, add that he believes people will try to kill him. Cain finds it too great to bear that he would suffer the potential threat of others due to his violent murder of his brother.

Hamilton. Cain's wife would be his sister, and those who might kill Cain—assuming a family proliferation that spreads over centuries—would be Cain's siblings. If that is the case, and it is the one we prefer, then the situation is even more freighted with irony. He who turned on one of his relatives now must watch out for any of his relatives. The "avenger of blood," the one who seeks retributive justice against the criminal, may be a family member.¹⁵

V. God extends mercy. Cain lives separate from God (15-16).

A. God extends mercy.

1. God displays common grace.
2. The manner or form of the mark is irrelevant. What matters is that God extends protection to rebellious people.

B. Cain lives separate from God. The final important note and lesson drawn from Cain is that he went away from the presence of the Lord. Distance from God is the result of sin consuming a life. Sin desires to control Cain – and it did. As a result, Cain lived separate from God.

¹⁴ Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 159.

¹⁵ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, 233.

Theological Implications

Pursuing God is a generational decision. Each generation must choose whether they will pursue God. You might think that the immediate following generation following Adam and Eve would have been super aware and sensitive to God and his expectations. They had seen the destruction of sin. Yet Cain's murder of his brother rests only one generation away from Adam and Eve.

Our birth does not determine our future. God blessed Eve with a child through which the promises to Adam and Eve could be fulfilled (or at least begin to be fulfilled). However, Cain's life ends separate from God.

Our heart in worship is more important than the method of worship (although important as well).

Message 13:

Conflicting Genealogies

(4:17-26)

June 13, 2021

If I were to tell you I think culture, the arts, and technology are dangerous, you'd probably have mixed responses. Some of you older folks would probably heartily agree with me, and most of the youth would probably write me off as an old dad who has some ridiculous phobias.

So then, let me refashion my initial statement. Cultural advancement, the arts, and increasing technology share a common and significant danger. Let me take this a bit further. I'm going to prove this to you by way of two genealogies.

The Comparison

Before we jump into a comparison of the two genealogies in the next two chapters, let us address a few observations. First, Cain's genealogy does not contain any dates. While somewhat speculative, the author appears to want to emphasize Seth's line in chapter five but has a passing point to make in offering this brief section about Cain's genealogy. His point does not require an awareness of dates or length of life.

Secondly, verse eighteen contains the names of five generations with no additional information in contrast to the information offered of each generation in chapter five. True, each generation in chapter five only includes a little bit of information – the age when the next generation was born and that individuals remaining years of life. However, the generations of Cain are offered so quickly as to provide two things. First, these names in 4:18 allow us to definitively conclude that this is a distinct genealogy to that of chapter five. Chapter four discusses Cain's genealogy and chapter five discusses Seth's genealogy. This could be confusing because both include a Lamech and Enoch (these names are more easily confused in the Hebrew than in the English). Secondly, the brevity of the genealogy in chapter four acts as a transition for Lamech to receive the primary emphasis. Cain's Lamech finds a prominent place in this genealogy – odd as it may seem. Cain's entire genealogy lasts for eight verses and five of those discuss Lamech.

So then, Moses desires to offer a comparison between two of Adam's genealogical lines – those of Cain and Seth. Consider three realities within the text that indicate this passage as a comparison.

The Seventh Grandson

Lamech, a murderer and polygamist. To start with, let us jump to the end of Cain's genealogy – verses 19-24 and the odd discussion surrounding Lamech. With the introduction of Lamech, the biblical story

introduces polygamy for the first time. The text does not outright condemn polygamy,¹ however, with no uncertainty, the biblical author offers Lamech as a plight on humanity. His polygamy conflicts with God's original design and his negative and murderous character hardly shed any positive light on polygamy. Lamech also boasts to his two wives of his murderous heart. In so doing, Lamech establishes himself as a murderous bigamist – in stark contrasts to the seventh generation in Seth's line.

Enoch walked with God (Gen 5:24). In the next chapter we find the seventh grandson of Adam from Seth's line. Moses writes, "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him" (Gen 5:24). Enough said! Enoch offers a brief although extreme contrast to Lamech, the murderous bigamist. Enoch walked with God!

The Two Lamech Statements

Cain's Lamech: Taunt Song. Let us go back to chapter four and Lamech. In verses 23 and 24 we find a weird song by Lamech. Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold" (Gen 4:23-24).

This is a bit strange. Let us quick work through it. This brief "song" falls into the biblical and literary form referred to as the "taunt song." Leland Ryken defines the taunt song as an "entire passage or composition that taunts an opponent. The taunt song can therefore be thought of as an expanded taunt."² Lamech states this to his wives, so potentially he is boasting to his wives or potentially he is ridiculously taunting God. (1) The Hebrew is a bit less clear than the English, resulting in some commentators concluding that Lamech is boasting about what he would do – not what he has done.³ If this is the case, Lamech is not admitting to his wives that he has murdered but that he would be willing to if he were ever hurt by another. This seems unlikely. Lamech offers a poor contrast to holiness if his guilt lies in talking smack about potentially killing someone. No. Lamech was a

¹ I don't want to spend much time on Lamech's wives, although there may be some value in such study. A number of commentators point out the meanings of Lamech's wives and conclude that Lamech was drawn away by their beauty and seduction. This may be true but seems to be too speculative to be of much value.

Mathews. "The meaning of their names is uncertain, but "Adah" usually is associated with *ādā*, meaning "ornament"; and "Zillah" (*šillā*) with Hebrew *šēl*, "shadow, shade," or *šil*, "shrill, tinkle." Some have related the latter to the Hebrew word for "cymbal" (*šilšûl*), suggesting that the two are praised for their beauty and sweet voice (as Song 2:14)."

Murphy. "The names of the two wives, Adah, *beauty*, and Zillah, *shade* or *tinkling*, seem to refer to the charms which attracted Lamek."

Wenham. "Cassuto and Westermann prefer to derive the name from צלצל "to tinkle" and see in the name "an allusion to the sweetness of the human voice." If this be correct, the names of the two women form an excellent parallel, pointing to the two charming feminine attributes mentioned in Cant 2:14: "a sweet voice and a pretty face" (Cassuto, 1:234). "Probably the holy author wanted to show Lamek as a person who had succumbed to sensuality" (Gabriel, *Bib* 40 [1959] 417)."

[Mathews, *Genesis 1-11*, 1a:286; Murphy, *Notes on the Old Testament: Genesis*, 159; Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:112.]

² "Taunt Song," Leland Ryken, *A Complete Handbook of Literary Forms in the Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014).

³ *Hamilton.* "Lamech, if provoked, would not hesitate to kill even a child, let alone an adult. His capacity for retaliation is nondiscriminatory.... Lamech's song speaks not of something that he has already done, but of something that under duress he would not hesitate to do." [Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, 241.]

murderer. (2) But how many had he murdered? Once again, the Hebrew offers some challenges. Possibly, Moses offers two parallel phrases⁴ which would mean that Lamech had only killed one person. However, more likely, Lamech killed multiple people, and Lamech boasts about how he killed a “young man for striking” him.⁵ (3) Finally, what does Lamech mean by “if Cain’s revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech’s is seventy-sevenfold”? Some of the early church fathers propose that Lamech is confessing his sins to his wives as an act of contrition and repentance.⁶ As much as I prefer to agree with Chrysostom, this conclusion seems implausible in context. More likely, Lamech twists Cain’s punishment into some sort of “greater license to sin, as if God had granted murderers some special privilege.”⁷ The reformer, Wolfgang Musculus writes best:

Wolfgang. Lamech was a violent and godless man, and the things he said to his wives here about his homicides were said not as if they concerned some hidden crime but one done openly, and he was moved not by repentance but by arrogance. And what he added about Cain, he added in order to set them forth as a threat to punish seventy-sevenfold, lest someone off in the future plan *his* murder on account of the slaughters he had perpetrated. Indeed, I think Moses wanted to relate these things about Lamech, namely, that he took two wives and that he killed both a man and a boy, in order to record the godlessness, malice and tyranny of Cain’s posterity. COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 4:23–24.⁸

⁴ *Wenham.* “I have killed a man for bruising me, a youth for hitting me” should probably be taken as two ways of describing the same incident rather than as two separate incidents.” [Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:114.]

⁵ *Hamilton.* “Most translations have Lamech claiming to have killed (*hāraḡtī*) a man for wounding him. The four lines of v. 23 are taken as an illustration of *parallelismus membrorum*. In other words, the second line repeats the first line, albeit with different vocabulary. For example, *Adah and Zillah* is parallel to *wives of Lamech*; *man* is parallel to *boy*. The problem with the latter point is that nowhere else in the OT do *īš* (“man”) and *yeled* (“boy”) form a word pair” [Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, 240.]

⁶ *Chrysostom.* You see, confession is of the greatest efficacy for correction of faults. Thus the denial of guilt after the committing of sin proves worse than the sins themselves. This was the condition of that man who killed his brother and who when questioned by the loving God did not merely decline to confess his crime but even dared to lie to God and thus caused his life to be lengthened. Accordingly Lamech, when he fell into the same sins, arrived at the conclusion that denial would only lead to his receiving a severer punishment, and so he summoned his wives, without anyone’s accusing or charging him, and made a personal confession of his sins to them in his own words. By comparing what he had done to the crimes committed by Cain, he limited the punishment coming to him. HOMILIES ON GENESIS 20.6–7

Theodoret of Cyr. He escapes vengeance through confession of sin, and pronouncing judgment on himself, he prevents divine judgment. QUESTIONS ON GENESIS 44

[Chrysostom, ed. Louth and Conti, *Genesis 1-11*, 112; Theodoret of Cyr, ed. Louth and Conti, 114.]

⁷ Calvin and King, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 222; Ephrem the Syrian, ed. Louth and Conti, *Genesis 1-11*, 112.

Ephrem the Syrian. When these wives saw the plight of their generation, they became fearful and knew that the judgment decreed against Cain and his seven generations had come upon their generation. Lamech, then, in his cleverness, comforted them, saying, “I have killed a man for wounding me and a youth for striking me. Just as God caused Cain to remain so that seven generations would perish with him, so God will cause me to remain, because I have killed two, so that seventy-seven generations should die with me.

⁸ Wolfgang Musculus, ed. George, Timothy, Manetsch, and Thompson, *Genesis 1-11*, 1:211.

Seth's Lamech: Prayer to God (5:28). There is another Lamech in these genealogies. Seth's genealogy includes a Lamech as well. Throughout this entire genealogy (in chapter five), no one speaks except this Lamech. In stark contrast to the wretched taunt song of Cain's Lamech, Seth's Lamech looks to his son, Noah, as a blessing and the potential fulfillment of God's promises. Seth's Lamech says, in reference to Noah, "Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands" (Gen 5:29).

Cain's Lamech taunts God, scares and abuses his wives, and kills people that wound him. In contrast, Seth's Lamech looks to God and finds hope in God's promises in his son Noah.

Their Earthly Pursuits

Cain's family pursued culture. Let us consider one final contrast in these two genealogies. Moses includes in Cain's genealogy additional information that, once again, seems a little out of place. Moses offers descriptions of Lamech's sons. Lamech's wife, Adah, "bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah"⁹ (Gen 4:20–22).

Why is this information included? The section begins with Cain building a city and ends with his grandsons developing culture and technical progress.

Like Solomon in Ecclesiastes, humanity tends to look for satisfaction in things other than God. Those avenues are not inherently bad – but the satisfaction they provide is fleeting. The Fall produced with mankind a hole – a cavern of dissatisfaction. We all want it filled. Cain's family pursued progress and cultural advancement to fill the hole.

Cole. Sounds like our world, doesn't it? There were children, cities, culture, and careers. We get married, have children, build "planned communities," take the kids to music lessons, and pursue our careers. But when you do all these good things apart from the presence of the Lord, they become only the illusion of progress. The world tries to fill the emptiness of life without God with all these good gifts which God has given for the human race.¹⁰

Seth's family pursued worship. In contrast, Seth's family offers a contrast. We have already acknowledged how Enoch walked with God and Noah walked with God but let me draw your attention to the final statement in chapter four. "To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD" (Gen 4:26). The problem with

⁹ I'm not addressing this at all in my message, however, some commentators discussed the presence of Lamech's daughter – Naamah. I didn't quite understand their thinking, but it seemed possible they were connecting her presence to a shift in focus in Cain's line emphasizing giving birth to daughters instead of sons so that their line could endure. Additionally, it seems possible, depending on one's interpretation of Genesis 6, that Naamah's presence connects to the daughters of man. Some Jews also propose Naamah was Noah's wife.

¹⁰ Cole, *Genesis*, Ge 4:16-24.

Cain's family was not that they made helpful strides in culture and technology, but that their pursuit did not include God. In contrast, Seth's family called upon the name of the Lord.¹¹

Theological Implications

A hole of emptiness. The Fall has left an enormous hole of emptiness within the heart of man. Cain's family pursued filling this hole with things other than God. Seth's family, in large part, pursued filling this hole with a pursuit towards God.¹² Each of us possesses this same yearning for satisfaction. We will attempt to fill it with something. In fact, we can fill our lives with a bunch of acceptable and good things, but if our primary pursuit is not God and his will, then we will ultimately find no satisfaction.

Blaise Pascal. There once was in man a true happiness of which now remain to him only the mark and empty trace, which he in vain tries to fill from all his surroundings, seeking from things absent the help he does not obtain in things present. But these are all inadequate, because the infinite abyss can only be filled by an infinite and immutable object, that is to say, only by God Himself.¹³

In Ecclesiastes, Solomon offers us a clear example of someone pursuing satisfaction in good things (although twisted at times) yet resulting in no satisfaction. He searches for wisdom under the sun and finds it to produce fleeting satisfaction. He hopes to find satisfaction in pleasure. He experiments with wine, looks to find enjoyment in nature. He pursues satisfaction in possessions and buildings. He possesses large choirs and a lot of women. Yet, he concludes the pleasures of this world possess no lasting satisfaction.

Each generation must choose. Every generation tends to spiral into corruption. Even though Seth's line is contrasted as the good line in which many generations pursued God, even Seth's line ends up being part of the group that is characterized as "every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen 6:5) and all but Noah and his family were destroyed.

Evil generations can produce good things. Every generation, even when corrupt, has the potential to produce incredible good. The problem with Cain's generations were not that they produced amazing parts of culture but that their pursuit in culture was looking for satisfaction apart from God.

¹¹ *Murphy.* "The Shethites contemplated the higher things of God, and therefore paid less attention to the practical arts of life. The Cainites, on the other hand, had not God in their thoughts, and therefore gave the more heed to the requisites and comforts of the present life." [Murphy, *Notes on the Old Testament: Genesis*, 160.]

Keil & Delitzsch. "While the family of Cainites, by the erection of a city, and the invention and development of worldly arts and business, were laying the foundation for the kingdom of this world; the family of the Sethites began, by united invocation of the name of God of grace, to found and to erect the kingdom of God." [Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1:75.]

¹² *Ross.* "In contrast to Cain's descendants, who, while altering the institutions of God and disdaining the value of life, produced cities, music, and all kinds of implements for the good life, the descendants of Adam through Seth primarily promoted the worship of the Lord." [Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 165-66.]

¹³ Blaise Pascal, *Pascal's Pensees*, trans. W. F. Trotter (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1958), 113, thought #425.

Message 14:

Seth's Genealogy

(5:1-32)

June 20, 2021

The story is told of a London merchant named Henry Goodear who rejected and mocked the Bible. But one Sunday, just to please his niece, he went to church. The young lady was greatly disappointed when she learned that the pastor's message was based on Genesis 5. As she listened to the boring list of names being read, she wondered why God had permitted the pastor to pick that text on the day her uncle came to church. As they walked home, little did she know that every step of her uncle's feet and every beat of his heart seemed to repeat the gloomy refrain, "And he died! And he died!" The next day, Goodear could not concentrate on his work. That night he searched for a family Bible and read over those words, "and he died, ... and he died." Goodear thought, "Now I'm living, but someday I too must die, and then where will I spend eternity?" That very night he asked the Lord Jesus to forgive him and make him his child.¹

Purpose Statement. The Genesis genealogies point to our sinfulness, resulting death, and hope of future relief, while at the same time offering a lifelong pursuit of walking with God that surpasses simply living.

Lessons from Similarities

In coming to many genealogies, especially the genealogy in Genesis five, our attention is most likely immediately drawn to the similarities within the text. However, quickly, we find three exceptions to the normal flow of the genealogical table – those being Adam, Enoch, and Noah. We will consider those in a moment, but first consider the normal structure of the genealogy.

When (X) had lived ____ years, he fathered (Y).
(X) lived after he fathered (Y) ____ years
and had other sons and daughters.
all the days of (X) were _____ years,
and he died.

As we consider Seth's genealogy let's consider Genesis 11 as well where the genealogy picks back up at Shem and moves all the way to Abram. Consider the following chart. The first number

¹ Steven Cole adapted this story in his message on Genesis 5. The story originally came from the 1978 Fall issue of Our Daily Bread.

indicates their age when the next mentioned offspring was born. The following number indicates the age of their death.

Adam	130	930	155 average age at first son prior to flood 912 average life span prior to flood
Seth	105	912	
Enosh	90	905	
Cainan	70	910	
Mahalalel	65	895	
Jared	162	962	
Enoch	65	365	
Methuselah	187	969	
Lamech	182	777	
Noah	500	950	
Shem	100	600	43 average age at first son prior to flood Life spans jump from 400 (Shem) - 205 (Terah) after flood
Arphaxad	35	438	
Salah	30	433	
Eber	34	464	
Peleg	30	239	
Reu	32	239	
Serug	30	230	
Nahor	29	148	
Terah	70	205	

Ages. A brief study of these two genealogies produces several questions – potentially irrelevant or maybe of secondary importance. (1) You may note that the age of having their first son decreased significantly following the flood. On average, they had their first son at the age of 155 prior to the flood.² Following the flood, the average age was 43, and Shem significantly impacts the average having been 100. (2) Additionally, their life spans before the flood averaged 912 years, whereas after the flood their life spans jumped from 400 with Shem to 205 with Terah.

Are their gaps? It seems natural to come to these genealogies and assume they are gapless, chronological accountings (ie. grandfather, father, son). The average reader likely does not consider Egyptian history, different Hebrew hiphil forms, comparison of biblical genealogies, or genealogical overlaps of our earliest ancestors.³ Most of us just read the text (if not peruse or skip) and take it at face value. However, upon deeper reflection, these genealogies offer a more complicated and nuanced examination.

² This average age does assume that each previous stated generation was the father and not a grandfather or great grandfather. This average only decreases to 117 if you exclude Moses at 500 years old when he had Shem.

³ Hasel offers a very helpful and concise overview of the different elements of the conversation surrounding the complications within Genesis genealogies. [Gerhard F Hasel, "Genealogies of Gen 5 and 11 and Their Alleged Babylonian Background," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 16, no. 2 (1978): 361–74.] Freeman summarizes K. A. Kitchen's conclusion. "First, certain archaeological evidence places literate civilization in Egypt around 3000 B.C. and quite a bit earlier in Mesopotamia, dates which conflict with a "continuous" reading of Gen 5 and 11. Second, the word "begat" can refer to a descendant rather than a son. Third, the symmetry of ten names in both lists testifies to schematization" (Freeman, 259).

Many (if not most) modern commentators and theologians assume that these genealogies contain gaps. "Those favoring gaps understand the names to mean that "X fathered the line *culminating* in Y," and that in the case of Genesis 5 only key antediluvian [pre-flood] figures are mentioned, not every generation."⁴ Several valid reasons exist for drawing such conclusions. (1) Other genealogies seem to include gaps within them (Ruth 4, 1 Chron 2 ff, Ezra 7, Matt 1, Luke 3).⁵ (2) Known Egyptian history seems to indicate that the flood must have been further back than the years outlined by James Ussher.⁶ (3) The symmetrical scheme of ten names and the highlighting of the seventh indicate to some that the list must have been predetermined and edited.⁷ (4) There appear to be some differences in this same list when outlined by Luke.⁸ (5) Biblical authors employ many forms of genealogies in order to accomplish their purposes. The reader must be careful to not impose certain expectations of genealogies that have different purposes.⁹

What then is the purpose of this genealogy? Did Moses intend for mankind to be able to assess specific dates for Creation and the Flood? If not, why did he offer such specific years for each generation?

Some young earth proponents believe that if any gaps are accepted in the Genesis genealogies "then the young-earth position will be damaged."¹⁰ However, others, like J. Paul Tanner, while arguing for no gaps, allows for a young earth proponent to allow for the possibility of gaps. He writes, "The traditional literal view of creation naturally leads to a young earth position, although

⁴ J Paul Tanner, "Old Testament Chronology and Its Implications for the Creation and Flood Accounts," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 172, no. 685 (January 2015): 26.

⁵ Steinmann offers clear argumentation regarding potential (if not likely) gaps within different Old Testament genealogies. Most significantly, his discussion about genealogies involving David seem most relevant. [Andrew E Steinmann, "Gaps in the Genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11?," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 174, no. 694 (April 2017): 149–52.] Kidner also considers the practice of omission in genealogical lists as potential evidence for gaps in Genesis 5 [Kidner, *Genesis*, 82.]

⁶ Steinmann argues this point throughout his journal article. [Steinmann, "Gaps in the Genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11?"]. K. A. Kitchen as well draws this conclusion in *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (pgs. 35-39).

⁷ Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody, 1994), 209-212; K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago: InterVarsity, 1966), 35-39.

⁸ Luke outlines Jesus' genealogy in Luke 3. This list, while nearly identical, does have one variation. In Luke, Arpachshad has Cainan whereas in Genesis 11 Arpachshad has Shelah.

⁹ Freeman outlines a few different forms of genealogies. Additionally, Samuel Kulling discusses two different forms of genealogies – one discussing someone's right to a certain office, position or inheritance and the other a chronological genealogy. Brevard Childs as well offers two – vertical or linear and horizontal or segmented. However, James Jordan offers a myriad of forms for genealogies. "he identifies continuous and discontinuous genealogies, chronological and nonchronological genealogies, genealogies that omit only a few generations and others that omit almost every generation, genealogies that are no more than a list of names and others that come with historical and biographical notations, two-generational and twenty- generational genealogies, linear and segmented genealogies. Each has its own functions and characteristics" (268). [Travis R Freeman, "A New Look at the Genesis 5 and 11 Fluidity Problem," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 42, no. 2 (2004): 266–68.]

¹⁰ Freeman, 259.

the question of gaps in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 leaves some latitude for discussing just how young the earth is....The conclusion reached is that there are *probably* no gaps."¹¹

Some conclusions. So then, let me draw a few personal conclusions. (1) These are actual people, not representatives of periods of time. (2) While the list most likely consists of a gapless and chronological genealogical table, the presence of some potentially minor gaps in the genealogical table introduces no significant theological problem.¹² (3) These genealogical tables (Gen 5 & 11), along with many others throughout Scripture, play an important role in outlining God's promises of providing a Messiah through various individuals (ie. Adam, Seth, Abraham, David).

However, two important theological points root themselves in Genesis genealogies. (1) History is regressing rather than advancing. (2) Everyone lives and dies.

Lessons from Exceptions

Adam

God named them man. Let me, by means of a secondary point, acknowledge a culturally relevant theological point in these first two verses. Within our culture, many are doing all they can to disconnect the inherent interdependence of men and women. Many are attempting to redefine terms (64 terms for gender identity and expression)¹³, change the spelling of other terms (ie. womxn or latinx),¹⁴ and simply remove others.

In January American democrats recently pursued eliminating all gendered terms in the House. "The proposed rule package seeks to "honor all gender identities" by striking words including "seaman," "chairman," "father," "mother," "sister," "husband," and "wife" from use [within the document being presented] and replacing them with gender-neutral terms including "seafarer," "chair," "parent," "child," and "sibling."¹⁵ One ridiculous consequence of such logic manifest in an

¹¹ Tanner, "Old Testament Chronology and Its Implications for the Creation and Flood Accounts," 25.

¹² Young earth authors (Freeman, Ham, etc.) appear to jump to too dramatic a conclusion if an author allows for the possibility of gaps within the genealogical table. These same authors seem to assume the primary reason for drawing such conclusions is due to an inability or unwillingness to stand up to modern science. However, most of the authors I read did not ground their argument in science at all. It seems like they fear the potential of someone accepting gaps in the genealogical tables and eventually being pulled into an evolutionary position. This approach is unnecessary and intellectually dishonest.

¹³ Mere Abrams, "64 Terms that Describe Gender and Identity Expression." Healthline, December 20, 2019. <https://www.healthline.com/health/different-genders>

¹⁴ *Wikipedia*. The term womxn is an alternative spelling of the English word woman. Womxn has been found in writing since the 1970s, along with the term womyn, to avoid perceived sexism in the standard spelling, which contains the word "man".

Wikipedia. Latinx is a gender-neutral neologism, sometimes used to refer to people of Latin American cultural or ethnic identity in the United States. The (-x) suffix replaces the (-o/-a) ending of Latino and Latina that are typical of grammatical gender in Spanish.

¹⁵ Carly Ortiz-Lytle. "Democrats seek to eliminate gendered terms in the House." MSN News. January 2, 2021. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/democrats-seek-to-eliminate-gendered-terms-in-the-house/ar-BB1cq0bn>

opening prayer of Congress by Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, a Democrat from Missouri, as he ended his prayer with “Amen and a-woman.”¹⁶ Only months later, as Mother’s Day arrived, man replaced the word “mother” with “birthing people.”¹⁷

However, the first couple of verses in Genesis five, by means of a passing statement, confront such lunacy. Moses writes, “When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created” (Gen 5:1–2). God termed all people “man” and then subdivided mankind into two distinct, mutually exclusive subcategories – male and female. In so doing, God communicates the inherent dependence males and females share. Paul acknowledges this reality when he writes in 1 Corinthians, “Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman” (1 Cor 11:11). We are “man” (or mankind) and mankind consists of males and females.

We are created in the image of God but also in the image of Adam. Inevitably, the wording of verse three draws our attention back to chapter one. “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.’” (Gen 1:26). Man was created in the image of God. However, due to the Fall, that image was severely impacted. While retaining some form of the original design, mankind now retains a marred and twisted remnant of the image of God.

Therefore, when Adam fathered a son in his own image, that image now flows from a fallen and corrupt Adam.¹⁸ While the image of God in man remains – although drastically and negatively impacted – all mankind now reflects the broken and sinful image of Adam.

James Boice concludes three likenesses potentially reside in the text. He writes of “the full likeness of God that Adam and Eve possessed before the fall but that exists only in a debased form now, if

¹⁶ Katrina Trinko, “‘Amen and a-woman:’ Inane political correctness proves how little Democrats get faith.” USA Today, January 6, 2021. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2021/01/06/amen-awomen-rep-cleaver-religion-gender-column/4142111001/>

¹⁷ On Thursday, Bush drew praise and criticism after she used the term “birthing people” to describe mothers during a speech in Congress. “I sit before you today as a single mom, as a nurse, as an activist, congresswoman, and I am committed to doing the absolute most to protect Black mothers, to protect Black babies, to protect Black birthing people, and to save lives,” she said. Later that day, Bush repeated the term in a tweet. “Every day, Black birthing people and our babies die because our doctors don’t believe our pain,” she wrote. [Christina Zhar, “Birthing People’s Day? Cori Bush Debates Rages Into Mother’s Day Weekend,” Newsweek, May 8, 2021. <https://www.newsweek.com/birthing-peoples-day-cori-bush-debate-rages-mothers-day-weekend-1589846>]

¹⁸ Some (such as Pink) seem to indicate that man no longer possesses the image of God. Pink writes, “By sin Adam lost the image of God.” [Arthur Walkington Pink, *Gleanings in Genesis* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2005), 74.] “By sin Adam lost the image of God and became corrupt in his nature and a fallen parent could do no more than beget a fallen child.... all are, by nature, the fallen offspring of a fallen parent—that we have all been begotten in the image and likeness of a corrupt and sinful father.” In contrast Wenham and Mathews argue the image remains but was negatively impacted. Wenham writes, “Adam ... fathered a child in his own likeness and according to his image.” This verse makes the point that the image and likeness of God which was given to Adam at creation was inherited by his sons. It was not obliterated by the fall. Similarly, Mathews writes, “God bequeathed his image to humanity, Adam has endowed his image to Seth, including human sinfulness and its consequences.” [Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:127; Mathews, *Genesis 1-11*, 1a:310.]

at all; 2) the likeness of sin that each of us passes on to our posterity; and 3) the likeness of godliness that must be learned.”¹⁹

Reversal of Adamic image through Jesus. The apostle Paul acknowledges the passing along of the sinful image from generation to generation. He writes, “just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” (Rom 5:12). Paul articulates that all men die because of one man’s (Adam’s) trespass. However, Paul goes on to offer a contrast and a solution.

Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous. (Rom 5:17–19).

Enoch

Enoch walked with God. Amid ten generations (stopping at Noah – eleven including his three sons), all but one are described as having lived a certain number of years, having children, and then dying. Every one of them died – except for Enoch. Enoch’s life starkly contrasts to the others in the genealogy. Whereas all the others lived and died, Enoch “walked with God and he was not for God took him” (Gen 5:24).

Enoch is the exception within this genealogy. However, his walking with God offers everyone of us a model for life. In the law, God exhorts his people to “walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them” (Lev 26:3). New Testament authors as well direct believers to walk with God. Paul writes to the believers in Colossae, “as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him” (Col 2:6). Even more significantly, Christ confronts the church in Sardis. He rebukes them and tells them to wake up and strengthen the little spirituality that remains. He then goes on to acknowledge just a few “who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy” (Rev 3:4).

For as long as I can remember, I have struggled to explain and/or understand clearly what it means to walk with God. Over the years, a few specific passages have impacted my thinking on the matter.

In his epistles, the apostle John connects walking with God with walking in the light and contrast this walk to those who walk in darkness. In chapter one of his first epistle, John describes those who walk in the light. (1) They walk with God and with other believers. (2) They are forgiven and cleansed from sin – and this cleansing is ongoing. Of course, Christ’s blood once and for all purified and restored a believer back to God, but as a believer continues to sin, the blood of Christ continues to perform its cleansing work. (3) A believer who walks with God continually acknowledges and confesses sin in his life. (4) Finally, God’s Word is present and active in the life of a believer.²⁰

¹⁹ Boice, *Genesis*, 1:281–82.

²⁰ Aaron Sturgill, *Exploring John’s Epistles* (Waterloo, WI: Crowdedship, 2011), 30–32.

In Colossians, Paul offers another helpful passage to a further understanding of walking with God. Paul directs the believers to “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord” (Col 1:10). He then proceeds to further unfold the qualities of that walk: (1) bearing fruit in every good work, (2) increasing in the knowledge of God, (3) strengthened by the Spirit with all power, (4) and finally giving thanks to the Father, specifically thankful for our inheritance and deliverance.²¹

Marcus Dods, in his commentary on Genesis, offers a very helpful and concise description of walking with God. Let me read a lengthier paragraph he writes.

Dods. We walk with God when He is in all our thoughts; not because we consciously think of Him at all times, but because He is naturally suggested to us by all we think of; as when any person or plan or idea has become important to us, no matter what we think of, our thought is always found recurring to this favorite object, so with the godly man everything has a connection with God and must be ruled by that connection.... This is the general nature of walking with God; it is a persistent endeavour to hold all our life open to God's inspection and in conformity to His will ; a readiness to give up what we find does cause any misunderstanding between us and God; a feeling of loneliness if we have not some satisfaction in our efforts at holding fellowship with God, a cold and desolate feeling when we are conscious of doing something that displeases Him.... Do not accept it as a thing fixed that you are to be one of the graceless and ungodly, always feeble, always vacillating, always without a character, always in doubt about your state, and whether life might not be some other and better thing to you.²²

Noah

The promise of future relief comes through Noah. Noah offers the third and final exception to the meticulously arranged genealogy. Lamech says of his son, Noah, “Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands” (Gen 5:29). Likely speaking beyond his understanding, for hardly could Lamech have imagined of the impending destruction, Lamech sees in Noah the hope of future relief brought on by the Fall.

Due to the Fall, man had continually experienced pain and death. All these early generations (like modern mankind) strongly desired relief and comfort. Lamech was no exception to this longing. Noah would be one more bright spot in a long genealogical line. Moses describes Noah as “a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God” (Gen 6:9).

Death had made its way into this family line, but ongoing hope and light had as well remain firmly rooted in this family line. In so doing, God displays his faithfulness in providing a believing remnant and a line that would one day produce the ultimate relief from the Fall.

²¹ Aaron Sturgill, *Exploring Colossians* (Waterloo, WI: Crowdedship, 2013), 39–42.

²² Marcus Dods, *The Book of Genesis* (New York: A.C. Armstrong, 1854), 51–53.

Conclusion

Purpose Statement. The Genesis genealogies point to our sinfulness, resulting death, and hope of future relief, while at the same time offering a lifelong pursuit of walking with God that surpasses simply living.

Resources

Freeman, Travis R. "A New Look at the Genesis 5 and 11 Fluidity Problem." *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 42, no. 2 (2004): 259–86.

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Message 15:

Men Increase, Wickedness Increases

(6:1-8)

June 27, 2021

“And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another: ‘Come, let us choose us wives from among the children of men and beget us children” (1 Enoch 6:1-2).¹

With this brief text I introduce to you the pseudepigraphal writing of 1 Enoch, from likely the 2nd or 3rd century BC. In so doing, we hear this pseudonymous author’s understanding of Genesis 6. Let me read the text in Genesis.

When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.” The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown. The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. (Genesis 6:1–8).

In Genesis 6, Moses unfolds a rather intriguing, near mythical, story of potentially angels procreating with women and producing the Nephilim and producing extreme wickedness on the earth resulting in a worldwide flood. Pretty amazing stuff! However, just like the first couple chapters of Genesis, we could potentially get lost in the weeds and lose the main point of the chapter. We need to acknowledge the challenges in the chapter, but let’s acknowledge up front the main point and keep that main point in front of us.

¹ R. H. Charles, ed., *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 191–94.

Purpose statement. Mankind devolves into increased wickedness, resulting in judgment and destruction. However, God extends grace to those who believe in him, resulting in godly behavior. Let me offer this more succinctly. God judges sin. God provides salvation. God expects obedience.

Context of Genesis 6

Assumptions from chapter five. As we come to chapter six, let's draw some logical assumptions from the flow of chapter five. (1) Without the first verse in chapter six, we would logically conclude from the statements made in chapter five that there were a lot of people on the earth. Each father in the genealogy sired a son but then had additional "sons and daughters." Therefore, there were a lot of men and women on the earth. (2) The emphasis on sons being born in chapter five may explain why Moses acknowledges "daughters were born to them" in 6:1. (3) However, we are not told to which genealogical line these daughters belong (whether Seth or Cain). A lot of speculation surrounds this point. Willem Van Gemeren determines the daughters of man "cannot be limited to the genealogy of Seth or Cain. They are the daughters of *man*. They belong to the category of human beings of the feminine gender."² For now, let's draw no conclusions as to the meaning of the "daughters of man." We can, however, assume from the content of chapter five, there were a lot of men and women on the earth.

Obvious conclusions from chapter six. Now let's draw some obvious conclusions from the first few verses of chapter six. (1) These women were attractive. This does not necessarily mean the "sons of God" chose these wives solely based on their beauty, but their beauty seems to be a prominent motivation. (2) The fact that the "sons of God" were taking "any they chose" likely indicates lust drove their decisions more than the value or quality of the women themselves. John Calvin concludes with certainty that the "sons of God" were described by "the violent impetuosity of their lust ... the sons of God did not make their choice from those possessed of necessary endowments, but wandered without discrimination, rushing onward according to their lust."³ Van Gemeren disagrees and thinks a conclusion involving lust "introduces an idea foreign to the text and prejudices the case."⁴ (3) The fact the "sons of God" took any they chose likely assumes polygamy. Plenty of corruption surrounds this scenario requiring no additional corruption to make Moses' point, however, the text seems to allow if not imply polygamy of some kind. (4) The first four verses of chapter six lead to "the wickedness of man being great on the earth" in verse five. What exactly happened in the first four verses that indicate wickedness? Besides the potential lust and polygamy going on (which is prevalent today), what else is wrong? Are the Nephilim inherently wrong? What about the men of renown? What did they do? Did the line of Seth

² Willem A Van Gemeren, "The Sons of God in Genesis 6:1-4 (An Example of Evangelical Demythologization)," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 43, no. 2 (1981): 332-33.

³ Calvin and King, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 239.

⁴ Van Gemeren, "The Sons of God in Genesis 6," 332. I understand Van Gemeren's point and to some degree agree with him. However, in taking the three New Testament passages into consideration, I conclude the sin in this moment seems to be primarily characterized by lust.

intermarry with the line of Cain, producing an impure line within God's promised line? Whatever the terms mean in the first four verses, they must indicate some form of corruption.

Challenges in chapter six. Now let's consider some things we likely don't know and cannot easily draw conclusions about. (1) Who are "the sons of God" and "daughters of men"? (2) Does the 120 years refer to the average length of man's life or the number of years before the flood? (3) Who or what are the Nephilim, the mighty men of old, the men of renown?

Let me narrow our conversation just a bit. The most challenging discussion in this chapter surrounds the identification of "sons of God" and "daughters of man." Regarding the 120 years, either this length indicates the length of time God determined to give the world to repent⁵, or more likely, due to the wickedness of mankind, God limits the length of man's life to around 120 years.⁶ Additionally, one's understanding of the Nephilim or "mighty men of old" primarily rests upon the interpretation of "sons of God" and "daughters of man." If the "sons of God" are real people then the Nephilim are most likely men who possessed immense power and position. If the "sons of God" were angelic beings, the Nephilim most likely are a legendary giants.

We could easily get lost in the weeds in the discussions presented in Genesis 6. However, we are going to briefly look at the primary interpretations of "sons of God" and "daughters of man."

Sons of God & Daughters of Man: three views ⁷

(1) The "sons of God" are earthly rulers who hold inordinate power and gather to themselves harems of women. If "sons of God" identify kings or powerful rulers, the divine punishment on mankind makes more sense. However, the term "sons of God" finds little evidence in Ancient Near Eastern literature to reference kings or rulers.

(2) The "sons of God" are the Sethites and the "daughters of man" are the Cainites.⁸ This interpretation makes the most sense following the two previous chapters' two distinct lines of

⁵ A position held by Keil and Delitzsch (Jerome, Augustine, Luther – Hamilton, Wenham). They write, "this means, not that human life should in future never attain a greater age than 120 years, but that a respite of 120 years should still be granted to the human race. This sentence, as we may gather from the context, was made known to Noah in his 480th year, to be published by him as "preacher of righteousness" (p. 86).

⁶ I found fewer commentators offering this opinion. Both Westermann and Mathews drew this conclusion, primarily based on the context addressing the mortality of mankind and the punishment extending to all mankind. Mathews writes, "Yet the issue of human mortality in 6:1–4, as we have seen it in continuum with the garden *tōlēdōt* (2:7, 17; 3:6, 17–24), recommends we take the 120 years as the shortening of life. Since 6:3 concerns God's judgment against all humanity (*ādām*) and a period of grace would affect only one generation, it is better to take the 120 years as a reference to human life span." [Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, CCS (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), 376; Mathews, *Genesis 1-11*, 1a:335.]

⁷ David Clines offers what I found to be the most concise overview of the varied views of "sons of God" and "daughters of man." [David J A Clines, "The Significance of the 'Sons of God' Episode (Genesis 6:1-4) in the Context of the 'Primeval History' (Genesis 1-11)," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 4, no. 13 (August 1979): 33–34.]

⁸ Van Gemeren's synopsis of John Murray's study. (1) The divisions of "the daughters of man" and "the Sons of God" are drawn from the human family. (2) The genealogies given in chapter 4 (the family of Cain) and in chapter 5 (the family of

genealogies. Additionally, this position bypasses the problem of angelic beings procreating with women – an idea most of us would reject.⁹ And, also makes sense of the fact that God's punishment is dispensed on humans. However, this interpretation requires "man" to be taken generally and specific to the line of Seth in verse 2. Typically, an author does not shift between different meanings for the same word in the same context. This view also struggles to take into consideration the New Testament text that connect to this passage.

(3) The "sons of God" are angelic beings who mate with women. By far, this is the weirdest interpretation, although also the most prominent. Steven Cole summarized well the general feel of many commentators and pastors regarding this view as he wrote, "it is incredible and makes the Bible sound like Greek mythology to say that demons take on bodies and produce offspring with human women!"¹⁰ Yet, I also appreciate Van Gemenen's opening line in his article on this passage. He writes, "Why does the theology in which creation, miracles, the miraculous birth and resurrection of Jesus have a place, prefer a rational explanation of Genesis 6:1-4?"¹¹

Even so, Old Testament authors often use the term "sons of God" to refer to angelic beings (eg. Ps 29:1, 89:7; Job 1:6). Additionally, most scholars support the identification of "sons of God" to be angelic beings. And most significantly, other biblical and extrabiblical texts suggest or conclude this interpretation (1 Enoch, Jubilees, Peter, Jude). However, why would mankind be punished for the sins of angelic beings?¹²

So then, given three interpretations, which one should we conclude? Given just the context of Genesis 6, I would most likely conclude that "the sons of God" were human men, maybe kings but more likely the men in the line of Seth. Moses sets up a contrast between two genealogies – between the godly line of Seth and the ungodly line of Cain. It follows best that Genesis 6 would continue the discussion on these two genealogical lines. If so, the problem would likely have been the intermarrying between the godly and ungodly lines.

However, a few New Testament passages must be considered as well that complicate the discussion.

Seth) provide the background for the distinctions of "daughters of men" and "Sons of God." (3) The phrase "the Sons of God" also applies to human beings and applies properly to the godly family of Seth. (4) Scripture is silent on the sexual functions of angels or demons. (5) The phrase "and they took wives for themselves" is the Hebrew idiom for a legal marriage relationship and can hardly refer to an unnatural relationship. (6) The judgment is inflicted on men (6:3), not on angels. (7) The *nephilim* are not necessarily the offspring of the intermarriage between the sons of God and the daughters of men. [Van Gemenen, "The Sons of God in Genesis 6," 334; John Murray, "The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men (Genesis 6:1-4)," in *Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1957), 243–49.] See Appendix H for John Murray's study.

⁹ Scripture is silent on angel's ability for sex (outside the potential of Genesis 6). Scripture does say angels are not given in marriage (Matt 22:29-30), but this does not necessitate sexual inability. Humans are not married in heaven but are presently able to have sex.

¹⁰ Steven Cole, "Lesson 14: Sin's Full Course (Genesis 6:1-8)," in Cole, *Genesis*.

¹¹ Van Gemenen, "The Sons of God in Genesis 6," 320.

¹² Keil and Delitzsch hold to this view and discuss it at length. [Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1:86.]

Three New Testament Texts

1 Peter 3:18-20

Peter writes a word of encouragement in his first epistle to the persecuted and exiled Christians spread throughout Asia Minor. Within this epistle we find one of the most complicated passages to exegete in the New Testament, 1 Peter 3:19-20.¹³ Martin Luther wrote in his commentary on First Peter, “A wonderful text is this, and a more obscure passage perhaps than any other in the New Testament, so that I do not know for a certainty just what Peter means.”¹⁴ Although challenging, I believe Peter offers one of the most encouraging passages to believers (specifically suffering and persecuted believers) of the great victory accomplished through the death of Christ.

Peter writes, “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water” (1 Pe 3:18–20).

We desire to better understand the passage in Genesis, so let us not stray to far into the challenges of 1 Peter – which would be extremely easy to do. Let me quickly acknowledge some of the challenges. (1) What did Christ proclaim? The gospel or a declaration of victory? (2) To whom did Christ make this proclamation? Peter says Christ proclaimed to “spirits.” Were these “spirits” human beings (OT saints or unbelievers) or demons? (3) When did Christ make this proclamation? During the time of Noah or following his death?

In attempting to answer all these questions, we could provide a host of varied opinions. Wayne Grudem offers a thorough discussion in which he identifies five primary interpretations.¹⁵ Joel Green concisely proposes two primary interpretations. (1) “These are the disembodied spirits of Noah’s contemporaries who perished in the flood and have been kept in prison in Hades.” If so, Christ would have declared the gospel to these bound souls. Let me add an additional

¹³ I conclude in my previous (poorly footnoted) study that Jesus proclaimed his victory to demonic beings in hell following his death, thereby also concluding that these demons were in hell due to their great offense spoken of in Genesis 6 when they impregnated “the daughters of man.” I offer a somewhat coherent summary of the views within this study. [Aaron Sturgill, *Exploring First Peter* (Grand Blanc, MI: Crowdedship, 2010), 129–33.]

¹⁴ Schreiner quotes Martin Luther. [Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 37, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 184.]

¹⁵ *Grudem: Five Views*. (1) When Noah was building the ark, Christ ‘in spirit’ was in Noah preaching repentance and righteousness through him to *unbelievers who were on the earth then* but are now ‘spirits in prison’ (people in hell). (2) After Christ died, he went and preached to *people in hell*, offering them a second chance of salvation. (3) After Christ died, he went and preached to *people in hell*, proclaiming to them that he had triumphed over them and their condemnation was final. (4) After Christ died, he proclaimed release to *people who had repented just before they died in the flood*, and led them out of their imprisonment (in Purgatory) into heaven. (5) After Christ died (or: after he rose but before he ascended into heaven), he travelled to hell and proclaimed triumph over the *fallen angels* who had sinned by marrying human women before the flood. [Wayne A Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 212–13.]

interpretation like the first. A pre-incarnate Christ or Christ through Noah (Grudem's view)¹⁶ proclaimed the gospel to the people of Noah's day. (2) Secondly, "[t]he imprisoned spirits are the fallen angels of Gen 6:1–6 who were responsible for bringing upon the whole earth the Great Flood and were therefore imprisoned ... The majority view favors this second option."¹⁷ In his very concise overview of these two views, Richard Bauckham appears to accept (along with R. T. France¹⁸ and Edward Selwyn¹⁹) the view that the spirits are fallen angels who "disobeyed God by descending to earth, mating with women, and teaching humanity evil practices. Thus they were responsible for the corruption of humanity which led to the Flood."²⁰

Many factors and word studies could (and probably should) be teased out for a more thorough interpretation; however, let me just draw your attention to a few extra-biblical sources and two additional biblical passages that support the view that "the sons of God" in Genesis 6 are most likely angelic beings.

Let me draw your attention to three extrabiblical sources. None of these offer any inspired evidence to this discussion, but they do seem to play a role in both how Jews understood Genesis 6 and how Peter's recipients might have understood his discussion about Christ proclaiming something to spirits in prison connected to the days of Noah.

Testament of Naphtali 3:5. In like manner the Watchers also changed the order of their nature, whom the Lord cursed at the flood, on whose account He made the earth without inhabitants and fruitless.²¹

¹⁶ Wayne A Grudem, "Christ Preaching Through Noah: 1 Peter 3:19-20 in the Light of Dominant Themes in Jewish Literature," in *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 248.

¹⁷ Both Green and Grudem conclude the interpretation involves Christ proclaiming to people – not demons. However, they both acknowledge the dominant view to be Christ's proclaiming victory to demons. While I could find some commentators holding this view, I would struggle concluding this was the prominent view. However, Grudem does offer a footnote including different proponents of this view. He writes:

"This is probably the dominant view today, primarily because of the influence of Selwyn's commentary, pp. 197–203, 314–362, and then of the detailed work by Dalton, esp. pp. 135–201. (Dalton sees the preaching as having occurred during an 'invisible ascension' of Christ on Easter Sunday morning, just after his appearance [John 20:17] to Mary in the Garden: see pp. 185–186.) Others who favour this view (but who place the preaching at various times, either before Christ's resurrection, immediately after it, or at his ascension) include: Kelly, pp. 151–158; J. Fitzmyer, *JBC*, vol. 2, pp. 366–367; Stibbs/Walls, pp. 142–143; Blum, pp. 241–243; Leaney, pp. 50–52; France, pp. 264–281 (a good recent statement of this position)."

[Joel B. Green, *1 Peter*, Two Horizons (Grand Blanc, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: W. B. Eerdmans, 2007), 121–22; Grudem, "Christ Preaching Through Noah," 213.]

¹⁸ R. T. France, "Exegesis in Practice: Two Samples," in *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods*, ed. I. Howard Marshall (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997), 268–78.

¹⁹ Edward Gordon Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter with Introduction, Notes, and Essays* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1946), 197–203.

²⁰ Richard Bauckham, ed., "Spirits in Prison," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 177.

²¹ The Testament of Naphtali was identified among the Dead Sea Scrolls and considered to be part of the Jewish Greek Pseudepigrapha. [Charles, *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 337 vol. 2.]

Jubilees 10:5. And Thou knowest how Thy Watchers, the fathers of these spirits, acted in my day: and as for these spirits which are living, imprison them and hold them fast in the place of condemnation, and let them not bring destruction on the sons of thy servant, my God; for these are malignant, and created in order to destroy.²²

Baruch 56:12-15. ¹² And some of them descended, and mingled with the women. ¹³ And then these who did so were tormented in chains. ¹⁴ But the rest of the multitude of the angels, of which there is 〈no〉 number, restrained themselves. ¹⁵ And those who dwelt on the earth perished together (with them) through the waters of the deluge.²³

1 Enoch 6-16. 6:1-2 And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another: 'Come, let us choose us wives from among the children of men and beget us children.' ... 7:1 And all the others together with them took unto themselves wives, and each chose for himself one, and they began to go in unto them and to defile themselves with them, and they taught them charms and enchantments ... 8:2 And there arose much godlessness, and they committed fornication, and they were led astray, and became corrupt in all their ways ... 10:1-2 Then said the Most High, the Holy and Great One spake, and sent Uriel to the son of Lamech, and said to him: 'Go to Noah and tell him in my name "Hide thyself!" and reveal to him the end that is approaching: that the whole earth will be destroyed, and a deluge is about to come upon the whole earth, and will destroy all that is on it.... 10:11 Go, bind Semjâzâ and his associates who have united themselves with women so as to have defiled themselves with them in all their uncleanness.²⁴

Philo, the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher (20 BC – 50 AD), offers his opinion to the meaning of Genesis 6. In addressing the giants in Genesis 6, he writes of how Moses "relates that these giants were sprung from a combined procreation of two natures, namely, from angels and mortal women."²⁵

Given the manner in which Peter connects these imprisoned spirits with the days of Noah and the extra biblical literature offering a potential first century backdrop, it seems most likely that Peter points to Genesis 6 and believes the "sons of God" and the "daughters of man" were angels and human women.

²² The Book of Jubilees is an ancient Jewish religious work considered canonical by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and considered part of the pseudepigrapha by Protestants. [Charles, 28 vol. 2.]

²³ Charles, 513. vol. 2.

²⁴ The Book of Enoch is an ancient Hebrew apocalyptic text, ascribed to Noah's great grandfather – Enoch. Likely, it was written in the 2nd or 3rd century BC. It carries no inherent value and proves no biblical point, however, it may offer a background source impacting how the early believers understood Peter's letter. [Charles, 191–94.]

²⁵ Philo of Alexander and Charles Duke Yonge, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 811.

2 Peter 2:4-6

Of much more significance, let us now consider two passages that further connect us to both 1 Peter and Genesis 6. In his second epistle, Peter warns the believers of the false prophets that “arose among the people” (2 Pe 2:1). He goes on warn the believers from following these false teachers that will ultimately come to condemnation. He then offers examples in which God meted out judgment on those who followed in their own paths: the angels, the flood, and Sodom and Gomorrah. Peter writes the following:

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly (2 Pe 2:4-6).

While commentators typically present these verses as including three examples of judgment²⁶ potentially only two periods of time are offered as examples; (1) the period in which angels and mankind were judged but Noah was spared and (2) Sodom and Gomorrah were judged but Lot was spared.

Jude 6-7

Similarly, Jude mentions these two periods of time and the judgment meted out by God. In this case, Jude more closely connects the event with the angels and the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah with no mention of Noah and the flood. He writes:

And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day— just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. (Jude 6-7).

The similarities between Jude and 1 Enoch are notable. I am uncomfortable concluding that Jude quoted Enoch or relied in anyway on it. However, notable commentators do draw such a conclusion. Peter Davids writes, “Jude is clearly dependent upon the form found in *1 Enoch*, not least because he explicitly cites this work in vv. 14-15, but also because of the close parallels between Jude 6 and the account in *1 Enoch* 6-19.”²⁷ Schreiner as well concludes “we know from vv.

²⁶ Both Green and Schreiner accept Genesis 6 as referring to angels. However, others (such as Lenski) who reject this proposal, conclude that the “sons of God” in Genesis 6 are humans. Peter would then be offering three examples instead of two. [Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, vol. 18, TNTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1987), 121-222; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 37:334; R. C. H Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1966), 309.]

²⁷ Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, PNTC (W. B. Eerdmans, 2006), 49.

14–15 that Jude was influenced by *1 Enoch*, and *1 Enoch* goes into great detail about the sin and punishment of these angels.²⁸

Conclusion

	God Judges Sin	God Provides Salvation	God Expects Obedience
Genesis	6:1-7	6:8	
1 Peter	3:19	3:20	4:1-11
2 Peter	2:4-10	2:4-10	3:11, 14
Jude	5-7, 14-16	21	22-23

Genesis six confronts us with a challenging and awkward biblical story. Easily we get lost in speculative discussions about the meaning of “sons of God” and “daughters of man.” Discussions about Nephilim and men of renown. And in getting lost, I think we miss the larger picture and the foundation for any application.

First, God judges sin. While God displays his patience in giving people time to repent and continues to shower his blessings on them through means of general grace, God does not allow sin to forever go unchecked or undealt with. God judges sin.

1. In Genesis, God sees the pervasive wickedness of mankind and sends a flood.
2. In his first epistle, Peter acknowledges the imprisonment of spirits and discusses the destruction of the flood due to disobedience (1 Pe 3:19-20a).
3. In his second epistle, Peter acknowledges how angels were chained in gloomy darkness because of sin, the ancient world was destroyed because of their sin, and Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of their sin – especially the sin of lust and despising authority (2 Pe 2:4–10).

²⁸ “Apparently Jude also understood Gen 6:1–4 in the same way. Three reasons support such a conclusion. First, Jewish tradition consistently understood Gen 6:1–4 in this way (*1 En.* 6–19; 21; 86–88; 106:13–17; *Jub.* 4:15, 22; 5:1; CD 2:17–19; 1QapGen 2:1; *T. Rev.* 5:6–7; *T. Naph.* 3:5; 2 *Bar.* 56:10–14; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.73). Second, we know from vv. 14–15 that Jude was influenced by *1 Enoch*, and *1 Enoch* goes into great detail about the sin and punishment of these angels.” [Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 37:448.]

Dauids. We should note at this point that Judaism abandoned this interpretation of Genesis 6 as referring to angelic beings only after the time of R. Simeon b. Yohai (in the third-generation Tannaim, i.e., A.D. 130–60), insisting thereafter that the “sons of God” were human beings rather than angels. In Christian circles this interpretation of Genesis 6 as referring to angelic beings remained unanimous until the third century and continued until the fifth century (Bauckham). Thus the strangeness of the tradition to our ears does not mean that it was strange to Jude’s readers. [Dauids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 49.]

4. Similarly, Jude points to the destruction of Egypt for their lack of belief, the imprisonment of the angels for leaving their proper dwelling and despising authority and Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction due their sexual immorality and unnatural desires (Jude 5-7).

Note in this passage how Jude seems to liken the sin of the angels to the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. He writes, "just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which *likewise* indulged in sexual immorality." Like who? The angels?

Jude goes on to further describe God's judgment. He writes in verses 14-16, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 14-16).

Secondly, God preserves his people. In Genesis, God extended salvation to mankind in an Ark. Throughout the New Testament passages, God extends salvation to mankind in Christ – the substance and fulfillment of Noah's Ark. Believers are placed into Christ, and in Christ we weather the storm of God's wrath against sin. To be saved from God's wrath, we must be in the ark – which is Jesus Christ.

1. In his first epistle, by means of a couple really challenging verses, Peter connects the salvation of Noah and his family in the ark to the salvation that believers now experience in Christ.

After acknowledging the imprisoned spirits, Peter discusses God's patience "in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pe 3:20-21).

We likely stumble on the phrase "baptism ... now saves you." We cannot take the necessary time to work through this passage at length. So then, let me offer a very quick and likely insufficient explanation. Note how quickly Peter offers a caveat to his statement about baptism saving you. He immediately follows that statement with "not as removal of dirt from the body" but instead "as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pe 3:21).

Amid the flood, the water was the visible display of God's wrath. The water did not save them. The ark saved them from the water which was God's wrath. In the same way Noah was immersed in the Ark, resulting in being spared from God's wrath, we must be immersed in Christ to be spared from God's wrath. Therefore, baptism does save you. More specifically, being immersed (or baptized) into Christ now saves you.²⁹

2. In his second epistle, Peter once again acknowledges Noah, a herald of righteousness, being preserved with seven others (2 Pe 2:5). Lot was preserved from

²⁹ Sturgill, *Exploring First Peter*, 135.

the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (2 Pe 2:7). And then Peter draws a timeless principle. "The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials (2 Pe 2:9).

3. After addressing the destruction brought on by the false teachers, Jude exhorts believers to "keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life" (Jude 21).

Therefore, given these two theological statements, we draw two initial points of application. First, do not undermine the significance and destructive power of your sin. God may not have fully addressed or judged your sin yet, but a day is coming in which your sin will be condemned and judged. However, secondly, in Christ provides to us an Ark of salvation. Repent of your sins and accept Christ to avoid God's wrath against your sin.

Finally, the connected New Testament passages offer an additional point of application. We have avoided God's wrath because we have been baptized into the body of Christ – our Ark of salvation. Therefore, how should we live? Both Peter and Jude exhort godly living due to our salvation.

1. In his first epistle, Peter exhorts believers to arm themselves with the way Christ thought who "ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God" (1 Pe 4:1). Therefore we should not live like the Gentiles, "living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry" (1 Pe 4:3). Instead be "be self-controlled and sober-minded ... Above all, keep loving one another earnestly ... Show hospitality to one another ... serve one another ... in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Pe 4:7-11).
2. Peter asks a similar question in his second epistle. After encouraging and reminding these persecuted believers of how God knows how to spare the righteous, Peter then asks the question, "what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness" as you wait the coming of the Lord in which God's wrath will be displayed (2 Pe 3:11). Peter concludes, "beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace" (2 Pe 3:14).
3. Jude draws a similar application. "[H]ave mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear" (Jude 22-23).

Resources

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Message 16:

God Remembered Noah

(6:9-9:19)

August 8, 2021

I would like to take a moment to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to finish up my dissertation over the last few weeks....

Let me share with you one of the literary structures engrained in our writing. I think both Joe and I have struggled wanting to write creatively at times. They really didn't want "creative" writing. They wanted clear writing. We were to begin with a proposition. Offer evidence through the rest of the paragraph which proved that proposition. Finally, we would conclude with a restatement of the point – just to make sure we had been clear. We applied this structure to every paragraph, and to some degree, we applied this same structure to a chapter section. We would offer an overall proposition. We would prove it through various paragraphs. Finally, we would right a concluding paragraph to restate our proposition. All this for clarity. We desire the reader know with certainty our intent.

This same principle applies to our study of biblical authors. Biblical authors as well desired to be understood and they creatively used literary devices to accomplish that purpose. However, sometimes their literary structures vary greatly from what we are used to.

Let's consider one such structure. Biblical authors would at times use a chiastic structure to reveal their main point. A chiasm is a "literary structure where parallel elements correspond in an inverted order."¹ A true chiasm "reveals the focus, the pivotal point, of a passage."² Consider Matthew 6:24.

- A No one can serve two masters
- B For either he will hate the one
- C and love the other
- C' or he will be devoted to the one
- B' and despise the other
- A' You cannot serve God and money

In so writing, Matthew emphasizes the reality that we will love and be devoted to one master. We better be careful as to which master we follow. Matthew offers us a very brief chiastic structure.

¹ Douglas Mangum, *The Lexham Glossary of Theology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

² Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 1988), 249.

However, what I'm proposing this morning is that Genesis 6:9-9:19 consists of one chiastic structure.

Appropriately Leland Ryken offers a caution. Ryken does not doubt the use of chiasms in Scripture; however, he does argue "the incidence of chiastic structure in long passages has been greatly exaggerated in recent biblical scholarship." Too often creative interpreters impose a structure never intended by the biblical author, and in so doing, offer interpretations "often totally confusing to the general reader of the Bible."³

I agree with Ryken. However, I do believe Moses intentionally wrote Genesis 6-9 as a chiastic structure. I will point out a few places in the text which convinced me so. Many consider Genesis 6-9 to be part of a chiastic structure.⁴ Below I offer my own chiastic structure.

- A God chooses to destroy the earth with a flood but makes a covenant with Noah (involving his three sons) that he would protect them by means of an Ark (6:9-16).
- B God commands Noah to enter the ark, with all the animals, and tells him to bring food (6:21-7:3).
- C Seven days of waiting (2x) for the water (7:4-10).
- D Noah and his family enter the ark and the Lord shuts the door (7:11-16).
- E The waters increase for forty days (7:17-18).
- F The waters prevailed for 150 days, covering the mountains (7:19-24).
- G But God remembered Noah (8:1).**
- F' The waters receded for 150 days, ark settles on mountains (8:3-5).
- E' The waters abated for forty days (8:5-6).
- D' Noah opens the ark window and sends forth a raven (8:6-9).
- C' Seven days of waiting (2x) for the water (8:10-13).
- B' God commands Noah to leave the ark, with all the animals, and he provides them with food (8:15-9:4).
- A' God makes a covenant with Noah that he will never again destroy the earth with a flood therefore he and his three sons may leave the ark (9:8-19).

³ Ryken, "Chiasm," in *A Complete Handbook of Literary Forms in the Bible*.

⁴ Bernhard offers a clear, concise chiastic structure of Genesis 6-9 in his journal article. Wenham, in both his article and commentary, offers a couple helpful but different chiastic structures that extend through chapter nine. In his journal article, Wenham breaks the structure into 16 levels (A-P), whereas in his commentary he offers a couple brief structures – one high level structure and another acknowledging the numbers throughout the chapters. Ross offers a helpful structure in his commentary; however, he only goes through chapter eight – instead of nine. Every author culminates with "God remembered Noah." [Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 192; Gordon J Wenham, "Coherence of the Flood Narrative," *Vetus Testamentum* 28, no. 3 (July 1978): 338; Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:156-57; Bernhard W (Bernhard Word) Anderson, "From Analysis to Synthesis: The Interpretation of Genesis 1-11," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 97, no. 1 (March 1978): 38.]

Defining Remember

The Hebrew term translated “remembered” (*zakar*) throughout the Old Testament carries three potential meanings. First, *zakar* may connote “bringing to mind”⁵ by means of pricking or invoking⁶. Most likely, as we consider “remember,” this definition most often comes to mind. Typically, with this meaning, a memory has been set aside or completely forgotten, and something prods or provokes its remembrance. Hardly does this meaning best fit “God remembered Noah.” God didn’t abandon Noah to the Ark, get busy for a couple hundred days, and finally remember that Noah and his family were still floating around.

Secondly, *zakar* may reference a completely inward act such as “paying attention to.”⁷ This meaning does not demand forgetfulness but instead purposeful attention. This meaning fits better than the first but still falls short of the context of Genesis 8.

Finally, *zakar* references, as TWOT states, an “inward mental act accompanied by appropriate external acts.”⁸ In Genesis 8, Moses clearly includes God’s appropriate external acts which followed his inward mental attention. God remembered Noah. God had never forgotten Noah. However, God did redirect his primary work to Noah’s situation, and God made changes in Noah’s life based on his inward thoughts. After 197 days of tumultuous waters, God remembered Noah, and from that point, the waters began to recede.

God Remembers His People

The Old Testament authors reverberate this theme of God remembering his people throughout the Scriptures. (1) God remembered Abraham. Prior to God destroying Sodom and Gomorrah, Moses reminds us in Genesis 19, “God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities” (Gen 19:29). (2) God remembered Rachel. Rachel remained barren. Her sister, Leah already had sons by Jacob. Even Leah and Rachel’s servants (Zilpah and Bilhah) had sons by Jacob. Yet, Rachel remained barren. However, Moses writes in Genesis 30, “Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. She conceived and bore a son and said, “God has taken away my reproach.” And she called his name Joseph” (Gen 30:22–24). (3) God remembered Israel. Israel groaned under their Egyptian slavery for 400 years.⁹ However, “God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with

⁵ Gesenius and Tregelles, *Gesenius’ Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, 244.

⁶ Harris, Jr, and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 241.

⁷ Harris, Jr, and Waltke, 241.

⁸ Harris, Jr, and Waltke, 241.

⁹ Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. (Gen 15:13). The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years. At the end of 430 years, on that very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. (Ex 12:40–41). And God spoke to this effect—that his offspring would be sojourners in a land belonging to others, who would enslave them and afflict them four hundred years. (Acts 7:6).

Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob” (Ex 2:24). Following this statement of God’s remembrance, Moses unfolds the story of how God came to him in the burning bush. Sometime later, God would deliver Israel from Egypt. (4) God remembered the land. In a section about the consequences for disobedience, Moses unfolds how amid Israel’s disobedience, God will “remember the land.”

then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. But the land shall be abandoned by them and enjoy its Sabbaths while it lies desolate without them, and they shall make amends for their iniquity, because they spurned my rules and their soul abhorred my statutes.

Because the Israelite people failed to follow Sabbath laws concerning the land, God would remove Israel from the land allowing the land to rest. However, even though he would send the Israelites into years of captivity, he would not forget them. Moses goes on to write:

Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them, neither will I abhor them so as to destroy them utterly and break my covenant with them, for I am the LORD their God. But I will for their sake remember the covenant with their forefathers, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am the LORD.” (Lev 26:42–45).

God remembers us. God’s remembrance of us depends upon the promises he has made. Due to our faith in Christ, we have multiple promises on which to find hope. In Christ, we are blessed “with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (Eph 1:3). In Christ, we “who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (Eph 2:13). In Christ, “you are all sons of God, through faith” (Gal 3:26). In Christ, nothing “will be able to separate [you] from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:39), “not height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation.” In Christ, we “shall all be made alive” (1 Cor 15:22). In Christ, “[t]here is therefore now no condemnation” (Rom 8:1). In Christ, we will not be ashamed (1 Pe 2:6).

Like Rachel, or Lot, God’s remembrance depends not upon our perfect adherence to law or expectations of some kind, but rather on the promises God made to those who are in Christ.

Therefore, in your darkness and in your sin, God remembered you and he gave you Christ. As well, in your present turmoil, God remembers you and works on your behalf based on the promises he has made.

Theological Implications

God remembers due his promises not our actions. God remembered Noah and acted – not because of Noah but because God had promised he would. God blessed Abraham and protected Lot not because Lot deserved saving but because God had made a promise to Abraham. God liberated Israel not because of some inherent value they possessed but because he had made a promise to Abraham.

God has promised to preserve all those who are in Christ. Our hope in our future, ultimate salvation and freedom from this broken world lies not in our actions but in God's promise that he would save all those who are in Christ.

God remembers his people amid their darkness. In each of the examples, God remembered someone (or the land) amid great darkness. Noah had been tossed in what amounted to non-steerable driftwood for nearly 200 days before God remembered him. Rachel had grieved her barren womb for years prior to God remembering and blessing her with a child. Israel experienced 400 years of slavery before God remembered them and sent Moses.

God's remembrance does not result in immediate change. Noah and his family continued to drift for 200+ days before getting off the Ark. Years would go by before Moses would come and liberate Israel from Egyptian bondage. Just because God remembered his promises to his people, God does not necessarily immediately relieve his people of their turmoil.

We, the people of God, as well still groan amid the darkness of a broken world. Scripture offers no promise that the people of God will avoid deep darkness, trial, and suffering. In fact, Paul acknowledges such suffering in Romans. He writes, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God" (Rom 8:18-19).

God remembered his people. God promised to save a people to himself, and God gave his Son as the accompanying appropriate external action. However, immediate release from all the challenges and brokenness in the world came not at the death of his Son. We continue to experience that brokenness and pain.

Application Points

Our hope demands faith. The author of Hebrews specifically addresses this faith when he writes, "By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith" (Heb 11:7). Noah displayed his faith in the building of the Ark. The length of time it took to build the Ark is irrelevant¹⁰ – save one purpose. Noah exhibited a great deal of faith throughout the years it took him to build the Ark. The longer this time, the more pronounced his faith.¹¹

¹⁰ Genesis 6:10-11 indicate that Noah had three sons when God directed him to build the ark. Noah sired the first of these three sons at the age of 500 (Gen 5:32). God brought the Flood when Noah was 600 years old (Gen 7:6). If Noah's sons had been born and married when God told Noah to build the ark, the building of the ark must have occurred during this 100 year period and additionally must have occurred following the birth of his third son – making the length of building no more than 60-70 years. Beyond this length, we cannot be certain. Potentially Noah and his three sons built the ark in a few years. We can't know, and it doesn't matter.

¹¹ Consistently, children's curriculum (e.g. Abeka Books, and Sharefaith Bible Curriculum) present Noah preaching a message or repentance to a sneering and mocking world. These curriculums often claim Noah presented an opportunity for repentance and an ability to get on the Ark if they were to repent. These curriculums also claim everyone around

Additionally, Noah likely exhibited a great deal of faith throughout the time on the Ark. In looking at this text, we've determined Noah experienced nearly 200 days prior to "God remembered Noah" (Gen 8:1). Noah must have exhibited great faith throughout those 200 days.

Amid the darkness of nearly 200 days – not just floating but – of being tossed around in a world sized ocean – amid the annoyance of nearly 200 days of living in a confined ark with a bunch of stinking animals – amid the emotional and mental strain of nearly 200 days pondering on how everyone they knew had just died in a horrible flood (imagine their survivors guilt) – I would imagine at a couple points amid those nearly 200 days, a few of this courageous crew doubted whether God would keep his word to preserve them. How many times did Noah have to state to someone else or remind himself, "But God said he would keep us alive" (6:20)?

Holding on to hope that God would keep his promise and spare them from this catastrophe required immense and ongoing faith.

Our hope demands patience. Not only does Noah's experience on the Ark demonstrate the need for faith for the maintaining of hope, but also our hope requires great patience. Nearly 200 days passed before "God remembered Noah." But even still, once God remembered Noah, God did not immediately removed Noah from the hardship. The water immediately began to recede, but an additional 200+ days go by before Noah leaves the Ark.

Holding on to hope that they would eventually get off the Ark and walk on land again required an immense amount of patience.

Conclusion

Purpose statement. Our hope that God remembers us requires patient faith.

Noah mocked at him. There is no biblical evidence for such presentations. God had predetermined who would be spared on the Ark. Nowhere does Scripture reveal that the world had an opportunity for repentance and entrance on the Ark. Additionally, nowhere does Scripture indicate that people mocked Noah. While Noah may have experienced mockery, to conclude so would be drawing implications not inherent in the text. One author argued

Message 17:

Man's Total Depravity

(6:5, 8:21)

August 15, 2021

Introduction

Is man basically good? George Barna and Arizona Christian University performed a survey in June of this year. Their research indicated that 69% of people believe “people are basically good.”¹ Sadly, of those who consider themselves to have a biblical worldview, 52% agreed. Equally concerning (although not as consistent with those with a biblical worldview), 75% of people believe “people are not born into sin and therefore do not need to be saved by Jesus Christ.”

A question concerning man's innate goodness requires some clarification. If asked, “is man basically good,” I would ask, “in comparison to what?” If I'm comparing man to demons, I might conclude – yes, man is basically good. If I'm comparing man to the worst people throughout time (for instance, Hitler, the quintessential evil person), I might also conclude – yes, man is basically good. However, if we are comparing mankind to the perfect law of God, I would conclude – man is absolutely evil. The extent of our goodness rests upon its comparison.

But concupiscence with its motions remains. These, however, if not deliberately assented to and indulged, are not sinful. Whether they are or not, of course depends on the extent of the law. Nothing is sinful but what is contrary to the divine law. If that law demands perfect conformity to the image of God, then these impulses of evil are clearly sinful. But if the law takes cognizance only of deliberate acts they are not.²

Moses offers an equally dramatic contention in Genesis six and eight. He writes in Genesis 6:5, “The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil” (Gen 6:5 NLT). Similarly, Moses writes in chapter eight, “I will never again curse the ground because of the human race, even though everything they think or imagine is bent toward evil from childhood” (Gen 8:21 NLT cf. NIV, NET, CSB).

¹ George Barna, “American Worldview Inventory 2021” (Arizona Christian University; Cultural Research Center, June 22, 2021), 3, https://www.arizonachristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CRC_AWVI2021_Release05_Digital_01_20210618.pdf. [The larger survey can be found on the schools site as well... <https://www.arizonachristian.edu/culturalresearchcenter/research/>]

² Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 186–187.

Comprehensive Sinfulness in Genesis

Everyone is sinful.

1. Implied in “wickedness of man” (Gen 6:5).
2. Clearly stated in “every intention of the thoughts of [mankind’s] heart was evil.”
3. Yet, Noah was righteous. Was this hyperbole?

1. This appears to be a comparison to others.

NOAH IS DESCRIBED in superlative terms that would humble anyone worthy of them. In fact, they are so exceptional that they have appeared to some interpreters as hyperbolic. After all, Romans 3:10 (echoing Ps. 14:1–3) insists that no one is righteous. Yet here Noah is being called a righteous and blameless man. In fact, however, the context helps us resolve the difficulty by specifying the relative nature of the claim. His righteousness and blamelessness is *in comparison to the people of his time*. This is in accord with the normal usage of these terms throughout the Old Testament, where they do not generally indicate someone’s absolute righteousness or blamelessness relative to God’s standards but indicate one’s status on the human scale.³

2. Moses reiterates man’s depravity in 8:21 following the flood.

Even after the flood has destroyed the wicked of the earth, God still characterizes “every inclination of the human heart [as being] evil from childhood” (Gen. 8:21). David describes the corruption of his contemporaries in terms that Paul quotes in Romans 3. In Psalms 14 and 53, which are almost identical, human corruption is pictured as universal: “They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.... All have turned away, they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one” (Ps. 14:1, 3).⁴

3. Noah sinned (ch. 9) which implies “righteous” and “blameless” are subjective terms.
4. Noah’s righteousness follows God’s favor (Gen 3:8). Most scholars translate the phrase as “found favor with God”; however, some translators conclude the intent to be “win favor with God” which offers a significantly different meaning to the text. “Finding favor” connotes no morality in Noah, whereas “winning favor” would instill moral value. Victor Hamilton writes, “The former denotes no moral quality on the part of the person who is designated as having found favor. On these grounds

³ Walton, *Genesis*, 2001, 311.

⁴ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 567.

Noah's election would be just that, and no causal relationship should be seen between Noah's finding favor (v. 8) and his character (v. 9)."⁵

The word for *favor* connotes "a heartfelt response by someone who has something to give to one who has a need.... the verb comes from a biliteral root 'to bend, to incline'"⁶

So then, everyone was sinful. However, comparatively speaking, Noah was righteous only due to God's favor (grace).

Everyone is comprehensively sinful.

(total depravity, total inability, radical corruption)

- A. "Every intention of the thought of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen 3:5).
 - B. Comprehensive in that our sins extend beyond mere action to our internal motivation.
 - 1. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. (Luke 6:45).
 - 2. The word *intention* carries a basic meaning of "to form, to fashion."⁷ Therefore, every formation of thoughts within a person's being are always evil.
 - 3. This harsh conclusion seems unfair and requires some definitions and clarifications.
 - a. Defining sin. Let me offer Wayne Grudem's definition for sin. He defines sin as "any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature."⁸ Of course, sin includes actions, but importantly, Grudem includes both attitude and nature. We sin every time our attitude and nature are not in perfect conformity to the law of God.
- J.I. Packer adds a little to Grudem's definition. He writes, "*Sin* may be comprehensively defined as lack of conformity to the law of God in act, habit, attitude, outlook, disposition, motivation, and mode of existence."⁹
- If we sin every time our actions, attitudes, and nature fail to conform to God's law, then concluding mankind always sins seems less dramatic. Therefore, whenever our motives and intents are not driven by love for God

⁵ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, 276.

⁶ Edwin Yamauchi, "694 נָחַם," ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 302.

⁷ Thomas E. McComiskey, "898 יָצַר," ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 396.

⁸ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 490.

⁹ J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Tyndale House, 1993), 82.

and a desire for God's glory, we are sinning. If this conclusion is accurate, then people sin all the time.

The Westminster catechism similarly defines mankind's sinful state. Mankind "is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually."¹⁰

- b. Defining total depravity. R.C. Sproul prefers "radical corruption" to "total depravity." He contends the phrase, "total depravity," although helpful to the TULIP acronym, falls short in our current understanding of the two terms. He goes on to define "radical corruption."

Sproul. Radical corruption means that the fall from our original state has affected us not simply at the periphery of our existence. It is not something that merely taints an otherwise good personality; rather, it is that the corruption goes to the radix, to the root or core of our humanity, and it affects every part of our character and being. The effect of this corruption reaches our minds, our hearts, our souls, our bodies — indeed, the whole person. This is what lies behind the word total in "total depravity."¹¹

Cole. With reference to God, total depravity means that no one is able in and of himself to do anything to choose God, to seek God, to please God, to love God, to glorify God, or to merit His salvation.¹²

Canon's of Dordt. Therefore all men are conceived in sin, and are by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto; and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, or to dispose themselves to reformation.¹³

Total Depravity Does Not Mean. (1) That an unbeliever is totally insensitive to matters of conscience and morality. Paul insists in Romans 2 that the work of the Law was "written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness" (Rom 2:15). (2) That an unbeliever is as sinful as they could possibly be. No person commits sinful acts every moment of their life. Many unbelievers perform acts of kindness and generosity. While these actions may in some

¹⁰ Westminster Assembly, *The Westminster Confession of Faith: Edinburgh Edition* (Philadelphia: William S. Young, 1851), 180–181.

¹¹ R.C. Sproul, "Radical Corruption," *Ligonier Ministries* (blog), July 1, 2005, <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/radical-corruption>.

¹² Cole, "Lesson 15: Total Depravity (Genesis 6:5; 8:21), in *Genesis*, Ge 6:5.

¹³ "The Canons of Dordt" in *Historic Creeds and Confessions*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Lexham Press, 1997).

degree conform to God's law and likely reflect the image of God in someone, those actions in no way truly conform to the law (since of love of God is the primary intent of the law) and result in no eternal merit. (3) That an unbeliever will sin in every way possible.

Total Depravity Does Mean. (1) Sin has affected the entire person. The prophet Jeremiah claims the "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick (Jer 17:9). In Romans, Paul concludes sin reigns in our mortal bodies (Rom 6:12). In 2 Corinthians, Paul charges the Jews with minds that were hardened (1 Cor 3:14-15, cf. Rom 8:7-8). Again, in Galatians, Paul acknowledges our passions and desires (our emotions) have been deeply affected by sin (Gal 5:24). Finally, Paul reflects on the previous position of believers as "slaves of sin" (Rom 6:17).

(2) Good acts of unregenerate men are done with less than perfect motives – that being perfect love for God. (3) Unbelievers are incapable of changing or bettering their condition. The natural man cannot understand "things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them" (1 Cor 2:14).¹⁴

Comprehensive Sinfulness in Romans

- A. Paul starts off with an acknowledgment of the benefit of the gospel for all. He starts with his purpose statement concerning the gospel and then slowly unfolds the glory of the gospel.
- B. Gentiles are sinful.
 - 1. God revealed himself to mankind.
 - 2. They did not honor him as God but instead worshiped other things.
 - 3. Therefore, God gave them over...
 - a. God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity (1:24)
 - b. God gave them up to dishonorable passions (1:26).
 - c. God gave them up to a debased mind (1:28).
- C. "Moral people" are sinful.

Leon Morris. There is considerable discussion as to whether the opening part of this chapter refers to the Jew (who is not specifically addressed until v. 17) or the Gentile (who is certainly in mind in vv. 12–16; cf. vv. 9–10). One view is that Paul

¹⁴ Aaron Sturgill, *Exploring John's Gospel*, First Edition (Grand Blanc, MI: Crowdedship, 2010), 98–99.

has in mind neither of them as such, but “men of moral insight and ideals” (Foreman).¹⁵

Thielman. Paul has been speaking in the third person, but now suddenly shifts to the second-person singular and, using present tenses, addresses a single person directly. It is as if he steps out of the page and looks directly at the individual to whom he speaks. This was a common rhetorical device among philosophers both when they taught their disciples orally and in their writings.¹⁶

Thielman. Who is this person? Paul becomes more explicit about his identity in 2:12, 17, 23, and 25. He is addressing a Jew who possesses the Mosaic law, the ethical and legal code of Israel that separates them from the nations.¹⁷

Bruce. One can almost envisage him as he dictates his letter, suddenly picking out the complacent individual who has been enjoying the exposure of those sins he ‘has no mind to’, and telling him that he is no better than anyone else.... Even in this section of chapter 2, however, as more explicitly from verse 17 onwards, Paul is thinking chiefly of a Jewish critic.... That Paul has a Jewish critic more particularly in mind is evident from his repetition of the words ‘the Jew first and also the Greek’ (see 2:9 and 10), in which he emphasizes that the Jews are the first to experience the judgment of God as well as the first to receive the good news of his saving grace (1:16).¹⁸

- D. Jews are sinful.
 - 1. Then what advantage does the Jew possess? The law.
 - 2. But are Jews better off? No not at all (3:9).
- E. Everyone is sinful (3:9, 3:23).
- F. Everyone is completely sinful.
 - 1. None is righteous, no, not one (Ecc 7:20; Ps 14:1, 53:2-4)
 - 2. no one understands
 - 3. no one seeks for God
 - 4. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless
 - 5. no one does good, not even one

¹⁵ Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; InterVarsity Press, 1988), 107.

¹⁶ Frank Thielman, *Romans*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold, ZECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 125.

¹⁷ Frank Thielman, *Romans*, 125.

¹⁸ F. F. Bruce, *Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 6, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 92–94.

6. Their throat is an open grave
7. they use their tongues to deceive (Psa 5:9)
8. The venom of asps is under their lips (Psa 140:3)
9. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness (Psa 10:7)
10. Their feet are swift to shed blood
11. in their paths are ruin and misery (Isa 59:7-8; Prov 1:16)
12. and the way of peace they have not known (Luke 1:79)
13. There is no fear of God before their eyes (Psa 36:1)

Conclusion

- A. Initially, total depravity should lead to despair and then immediate and utter reliance upon Christ alone for salvation.
- B. Total depravity should produce humility by crushing any pride.
- C. Total depravity should lead to greater love and devotion to God for his immense grace.¹⁹

Spurgeon. Too many think lightly of sin, and therefore think lightly of the Saviour. He who has stood before his God, convicted and condemned, with the rope about his neck, is the man to weep for joy when he is pardoned, to hate the evil which has been forgiven him, and to live to the honour of the Redeemer by whose blood he has been cleansed.²⁰

Purpose statement. The more accurately we understand the depths of our sin, the more we appreciate the magnificence of Christ's grace.

Resources

Sproul, R.C. *Radical Corruption*. Teaching Series on Total Depravity. Ligonier Ministries, n.d.
<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/total-depravity>

¹⁹ These three points are part of Steven Cole's conclusion on this passage. [Steven J. Cole, "Lesson 15: Total Depravity (Genesis 6:5; 8:21)," in *Genesis*.]

²⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon Compiled from His Diary, Letters and Records by His Wife and His Private Secretary*, vol. 1 (Cincinnati, Chicago, St. Louis: Curts and Jennings, 1898), 76.

Message 18:

Our Covenant Keeping God

(9:1-17)

August 22, 2021

God's covenant with Noah

[Read Genesis 9:1-17]

In Genesis 9, we find the first instance for the word “covenant.” Prior to Noah, God made a covenant with Adam, but this is the first time the word *covenant* is used. In so doing, Moses introduces an important biblical concept – the idea of a covenant. So important is covenant to the overall structure of Scripture that Gentry and Wellum refer to *covenant* as “the backbone of the biblical narrative.”¹ The covenants and God’s working out of those covenants almost entirely (if not entirely) account for all the content of Scripture.

Adam. God makes the creation covenant with Adam in which God allowed Adam and Eve to live in the garden and eat from any tree – but one. God commanded them to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and God expected them to be fruitful and multiply and subdue the earth. Their disobedience brought death on all creation.

Noah. God reestablishes² the creation covenant with Noah. Some slight differences present themselves (food consists of animals); however, nearly all the same elements between God and Adam as well exists with God’s covenant with Noah.

¹ Peter John Gentry and Stephen J Wellum, *God's Kingdom Through God's Covenants: A Concise Biblical Theology* (Crossway, 2015), 52.

² “An exhaustive study of all cases of *bērît* in the Hebrew Bible reveals a completely consistent usage: the construction “to cut a covenant” (*kārat bērît*) refers to covenant initiation while the expression “to establish a covenant” (*hēqîm bērît*) means to affirm (verbally) the continued validity of a prior covenant, i.e. to affirm that one is still committed to the covenant relationship established in a preexisting covenant. The difference in the expressions can be illustrated in the case of the covenant with Abraham. In Genesis 15, God’s promises to Abraham of land and seed, given earlier in chapter 12, are formalized in a covenant. Notice that in 15:18 we have the standard terminology in the Hebrew text: “cut a covenant” (*kārat bērît*). Later, in Genesis 17, God *affirms* his covenant promise. Verses 7, 19, and 21 consistently employ the expression *hēqîm bērît*, while the expression *kārat bērît* is not used. Here God is affirming verbally a commitment in the covenant made previously, in chapter 15. So God affirms his promise and specifies further that Sarah will have a baby within the year. Therefore the construction *hēqîm bērît* in Genesis 6 and 9 indicates that God is not initiating a covenant with Noah but rather is affirming to Noah and his descendants a commitment initiated previously.” [Gentry and Wellum, 59–60.]

	with Adam	with Noah
Be fruitful and multiply	1:28	9:1
Subdue the earth	1:28	9:2
Provision of food	1:29-30 (plants)	9:3 (animals)
Don't eat meat with blood		9:4
Value of human life, in God's image	1:27	9:6
Man accountable for taking life	4:9-10 (Cain & Abel)	9:5-6 (general principle)

Abraham. God makes a covenant with Abraham. He promises to bless him, make of him a great nation, give his people land, and bless all the families of the earth through him (Gen 12, 15, 17, 22).

Isaac and Jacob. God reestablishes this Abrahamic covenant with his children – Isaac (Gen 26:2-5) and Jacob (Gen 28:12-22).

Israel. God makes the conditional Mosaic covenant with Israel at Mt. Sinai (Ex 19:3-8). He established a special relationship with them and promised to bless them if they would keep his commandments. They would be blessed by obedience and cursed with disobedience. A large swath of the Old Testament outlines how this covenant worked out with Israel. God renewed this covenant in Exodus 34:10-28.

Aaron and Phinehas. God made covenants with both Aaron and Phinehas regarding the line of priestly descendants. God promised Aaron that his line would serve as priests (Ex 28:1-30:37). Additionally, God made with Phinehas a covenant of peace in which he promised him an everlasting priesthood (Num 25:10-13).

David. Samuel records God's covenant with David. God promised to establish the throne and kingdom of David and allowed David's line to build the Temple.

Jeremiah and the New Covenant. Jeremiah discusses, at length, a covenant God will make with Israel that is "new" and "not like the covenant that I made with their fathers when I took them...out of the land of Israel" (Jer 31:32). In this new covenant, God promised to put a new law in them, give them a new heart, and be their God (Jer 31:33). He would "forgive their iniquity" and "remember their sins no more" (Jer 31:34).

Covenant	Main Scripture Texts
The Covenant with Adam (creation)	Gen 1–3
The Covenant with Noah	Gen 6–9
The Covenant with Abraham	Gen 12, 15, 17, 22
The Covenant with Israel	Ex 19–24
The Covenant with David	2 Sam 7, Psa 89
The New Covenant	Jer 31–34, Isa 54, Eze 33–39

Defining Covenant

Covenant generally defined. The term covenant in our English Bibles most often reflects the underlying Hebrew word, *berith*. *Berith* may be used to communicate all sorts of agreement and “oath-bound commitments.” Gentry and Wellum offer varied contexts. “It is used to refer to international treaties (Josh. 9:6; 1 Kings 15:19), clan alliances (Gen. 14:13), personal agreements (Gen. 31:44), national agreements (Jer. 34:8–10), and loyalty agreements (1 Sam. 20:14–17), including marriage (Mal. 2:14).”³ Gerard Groningen broadly defines covenant as “a coming together. It presupposes two or more parties who come together to make a contract, agreeing on promises, stipulations, privileges, and responsibilities.”⁴ Similarly, Daniel Lane defines *berith* as “a solemn agreement between two parties in which one or both of them make a binding pledge to the other to perform a specified commitment in the future.”⁵

However, we desire to understand God’s covenant with Noah; therefore, these varied contexts and definitions provide too broad an understanding of covenant. Many of these contexts involve people with other people and most often reflect a mutual agreement between relative equals. This broad understanding of *berith* would produce an inaccurate view of God’s covenants with different people.

We desire to understand the concept of covenant within the context of God’s establishing covenants with people. Therefore, let’s limit our understanding of covenant (for today’s purposes) to God’s primarily unilateral establishment of an imposed legal agreement upon man in which God stipulates the conditions of their relationship.⁶

³ Gentry and Wellum, 47.

⁴ Gerard Van Groningen, “Covenant,” Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Pub Group, 1996), 124.

⁵ Daniel Clifford Lane, “The Meaning and Use of Berith in the Old Testament” (Dissertation, Deerfield, IL, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2000), 314.

⁶ My definition is primarily drawn from Grudem’s definition of “covenant.” Grudem defines covenant as “an unchangeable, divinely imposed legal agreement between God and man that stipulates the conditions of their relationship.” [Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 515.]

Distinction between contract and covenant. Still, to best understand God’s covenant with Noah, the above definition demands further clarification. Additionally, the following clarification reveals one of the preeminent values of God’s covenant with people. So then, let’s make a distinction between a contract and a covenant. Many of the above cited examples of *berith* could appropriately be considered contracts between people. For instance, two nations, or clans, or individuals make a contract in which each party mutually benefits from the negotiation.

For instance, I desire to buy a car. I go to a car lot and choose a car. The car owner and I negotiate a contract in which we both benefit. I acquire a car. The car owner acquires money from me. Within this contract, neither party desires to build a relationship. If I have no money, the car owner is not interested in a relationship with me. If the car owner sells the car to someone else or doesn’t have a car I like, I have no interest in a relationship with him. Our mutually beneficial relationship entirely hinges on negotiating for a certain item – not establishing a relationship.

In contrast, God’s desires for a covenant vary profoundly. God does not look to acquire some desired product we have in our possession. He desires relationship with us. God’s covenants do not include two equals seeking to mutually benefit from one another. God, the stronger party, comes to mankind, the needy weaker party, and desires to establish a relationship that will benefit the weaker party. Additionally, the expectation on the weaker party is not their performance or ability to produce, but rather loyalty to God.

Category ⁷	Contract	Covenant
Occasion	Expected benefit	Desire for relationship
Initiative	Mutual agreement	Stronger party
Orientation	Negotiation: Thing-oriented	Gift: Person-oriented
Obligation	Performance	Loyalty
Termination	Specified	Indeterminate
Violation	Yes	Yes

Let me offer a simple, and potentially silly illustration. I love the kids in our church. I desire to have a relationship with them. Typically, a pastor struggles to connect with the kids in the church. Church life provides few contexts in which we will interact at all. I don’t work in the nursery. I don’t teach children’s church or one of their Sunday school classes. Basically, I’m one of the few figures they see stand at the platform when they are forced to sit in the auditorium. However, as pastors, we are responsible to care for their precious souls. I desire to initiate a relationship that will hopefully one day produce within them a comfort to come to me when they need counsel or help.

To this end, I give them candy every week. Of course, no formal covenant has been established. No blood was spilled – which often accompanies biblical covenants. No papers were signed. But some unspoken rules apply. They get one piece each week, and their parents must approve. Of course,

⁷ Gentry and Wellum, *God’s Kingdom Through God’s Covenants*, 53.

they stretch these rules at times. I see five wrappers strewn about the floor of my office on occasion. One of them will stand in front of me, after having had their one piece, and stare at me until I relent and give them a second. We have an informal agreement. I don't give them candy so that they will behave. Our relationship is not contingent on their behavior that day. We don't have a mutually beneficial relationship in which I give them candy and they draw pictures of me during church. Primarily, I take the cost to keep my candy containers stocked for their benefit and for our relationship.

Distinction between promissory and suzerain/vassal covenants. My "candy covenant" offers one example of a type of covenant God makes with man. Primarily, throughout scripture God makes either a "promissory covenant" or a "vassal-like covenant."⁸ A promissory covenant is "given irrevocably by God, and hence it cannot fail,"⁹ whereas a suzerain/vassal covenant emphasizes the obligation of the vassal to keep the covenant and thereby can fail.

God made a promissory covenant with Abraham. In Genesis 12, God promises Abraham blessings, that he will be the father of a great nation, and that through him all the families of the earth will be blessed (Gen 12:1-3). In Genesis 15, the first time "covenant" is used concerning Abraham, God covenants with Abraham to give land to his offspring. In Genesis 15, God covenants with Abraham that he will multiply him, make him the father of many nations, and that he will be their God. God specifies this covenant as eternal and everlasting (Gen 15:2-8). Additionally, God comes again to Abraham in Genesis 22. Here, God once again promises to multiply Abraham's offspring and bless the whole earth through his offspring. Within this covenant between God and Abraham, God offered no stipulations for the fulfillment of the covenant. He expected obedience – and primarily this obedience was displayed through circumcision (the sign of the covenant).

God makes a vassal-like covenant with Israel at Mt. Sinai. God initiates a special covenant relationship with Israel at Mt. Sinai. God and the Israelites make up the two covenant parties. God is the stronger desiring special relationship with the weaker. Israelites serve as the beneficiaries in this covenant. God promised Israel that they would enjoy a special, unique, and beneficial relationship with himself. However, they must keep the law that he unfolded for them. If Israel failed to obey, they would forfeit God's blessings. Therefore, the Mosaic covenant was conditional – Israel must obey.

Our Connection to the New Covenant

New Testament believers primarily find themselves connected to Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel's new covenant. This new covenant shares similarities with the old covenants. In either covenant,

⁸ I may be making a distinction between these that may not exist. I need to study this further. For instance, is a promissory covenant a suzerain covenant?

⁹ Lane writes, "As concerns our interest in the Abrahamic and the Sinai *berith*: the fundamental difference is that the Abrahamic covenant is a promissory *berith* given irrevocably by God, and hence it cannot fail. Conversely, the Sinai covenant is a vassal-like *berith* in which the primary obligation is placed upon fallible human beings; it is therefore in a category of covenant which can fail. It can incur the full-force of the threatened curses, should the Sovereign chose to execute them, and can cease to operate." [Lane, "The Meaning and Use of Berith in the Old Testament," 311.]

God extends himself in grace to needy recipients. In both covenants, God desires to produce out of the recipients a holy nation and a special possession intended to bring himself glory (1 Pet 2:9-10). Both covenants are initiated in blood (Heb 9:6 ff). In both covenants, love, as the root motivation for obedience finds a prominent role (Rom 13:8; Gal 5:14).

However, Ezekiel and the author of Hebrews clearly point out better aspects of the new covenant. Jesus Christ, as a sinless savior, serves as a better mediator for the new covenant (Heb 8:6, 9:15, 12:24). Christ offers a better and once-for-all sacrifice (Heb 9:6-10:18). Ezekiel reveals that, in the new covenant, God will give a new heart and the indwelling Holy Spirit (Eze 36:24-28).¹⁰

Old covenants still relevant. While the New Testament believer primarily connects to the new covenant, we ought not consider the older covenants irrelevant or that the new covenant is, as Elwell writes, “contrary or antithetical to the old covenant. The new covenant is not a refutation of the old, but a fulfillment and ‘interiorization.’ The continuity and essential unity between the two are as obvious as the differences between them.”¹¹ Similarly, Gentry and Wellum write the following:

Since *all* of the biblical covenants are part of the one plan of God, no covenant is unrelated to what preceded it, and no covenant can be understood apart from its fulfillment in Christ, it is right to say that *all* of the biblical covenants reach their *telos* in Christ and the new covenant.¹²

However, distinctions exist and must be understood and maintained. When God made the new covenant, he could choose to carry over some of the stipulations from the old covenant and could additionally add new promises and expectations. Ben Witherington addresses this important point, “only those commandments given as a part of the new covenant are binding on Christians.”¹³ Many similarities exist between the covenants because the same God enacted both covenants. Therefore, each covenant expects the recipients to love their enemies, turn the other cheek, and leave vengeance in the hands of God. However, New Testament believers refuse to commit adultery, not because of the ten commandments, but instead because Jesus commands this behavior as part of the new covenant.

Two important truths. As we consider all the covenants, including the new, we find two important truths. First, God consistently displays his faithfulness through the covenants. While all the recipients to God’s covenants reveal themselves to be unfaithful – Adam, Noah, Abraham, Israel, and David – God is always faithful to the promises he has made.

¹⁰ Gentry and Wellum offer a concise chart to break out the similarities and dissimilarities between covenants. The above two paragraphs primarily reflect that chart. [Gentry and Wellum, *God’s Kingdom Through God’s Covenants*, 235–36.]

¹¹ Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “Covenant, The New,” in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 538.

¹² Gentry and Wellum, *God’s Kingdom Through God’s Covenants*, 253.

¹³ See Appendix J. Ben Witherington, “Cutting a Covenant, and when Covenant People can’t Cut it,” (blog) October, 27, 2007. <https://benwitherington.blogspot.com/2007/10/cutting-covenant-and-when-covenant.html>

The covenants, then, reveal first and foremost our gracious triune God who is the promise maker and keeper and who unilaterally guarantees that his promises will never fail.¹⁴

Secondly, within each covenant, God requires obedience, however, in every covenant, the human participants have revealed themselves to fail regularly. So then, while God is consistently faithful, man is consistently sinful. Man's sinfulness poses a problem. Obedience is required for man to receive the benefits of the covenant. Man cannot consistently obey; therefore, man does not deserve the benefits of the new covenant.

it is *through* the covenants that only one answer is given: it is only if God himself, as the covenant maker and keeper, unilaterally acts to keep his own promise through the provision of a faithful covenant partner that a new and better covenant can be established. It is only in the giving of his Son, and through the Son's obedient life and death for us, that our redemption is secured, our sin is paid for, and the inauguration of an unshakable new covenant is established.¹⁵

Resources for Bible Study

Gentry, Peter John, and Stephen J Wellum. *God's Kingdom Through God's Covenants: A Concise Biblical Theology*. Crossway, 2015.

Lane, Daniel Clifford. "The Meaning and Use of Berith in the Old Testament." Dissertation, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2000.

¹⁴ Gentry and Wellum, *God's Kingdom Through God's Covenants*, 255.

¹⁵ Gentry and Wellum, 256.

Message 19:

New World, New Corruption

(9:18-29)

August 29, 2021

Introduction

If I were to ask you to summarize Noah with two words, would you use “righteous and blameless” or “drunk and naked?” And with that, welcome to another of the many odd stories in the book of Genesis.

[Read Genesis 9:18-28]

As we wrestle through another awkward story in Genesis, I would like to address a few questions and then offer some practical insight drawn from the narrative. (1) Why does Noah, the spiritual giant of the Flood, appear in such a bad light? Did Noah sin in this story? (2) What exactly did Ham do to Noah? Moses tells us that Ham saw the nakedness of his father. What does it mean that Ham saw his father’s nakedness? (3) Ham’s offense results in Canaan and his progeny being cursed. Who is Canaan and why should he be cursed for something he did not do?

Noah’s Shame

Let’s begin by addressing Noah’s character and actions in this story. Moses informs the reader that “Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent” (Gen 9:20-21).

Two different Noahs? At face value the Noah of chapter nine seems to be a different Noah than the Noah of chapter six. Moses describes the Noah of chapter six as “a righteous man, blameless in his generation.” A man who walked with God (Gen 6:9). In stark contrast, in chapter nine, we see Noah as a drunk and naked man lying in his tent (Gen 9:21).

The arresting contrast between the antediluvian Noah, rescued from death by his goodness, and the postdiluvian Noah, sprawled out in drunken disarray, has provoked a running controversy over the centuries between the apologists, who try to salvage Noah’s reputation as the man “blameless in his age,” and the more kindly critics, who regard him as perhaps the best of a degenerate lot.¹

¹ H. Hirsch Cohen, *The Drunkenness of Noah*, Judaic Studies 4 (University: University of Alabama Press, 1974), 1.

Naturally, biblical readers attempt to remedy this apparent contradiction. Either interpreters attempt to justify Noah's actions in chapter nine, concluding he was either naïve or alcoholic potency, or they accept the dark painting of Noah in chapter nine and conclude he serves as an example of the best of broken people.

Either Noah was blameless and righteous and blameless and righteous people have moments of sinful behavior. Or Noah was blameless and righteous only when contrasted to the generations prior to the flood whose "every intention of the thoughts of [their] heart was only evil continually" (Gen 6:5). [Some have concluded that these two descriptions of Noah demand the reality of two distinct people (ie. Cohen² and Skinner³).]

Babylonian Talmud. Tract Sanhedrin. Mishnah 2. Noah was just, a perfect man in his generation;" in his generation, but not in others. According to Resh Lakish: In his generation which was wicked, so much the more in other generations.⁴

Did Noah sin? While we naturally desire to understand if Noah sinned, we need to recognize the point of the story does not revolve around Noah's guilt or innocence. Instead, the story offers an account that explains why Abraham and his posterity are blessed and the Canaanite people receive the brunt of judgment. However, let's briefly address Noah's character.

Some have argued Noah was wrong to ever plant a vineyard.⁵ However, hardly could a vineyard pose an inherent sinful problem for Noah, seeing that the symbol of the coming bliss in the Messianic age is the fruit of the vine (Zech 8:12, Isa 25:6).

² Cohen only offers this as a possible interpretation and then offers Skinner as an interpreter of this view. Skinner writes, "There is the righteous Noah, and there is the drunken Noah – two entirely different people who bear not the slightest relationship to one another. They simply come from two disparate traditions where the only thing they have in common is their name." [Cohen, 3.]

³ Skinner writes, "Noah is here introduced in an entirely new character, as the discoverer of the culture of the vine; and the first victim to immoderate indulgence in its fruit....The Noah of vv. 20-27 almost certainly comes from a different cycle of tradition from the righteous and blameless patriarch who is the hero of the Flood. The incident, indeed, cannot, without violating all probability, be harmonised with the Flood narrative at all." [John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 181–82, <http://archive.org/details/criticalexegetic00skinuoft>.]

⁴ Michael L. Rodkinson, trans., *The Babylonian Talmud: Original Text, Edited, Corrected, Formulated, and Translated into English*, vol. 1–10, 10 vols. (Boston: The Talmud Society, 1918).

⁵ Chrysostom wrote, "Perhaps, on the other hand, someone might say, "Why was vine dressing, source of such terrible wickedness, introduced into life?" Do not idly blurt out what comes into your head, O man: vine dressing is not wicked nor is wine evil—rather, it is use of them in excess." Additionally, The Reformer, Andrew Willet, wrote, "It is mentioned that Noah planted vines rather than that he sowed corn (with which he was also undoubtedly occupied) not because he intended to leave the invention of necessary things to God and of pleasurable things to humans (as Ambrose supposes), for there is no doubt but that wheat was in use before the flood. Rather, [the mention of vines] furnishes the occasion for the story that follows. Nor is there any ground for saying that there was no use of the vine before the flood, when the people were given to such sensuality and pleasure. Rather, Noah brought the grape to more perfection (and therefore it is said he planted a vineyard, not vines) in order to make drink from that which might have been used otherwise before." [Louth and Conti, *Genesis 1-11*, 157; George, Timothy, Manetsch, and Thompson, *Genesis 1-11*, 1:304–5.]

More challenging to dismiss is Noah's drunkenness. Some early church fathers (Origen, Chrysostom, Theodoret of Cyr) and reformers (Andrew Willet) concluded Noah did not understand the potency or dangers of wine, therefore conclude Noah bears no judgment for his drunkenness.

Theodoret of Cyr. Why was Noah not blamed for falling into drunkenness? His falling was not due to intemperance but inexperience. For he was the first man to press the fruit of the vine and was ignorant not only of the power of the drink but also of the kind of change it had undergone.⁶

Andrew Willet. Though Noah's drunkenness may have some excuse, in that he was an old man and unaccustomed to this kind of drink, and being ignorant of its nature and power, he was more quickly overcome, nonetheless, he can have no just defense.⁷

[A Jewish rabbi, in the Midrash, proposed an interaction between Noah and Satan about the planting of the vineyard. This view is extravagant and bizarre, but worth keeping in a footnote 😊. ⁸]

From our New Testament perspective, we rely on passages such as in Ephesians, where Paul commands the believer to "not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph 5:18). However, the bible reader finds no condemnation for drunkenness prior to the law or in the law. However, wisdom literature does strongly caution against the abuse of alcohol (Prov 20:1, 23:31, 31:4-5).

The OT offers examples of the dangers of drunkenness. Lot gets drunk and his two daughters sleep with him (Gen 19:30-38). God commands the priests not to drink so they could distinguish between holy and unholy (Lev 10:9-11). Nabal dies after a drunken spree (1 Sam 25:32-38). The Israelites were able to defeat Ben Hadad and 32 other kings because those kings had gotten drunk (1 Kings 20:12-21). Proverbs warns kings, princes, and rulers to abstain from alcohol because alcohol perverts good judgment (Prov 31:4-5).

Moses describes intoxicating wine as the poison of serpents and the cruel venom of asps (Deut 32:33). Solomon refers to alcohol as the "wine of violence" (Prov 4:17) and states that "wine is a mocker and strong drink is raging" (Prov 20:1).

⁶ Louth and Conti, *Genesis 1-11*, 156.

⁷ George, Timothy, Manetsch, and Thompson, *Genesis 1-11*, 1:306.

⁸ "Midrash Tanchuma, Noach 13.4. What did Satan do? First, he obtained a lamb and slaughtered it beneath the vineyard. Then, he took a lion and slaughtered it there, and after that he obtained a pig and an ape and slaughtered them in the same place. Their blood seeped into the earth, watering the vineyard. He did this to demonstrate to Noah that before drinking wine man is as innocent as a sheep: *Like a sheep that before her shearers is dumb* (Isa. 53:7). But after he drinks a moderate amount of wine he believes himself to be as strong as a lion, boasting that no one in all the world is his equal. When he drinks more than he should, he behaves like a pig, wallowing about in urine and performing other base acts. After he becomes completely intoxicated, he behaves like an ape, dancing about, laughing hysterically, prattling foolishly, and is completely unaware of what he is doing. All this happened to the righteous Noah. If the righteous Noah, whom the Holy One, blessed be He, praised, could behave in such a fashion, how much more so could any other man!" [Sefaria. "Midrash Tanchuma." n.d. https://www.sefaria.org/Midrash_Tanchuma%2C_Noach.13.4?lang=bi]

However, the fact that Nazirites were told to not drink wine infers the average Jew did drink wine (Num 6:3). Wisdom literature praises God for producing “wine to gladden the heart of man” (Ps 104:15) and offers wine as a sedative (Prov 31:6).⁹

Therefore, Noah planting a vineyard poses no problem. Noah’s drunkenness sheds a negative light on his character, and his resulting nakedness in his tent leave him in a position of shame. Consistently biblical authors couple drunkenness and nakedness and pose them in a negative and shameful light. This shameful position offers the backdrop to Ham’s sin. Clearly Noah, having lived for around 350 years after the flood, produced and accomplished a great many wonderful and positive feats for which he could have been left in a more positive light. However, scripture leaves Noah’s character in the negative light of being drunk and naked in his tent.

Luther. Of his life after the flood, Moses tells us very little. But is it not apparent that so noble a man, living for about 350 years after the flood, could not be idle, but must have been busy with the government of the Church, which he alone established and ruled? ... Though reason tells us that Noah was burdened with these manifold duties after the flood, yet Moses does not mention them. It appears to him sufficient to confine his remarks to the statement that Noah began to plant a vineyard, and that he lay in his tent drunken and naked.¹⁰

Observation: As already stated, Noah’s shameful position offers a backdrop to Ham’s sin. The story is about Ham not really about Noah. However, in sharing Noah’s shameful moment we are offered an example of how drunkenness often leads to immorality, poor decision making, and shame.

Ham Extends the Shame

We leave the backdrop of Noah’s shameful drunken position and now confront the primary offense of the story. Moses writes, “Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside” (Gen 9:22).

Fringe interpretations. Before I propose the two most plausible interpretations, let me simply acknowledge a couple others. Some rabbis, attempting to explain why Canaan was cursed rather than Ham, conclude that little Canaan had gone into the tent and accidentally castrated his grandfather.¹¹ Additionally, one author in the Jewish Talmud discusses the proof for Ham

⁹ “Genesis does not stop to moralize on Noah’s behavior. It is neither condemned nor approved. To be sure, wine was not forbidden in Israel. It was used to cheer the heart (Judg. 9:13; Ps. 104:15), and as a sedative (Prov. 31:6). The Nazirite vow of abstention from wine would be meaningless if Israel as a nation already abstained. Nevertheless, the Bible does not hesitate to condemn winebibbing (Prov. 23:29–35), and even equates it with harlotry (Hos. 4:10–11, 18), which numbs the longing for God. The two incidents in Genesis describing drunkenness (here and 19:31ff.) become the occasion for sins of debauchery.” [Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, 321.]

¹⁰ Martin Luther, *Luther on Sin and the Flood: Commentary on Genesis*, trans. John Nicholas Lenker, vol. 2, The Precious and Sacred Writings of Martin Luther (Minneapolis, MN: The Luther Press, 1910), 304–5.

¹¹ Graves and Patai footnote the following Jewish literature. I was unable to find these documents. “Tanhuma Buber Gen 48-49, Gen. Rab. 338-40.”

castrating his father,¹² and another author writes, “All agree that Ham castrated Noah, and some say that Ham also sodomized him (Talmud, Sanhedrin 70a).¹³ Those who argue such a position offer the potential motivation to be the desire by Ham to “prevent procreation in order to seize the power to populate the earth.”¹⁴

Option 1: Ham’s sin was sexual. Let us consider instead the first of two more likely interpretations. Potentially Ham sexually assaulted his mother. Such an interpretation would well explain the dramatic curse Noah offers following the incident. A section in Leviticus provides the basis for such an interpretation. In chapter 18 of Leviticus, Moses addresses unlawful sexual relations, and in a significant section addresses the sin of incest. Fifteen times within thirteen verses, Moses commands, “you shall not uncover the nakedness.” A few of these seem most clear (18:7, 8, 16)¹⁵, however, let me offer Leviticus 18:14 as the most pertinent to our discussion. Moses writes, “You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father’s brother, that is, you shall not approach his wife; she is your aunt” (Lev 18:14). In these passages, sexually approaching a woman equates to uncovering her husband’s nakedness. Possibly, Ham, seeing his father passed out, sexually takes advantage of his mother – most likely the motivation being to shame his father and take some type of control [Cf. Ahithophel’s counsel to Absalom to sleep with David’s concubines so that “the hands of all who are with you will be strengthened” (2 Sam 16:11).]

This interpretation seems to better explain the harsh curse placed on Canaan and, at first glance, seems to reflect well the prohibitions in Leviticus. Many argue Noah too harshly cursed Canaan if Ham simply saw his father naked. However, one slight difference between the wording in Genesis 9 and Leviticus 18 (and a couple other evidential points) make this interpretation less likely. In Genesis 9, Moses deliberately emphasizes how Ham “saw” (Gen 9:22) his father and again Shem and Japheth purposefully did not “see” the nakedness of their father (Gen 9:23). Whereas, in Leviticus, Moses restates the prohibition to not “uncover the nakedness.” Leviticus emphasizes the action of uncovering and Genesis emphasizes the sin of seeing.

Additionally, The solution to their father’s nakedness was for the two brothers to physically walk backward and cover their father with a garment. This solution seems odd if Ham seeing his father’s nakedness equates to his sexual impropriety with his mother.

¹² *Talmud, Sanhedrin 70a*. “The Gemara explains: The one who says that Ham castrated Noah adduces the following proof: Since he injured Noah with respect to the possibility of conceiving a fourth son, which Noah wanted but could no longer have, therefore Noah cursed him by means of Ham’s fourth son.” [Sefaria. “Talmud, Sanhedrin.” n.d. <https://www.sefaria.org/Sanhedrin.70a.19?lang=bi>]

¹³ Sefaria. “Talmud, Sanhedrin.” n.d. <https://www.sefaria.org/Sanhedrin.70a.20?lang=bi>

¹⁴ *Ross references Philo Biblius’ discussion*. “Greek and Semitic stories occasionally tell how castration was used to prevent procreation in order to seize the power to populate the earth.” [Allen P Ross, “The Curse of Canaan: Studies in the Book of Genesis, Pt 1,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 137, no. 547 (July 1980): 229.]

¹⁵ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, which is the nakedness of your mother; she is your mother, you shall not uncover her nakedness. (Lev 18:7). You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father’s wife; it is your father’s nakedness. (Lev 18:8). You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother’s wife; it is your brother’s nakedness. (Lev 18:16).

Option 2: Ham's sin was disrespect. While the first option remains plausible, the second interpretation seems most likely. According to this second view, Ham sinned against his father in a couple ways. As would be true today, drunkenness and nakedness would be looked upon with shame and a perception of weakness.

Ross. Nakedness thereafter represented the loss of human and social dignity. To be exposed meant to be unprotected; this can be seen by the fact that the horrors of the Exile are couched in the image of shameful nakedness¹⁶

After having seen his father naked, Ham does not take the opportunity to cover his father's shame. Not only does Ham do nothing about his father's shameful position, but Ham also goes and tells his brothers about it. In so doing, Ham increases his father's shame. If Ham had accidentally stumbled upon his passed out and naked father, out of love, respect, and concern for his father; Ham should have immediately covered him and done all he could to minimize the shame. He doesn't. Instead, he broadens the shame.

Westermann. With Noah and his sons living together it was the duty of the sons in such a situation to stand by the father, in this case to cover him, as the citation from Ugarit shows. It was a grave breach of custom when Ham saw his father lying naked in his tent, did not cover him, but left him there and went outside and told his brothers. This is narrated so clearly that it is difficult to understand how exegetes have missed the obvious meaning.¹⁷

This second interpretation better follows the natural reading of the story. Additionally, this interpretation better explains Shem and Japheth's actions. Shem and Japheth's actions become confusing if the first interpretation is accepted. If Ham seeing his father's nakedness equates to sexual impropriety towards his mother, what does it mean that Shem and Japheth "covered the nakedness of their father?" Could this simply mean that Shem and Japheth "abstained from sexual relationship with their mother?"¹⁸ Unlikely.

Mathews. The expression in our passage is not a figurative statement since the two sons actually cover up the exposed nakedness of their father, who was in a drunken stupor in the tent. This is reinforced by the description "their faces were turned."¹⁹

Therefore, the depth of sin comes from Ham's immensely, disrespectful treatment of his father. Mosaic law demanded Israel to deal harshly with disrespect for parents (Ex 21:15, Deut 21, 18-21, Deut 27:16). Mathews writes the following:

¹⁶ Ross, "The Curse of Canaan," 230.

¹⁷ Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 488.

¹⁸ Hamilton writes, "For example, when Shem and Japheth 'covered their father's nakedness' (v. 23), does this mean simply that they abstained from sexual relationship with their mother? Basset himself is forced to admit that v. 23 is awkward, and that it comes from the hand of a later redactor who failed to understand the subtleties of the event." [Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, 323.]

¹⁹ K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, vol. 1A, NAC (Broadman & Holman, 1996), 419.

In the ancient world insulting one's parents was a serious matter that warranted the extreme penalty of death. Mosaic legislation reflected this sentiment. This patriarchal incident illustrated the abrogation of the Fifth Commandment, "Honor your father and mother." To do so means divine retaliation, for the crime is not against parent alone but is viewed as contempt for God's hierarchical order in creation.²⁰

Ham, intentionally or unintentionally, stumbled upon his drunk and naked father. Instead of loving his father well and immediately covering him to minimize potential shame, Ham intensified and expanded his father's shame by telling his brothers. As a result of this thoughtless and disrespectful behavior, Noah becomes aware of this offense and curses Ham's son Canaan.

Why Canaan? Why not Ham?

Canaan cursed for the Shame

Moses writes, "when Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son²¹ had done to him, he said, 'Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers'" (Gen 9:24).

Why Canaan? Why does he curse Canaan rather than Ham? This question has baffled students of Scripture for millennia with no obvious answer. Gordon Wenham purposefully ignores any interpretation which places the blame on Canaan. He then offers three best possible interpretations. First, consistent with some Jewish rabbis, Noah could not curse Ham right after God had just recently blessed Ham (Gen 9:1).

Midrash on Genesis. Rabbi Yehudah said: Since it is written, 'And God blessed Noah and his sons' (Gen. 9:1), while there cannot be a curse where a blessing has been given, consequently. He said: Cursed be Canaan.²²

Second, some interpreters, such as Keil and Delitzsch, conclude the curse was against a father because the offense was by a son towards his father. Keil and Delitzsch write, "It was not Ham who was cursed, however, but his son Canaan. Ham had sinned against his father, and he was punished in his son."²³

²⁰ Mathews, *Genesis 1-11*, 1a:420.

²¹ Let me acknowledge an irrelevant (to me) but potentially confusing phrase – "his youngest son." At two previous points, Moses names Noah's sons. In each instance, Moses places them in the order of "Shem, Ham, and Japheth." This order has resulted in most assuming Ham to be the middle son. In chapter ten they are in a different order (Japheth, Ham, and Shem). Neither text seems to indicate that Ham is the youngest. While most commentators acknowledge this potential confusion, drawn from their discussion, I offer the simple acknowledgment that likely Moses either does not place them in order of birth or the Hebrew term *qatan* means smaller or younger rather than youngest. Many translations offer "his younger son" (KJV, LXX, DR, Geneva).

²² Sefaria. "Bereishit Rabbah." n.d. https://www.sefaria.org/Bereishit_Rabbah.36.7?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en

²³ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1:99.

Finally, Wenham offers a third interpretation. He writes, "Noah's curse on Canaan thus represents God's sentence on the sins of the Canaanites, which their forefather Ham had exemplified."²⁴ Ross agrees with Wenham and writes the following:

Ross. the Torah, which shows that God deals justly with all people, suggests that Noah anticipated in him the evil traits that marked his father Ham. The text has prepared the reader for this conclusion by twice pointing out that Ham was the father of Canaan, a phrase that signifies more than lineage. Even though the oracle of cursing would weigh heavily on Ham as he saw his family marred, it was directed to his distant descendants, who retained the traits.²⁵

Therefore, in this curse, Moses offers an explanation as to why the lasting division and animosity exists between the Canaanites and the Israelites.²⁶

[An alternative view: Some, who conclude Noah sexually sinned with his mother, conclude potentially Canaan was the fruit of Ham's incest, thereby the fruit of the sexual sin carries the curse of the sin. ²⁷]

Important interpretive conclusions. (1) The father's sin negatively impacts his family for generations. Scripture offers precedent for the sins of one man negatively impacting his posterity; after all, Adam sinned once leading all mankind into sinful darkness. Ham's sin, similarly, extended to many generations to follow him. (2) The curse does involve slavery; however, the fulfillment of this curse plays out in the years of division, war, and servitude between ancient Israel and their Canaanite rivals. The curse does not forever condemn certain "races" to perpetual slavery.

Mathews. There are no grounds in our passage for an ethnic reading of the "curse" as some have done, supposing that some peoples are inferior to others. Here Genesis looks only to the social and religious life of Israel's ancient rival Canaan, whose immorality defiled their land and threatened Israel's religious fidelity. It was not an issue of ethnicity but of the wicked practices that characterized Canaanite culture.²⁸

²⁴ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:201.

²⁵ Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 217.

²⁶ Cynically, Graves and Patai write, "The myth is told to justify Hebrew enslavement of Canaanites." Similarly, Bassett writes, "The story seems clearly designed to discredit the Canaanites and justify the Israelite and Philistine hegemony over them." [Robert Graves and Raphael Patai, *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis* (London: Cassell, 1964), 122. Frederick W Bassett, "Noah's Nakedness and the Curse of Canaan: A Case of Incest?," *Vetus Testamentum* 21, no. 2 (April 1971): 232.]

²⁷ "On the basis of the above references which establish the idiomatic meaning of the expression under discussion, it is possible that the statement that Ham saw the nakedness of his father originally meant that he had sexual intercourse with his father's wife. If so, this would explain the seriousness of the offense which led to the curse. It would also explain why Noah cursed only one of Ham's several sons, if it is further assumed that Canaan was the fruit of such a case of incest.... Idiomatically understood, Canaan bears Noah's curse of slavery, because he is the fruit of Ham's incest." [Bassett, "Noah's Nakedness and the Curse of Canaan," 235.]

²⁸ Mathews, *Genesis 1-11*, 1a:423.

Finally, (3) and ultimately, following generations were not cursed because of what Ham did but because they chose to sin in the same way as their ancient ancestor. For generations, the Canaanites chose to abandon themselves to immorality and received the just consequences of such actions.

Theological Implications

This story's position in Genesis. The story of Noah's drunkenness and Ham's sin offers an important setting to God's choice to bless Abraham and his posterity and curse Canaan's family line. As Israelites and Canaanites heard or read of Moses' telling of Shem and Japheth's blessing and Canaan's cursing, they would quickly connect this story to their ongoing rivalry and enslavement.

Sin is prevalent in man. God had just destroyed the world due to its wickedness. Shortly after Noah and his family disembark from the mammoth vessel symbolic of God's salvation and protection, mankind jumps right back into their sinful disposition. Over and over, throughout Scripture, mankind shows their natural tendency to choose corruption. Sin is prevalent in man.

Man's sin has devastating and lasting repercussions. We underestimate the severity of consequences to our sin. This story offers one more instance in which a seemingly minor action results in dramatic consequences. Even if Ham simply saw his father's nakedness and told his brothers – why does Canaan and following generations need to be cursed. Of course, Ham was wrong, but doesn't this curse seem to be a bit over the top?

Ross. It seems almost incredible that a relatively minor event would have such major repercussions. But consistently in the narratives of Genesis, one finds that the fate of both men and nations is determined by occurrences that seem trivial and commonplace.²⁹

God punished all mankind because Adam ate some fruit. David gave into lust one time and destroyed his family. We way underestimate the destructive power of our sin.

A life of ongoing blessing follows a life of obedience to God's design. When we ignore God's expectations, laws, and design for life, we should expect a destructive life pattern.

Christ covered our shame. Christ covered our shame by becoming shame for us. I would not argue that Moses was attempting to make this point. However, we can connect to Noah's position. We find ourselves in a position of shame. We aren't drunk and naked in a tent – at least not right now. However, we have plenty of sin in our lives which produces shame. Unlike Ham, Christ saw our shame, and not only did he simply cover our shame, he took our shame upon himself so we would experience none of it.

²⁹ Ross, "The Curse of Canaan," 224.

Additional Exhortation

Some Jewish interpreters have concluded Canaan's children would be black and carry specific physical attributes. Graves and Patai offer succinct and startling summary of this egregious view.

Graves summary of Midrash interpretation. Others say that Ham himself unmanned Noah, who awakening from his drunken sleep and understanding what had been done to him, cried: 'Now I cannot beget the fourth son whose children I would have ordered to serve you and your brothers! Therefore it must be Canaan, your first-born, whom they enslave. And since you have disabled me from doing ugly things in the blackness of night, Canaan's children shall be born ugly and black! Moreover, because you twisted your head around to see my nakedness, your grandchildren's hair shall be twisted into kinks, and their eyes red; again, because your lips jested at my misfortune, theirs shall swell; and because you neglected my nakedness, they shall go naked, and their male members shall be shamefully elongated.' Men of this race are called Negroes; their forefather Canaan commanded them to love theft and fornication, to be banded together in hatred of their masters and never to tell the truth.³⁰

Each aspect of this summary can be found in the Jewish Talmud and Midrash.

Talmud, Sanhedrin 70a. The Gemara explains: The one who says that Ham castrated Noah adduces the following proof: Since he injured Noah with respect to the possibility of conceiving a fourth son, which Noah wanted but could no longer have, therefore Noah cursed him by means of Ham's fourth son.³¹

Talmud, Sanhedrin 70a. All agree that Ham castrated Noah, and some say that Ham also sodomized him.³²

Midrash, Tanchuma, Noach 15.3. Our sages stated: While Noah was in the ark, he said to himself: Would that my sons possessed slaves so that they might remain seated while being served. When I depart from this place, I shall produce a descendant who will be their slave. Following this incident, he said to Ham: You prevented me from begetting a fourth son who would serve you, therefore your fourth son shall become a slave. Hence, he said: *Cursed be Canaan*. This is the opinion of those who contend that Ham castrated his father.³³

Midrash Tanchuma, Noach 13.5. Thereupon Noah cursed his seed, saying: *Cursed be Canaan* (Gen. 9:25). Because Ham had glanced at his naked father, his eyes became red. Because he related (what he had seen) to others with his mouth, his lips became twisted. Because he turned his face away (ignored his father's condition), the hair of

³⁰ Graves and Patai, *Hebrew Myths*, 121.

³¹ Sefaria. "Talmud, Sanhedrin." n.d. <https://www.sefaria.org/Sanhedrin.70a.19?lang=bi>

³² Sefaria. "Talmud, Sanhedrin." n.d. <https://www.sefaria.org/Sanhedrin.70a.20?lang=bi>

³³ Sefaria. "Midrash Tanchuma." n.d. https://www.sefaria.org/Midrash_Tanchuma%2C_Noach.15.3?lang=bi

his head and beard was singed. And because he neglected to cover his naked father, he went about naked, with his prepuce extended. This happened to him because the Holy One, blessed be He, exacts retribution measure for measure.³⁴

Babylonian Talmud, Tract Pesachim 10. Five things Canaan the son of Ham the son of Noah commanded his children; viz.: "Love ye one another, love robbery, love lasciviousness, hate your masters, and never tell the truth."³⁵

These interpretations have been used by some Jews and Christians for at least, if not more, than the last 2200 years to justify racism and perpetual slavery.

In 1700, Samuel Sewall addressed the common understanding that "these Blackamores are the posterity of Cham, and therefore are under the curse of slavery."³⁶ Sewall didn't agree with this conclusion, but he acknowledged that this view was the prominent view and instead offered a counter understanding.

In 1869, Edward Blyden argued African Americans should return to Africa and redeem it.

But it may be said the enterprising people, who founded Babylon and Nineveh, settled Egypt, and built the pyramids, though descendants of Ham, were not black – were not negroes; for, granted that the negro race have descended from Ham, yet, when these great civilizing works, were going on, the descendants of Ham had not yet reached that portion of Africa, had not come in contact with those conditions of climate and atmosphere which have produced that peculiar development of humanity known as the Negro.³⁷

In the late twentieth century, Thomas Peterson wrote a book addressing the Antebellum understanding of Ham's curse. He wrote the following about the proslavery position.

Proslavery writers also joined the argument with the abolitionists in terms of biblical exegesis. They contended that Noah's curse was not mere prediction, but an ordinance of God and that Noah spoke by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; they held that the decree was not a special dispensation, applying only to the Israelites, since it referred to the future relations among Ham, Shem, and Japheth; a few believed that Canaan concurred in Ham's sin, while others maintained that the Hebrew text was corrupt and that "Ham, the father of Canaan" was the object of the curse; and they argued that both polygamy and divorce had been specifically prohibited by the New Testament, whereas slavery was explicitly sanctioned by Paul in his Epistle to Philemon, and never condemned by Christ.³⁸

³⁴ Sefaria. "Midrash Tanchuma." n.d. https://www.sefaria.org/Midrash_Tanchuma%2C_Noach.13.5?lang=bi

³⁵ Rodkinson, *The Babylonian Talmud*, 1–10:236.

³⁶ Samuel Sewall, "The Selling of Joseph, A Memorial" (Bartholomew Green and John Allen, 1700), 2.

³⁷ Edward Blyden, "The Negro in Ancient History," *Methodist Quarterly Review*, no. January (1869): 8.

³⁸ Thomas Virgil Peterson, *Ham and Japheth: The Mythic World of Whites in the Antebellum South*, ATLA Monograph Series: No. 12 (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1978), 6.

It is important that we acknowledge a couple of things.

1. Christians (and Jews) have justified racism and gruesome slavery due to a horrific interpretation of Genesis 9. America still suffers from the results of such racism and slavery.
2. This interpretation has impacted generations up through – at least – the twentieth century. I recall growing up hearing about the curse of Canaan being the basis for the enslavement of black people.
3. The twisting of Scripture can result in horrific and long-lived erroneous practices.
4. This twisting of Scripture offers one example for the need for consistent and faithful bible study. It appears Christians adapted a very old and erroneous Jewish interpretation of Genesis 9 and used it to justify American slavery.
5. We must reject lazy bible study and bible study that tends to justify our already perceived opinions.

Resources for Bible Study

Bassett, Frederick W. "Noah's Nakedness and the Curse of Canaan: A Case of Incest?" *Vetus Testamentum* 21, no. 2 (April 1971): 232–37.

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Graves, Robert, and Raphael Patai. *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis*. London: Cassell, 1964.

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Message 20:

The Table of Nations

(10:1-32)

September 5, 2021

Let me take a moment to set appropriate expectations for this text today. First, let's remember we don't skip passages in scripture – primarily because as Paul writes, “all scripture is inspired by God and is profitable” (2 Tim 3:16). Second, I'm not going to pretend this passage provides some of the most insightful and practical guidance for our Christian walks. As one pastor wrote, “If I could choose one chapter from the Bible to take with me to a desert island, it would not be Genesis 10. It is history at its most bare; it lists names and people whom we no longer know or care about.”¹ I won't go so far as to agree with Leupold who argues, “It may very well be questioned whether a man should ever preach on a chapter such as this.... such a sermon might have too little gospel content.”² However, I would disagree with Boice when he describes Genesis 10 as “a chapter that is surely one of the most interesting and important in the entire Word of God.”³ Leupold undervalues the text and Boice over sells it.

Broad observations

Individuals, cities, clans, and nations. This genealogy varies from the typical genealogy in which a father who had a son and lived so many years – and so on. In contrast, Moses lists both individuals, families, cities, clans, and nations. For instance, Peleg and Nimrod (and of course Noah's three sons) were all individuals. However, the Kittim, Dodanim, Mizraim, Ludim, Ananim, etc. were all tribal names. Other people groups or nations are noted by the name of their city – Jebusites (all the “ites” in 10:16-17) – but also cities such as Babylon, Erech, Akkad (10:10), Nineveh (10:12), and Sodom and Gomorrah (10:19).

Because Moses chooses to present the names of the genealogy in this manner, he avoids adding the typical dates to each name. Most genealogies include the number of years an individual lived and sometimes gives the age of the father when he had his son and the years he lived afterward. Understandably, this genealogy lacks all those years.

¹ Steven J. Cole, “Lesson 22: The Roots of the Nations (Genesis 10:1–32),” in *Genesis*, ed. Steven J. Cole, Steven J. Cole Commentary Series (Dallas: Galaxie Software, 2017), Ge 10:1–32.

² H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1942), 380.

³ Boice, *Genesis*, 1:418.

Amount of emphasis. Moses emphasizes particular sons of Noah by the amount of time spent discussing them. For instance, Moses summarizes all the families of Japheth in five verses with no additional comment. Even though, Japheth spreads throughout more of the world than any other of Noah's sons, Moses discusses Japheth less because Japheth's children would play a less significant role in Israel's history.

Similarly, the families of Shem are discussed less than Ham (35%) but more than Japheth because they played a more significant role in Israel's history than did the offspring of Japheth.

However, Moses discusses Ham for nearly 50 percent (48%) of the chapter. Ham fathers all those coming from Egypt and Canaan – two incredibly significant nations in Israel's history. Additionally, amid the discussion of Ham, Moses takes a notable amount of time to discuss Nimrod, one of Ham's descendants. In fact, more time is spent on Nimrod than any other individual in the chapter.

Chapter ten in light of chapters nine and eleven. First, the table of nations in chapter ten ought to be read and understood in light of the Tower of Babel in chapter eleven. Chronologically, the story of the Tower of Babel in chapter eleven occurs amid the spread of the nations in chapter ten. Chapter eleven offers the reason that the nations of chapter ten spread the way they did. Originally (at least close to the beginning), all the people came together, in direct disobedience to God's command to Noah and his sons to populate and fill the earth (9:1). Instead, they chose to migrate to the East and "make a name for themselves (11:4), specifically so that they would not "be dispersed over the face of the whole earth" (11:4). Ross describes the potential motivation of the people. "It thus appears that the human family was striving for unity, security, and social immortality (making a name) in defiance of God's desire for them to fill the earth (9:1)."⁴ Therefore, to suppress their combined wickedness which would once again require universal judgment, God divides them by confusing their languages.

In chapter eleven, Moses discusses God's method of dividing and spreading out the people of the world. Chapter ten indirectly outlines where those people went. I say indirectly because the text does not tell us where the people went, but other biblical texts and extra biblical literature informs us as to where these clans, nations, and cities were located. As a result, we can know where the families of Noah's three sons journeyed.

A bookend. 9:1 and 10:32 offer bookends of sorts. In 9:1, Moses writes, "God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, 'be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth'" (Gen 9:1). In 10:32, Moses writes, "these are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood" (Gen 10:32).

The Generations of Japheth

The brevity of this portion points to its lack of importance to Israel's story. However, Japheth's family appears to be the most significant regarding the population spreading throughout the world. Ezekiel acknowledges how the families of Japheth journeyed to "the uttermost parts of the North" (Eze 38:6). From there they spread both West to Asia Minor and the Greek islands and East

⁴ Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 233–34.

as the Medes and Cimmerians. [This spread explains the similarities found within the Indo-European languages.]

Although less significant to Israel's history, this immense spread offers evidence of the blessing given to Japheth by Noah in chapter nine. Noah blesses Japheth and says, "May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant" (9:27).

The Generations of Ham

As you likely notice, the length of this section indicates the emphasis of this chapter as well as the impact of Ham's offspring on the people of Israel. Ham's offspring are both the closest neighbors to Israel but as well the most oppressive enemies to Israel.

Cush, typically understood to be Ethiopia. Quite consistently, commentators agree that Cush refers to those clans and tribes that migrated south of Egypt.⁵ In a moment we will further discuss Nimrod, who came from Cush.

Egypt (and Put). While we all understand the significance of Egypt's connection to Israel, at this point, Moses simply acknowledges Egypt and his sons as a line of Ham. One significant emendation finds its way into the text, maybe by a later editor. The text acknowledges Egypt as one "from whom the Philistines came" (10:14).

Additionally, Put likely migrated south with those in Egypt but maybe moved even further into modern day Somalia. The author only mentions Put as a son of Ham but offers no following generations. "Josephus too understands [Put] it as Lybia. Nahum 3:9 distinguishes it from Lybia (Egypt, Put, the Lybians). It has been equated therefore with the Egyptian Punt, on the Somali coast, west of the Red Sea."⁶

Canaan, those West of Jordan, especially in the coastal plain. Simply put, Moses outlines the nations that populated Canaan, the land that they would one day possess as part of God's blessings and promises to Abraham.

Nimrod emphasized. The genealogy emphasizes Nimrod more than any other. Note the potentially tragic irony connected to Nimrod. He is "a mighty hunter before the Lord," however, he also fathers Babylon and Nineveh.⁷

⁵ Wenham writes, "'Cush' lies to the south of Egypt, and is traditionally translated 'Ethiopia,' following LXX, but it probably covers a variety of dark-skinned tribes (cf. Jer 13:23) living beyond the southern border of Egypt." Westermann writes of the "land south of Egypt, Nubia, in Greek, Ethiopia."⁵ Hamilton offers a little bit more. "*Cush* represents the area of northeast Africa. The Greek appellation for it is Nubia. The LXX uses two forms for Cush: *chous* when it refers to the sons of Ham, and *aithiopia* in other instances. It is questionable whether one is dealing here with a homonymous Cush: an Ethiopian Cush (v. 6), a North Arabian Cush (v. 7), and a Kassite Cush (v. 8), to be discussed below." [Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:221; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 510; Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, 336.]

⁶ Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 510-11.

⁷ Westermann. "Moreover there is a third observation: the sentence that has been appended in v. 14, generally regarded as a marginal note, 'from whom the Philistines came.'" Mathews. "To complicate the problem is the troublesome issue of early references in the patriarchal narratives to the 'Philistines' (21:32, 34; 26:1, 8, 14-18), whose presence in Canaan

The phrase “before the Lord” leaves most readers with some uncertainty. Typically, we may consider such a statement as a positive trait. However, the entire section concerning Nimrod seems to be cast in a negative light. (1) Possibly, Moses intends to use the phrase as a superlative. In other words, Nimrod was remarkable or stood out from the others, and the phrase offers no approval or disapproval.⁸ (2) Potentially, the phrase simply acknowledges that any strength or power ultimately flows from God’s grace.⁹ In the same way God guided Cyrus, a pagan king, God empowered Nimrod. After all, the heart of the king is in the hands of God (Prov 21:1). Chrysostom, the early church father, likely agreed with this interpretation. He wrote the following:

Chrysostom. While some people say the phrase “before the Lord” means being in opposition to God, I on the contrary do not think sacred Scripture is implying this. Rather, it implies that [Nimrod] was strong and brave. But the phrase “before the Lord” means created by him, receiving from him God’s blessing.¹⁰

Finally, in his commentary, James Murphy concludes “before the Lord” suggest, “not merely that the Lord was cognizant of his proceedings... but that Nimrod himself made no secret of his designs, pursued them with a bold front and a high hand, and at the same time was aware of the name and will of Jehovah.”¹¹ While I think Murphy is correct, this seems to impose a bit on the text.

Taking into consideration all the context, the inclusion of Babel (and the following story), Nineveh, Assyria, and a likely negative connotation to him being a “mighty man” and “mighty hunter,” I concur with Luther’s simple conclusion. “Nimrod was the first after the Flood to strive for the sovereignty of the world.”¹²

The Generations of Shem

Typically, in considering Noah’s sons, we would likely place Shem as the middle son – hence, the couple times we read of Ham, Shem, and Japheth. However, in this chapter, we find a different order. Japheth’s descendants spread more than any other of Noah’s sons but play a less significant role in Israel’s history. The descendants of Ham play a profound role in Israel’s history as the primary nemesis to Israel, therefore, Moses spends significant time in addressing them. However, Moses places Shem, the middle child, at the end of this table of nations. Shem plays the most significant role of Noah’s sons because through Shem all the covenant promises will be fulfilled.

It is placed last because Shem fathers the elect line, and the chosen line is always dealt with last.¹³

would antedate by centuries the arrival of the Philistines as indicated by Egyptian sources (ca. 1300–1200 B.C.).” [Westermann, 519; Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 1A:453.]

⁸ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:223; Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 1A:450.

⁹ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, 339.

¹⁰ Louth and Conti, *Genesis 1-11*, 165.

¹¹ Murphy, *Notes on the Old Testament: Genesis*, 224.

¹² George, Timothy, Manetsch, and Thompson, *Genesis 1-11*, 1:325.

¹³ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:227.

Moses acknowledges the descendants of Japheth and Ham in chapter ten, but from now on, the emphasis of genealogies will flow from Shem – and most significantly from his distant grandson Abraham, mentioned in chapter 12.

The earth divided. Moses offers very little additional commentary concerning Shem's offspring. However, let me point out one additional phrase. In verse twenty-five we read, "To Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided." While this phrase may reference a few different meanings, likely Eber names his son Peleg due to him being born around the time of the separation of people from the tower of Babel. Possibly this phrase refers to something as dramatic as a catastrophic earthquake or less dramatic as the division of two Semitic people groups or even less dramatic as an irrigation canal. Simply, we can't be too decisive, but chapter eleven seems to offer the most logical explanation for Peleg's inclusion.¹⁴

Conclusion

Moses accomplishes a few things by means of chapter ten. First, Moses introduces to the biblical narrative many, if not most, of the significant people groups throughout scripture - especially those who played a significant role in Israel's history.

At the beginning of chapter ten, the question remains. Through whom will God fulfill his promise to Eve to provide an offspring who will crush the enemy? Canaan has been cursed, therefore, someone must come through the line of Japheth or Shem to fulfill this promise. While Moses introduces all the relevant nations to the next period of history; he also, by discussing Shem last, narrows the group of people to Shem's line through whom the promises will be fulfilled. This broad people group narrows even more, when in chapter twelve, Moses introduces Abraham. God covenants with Abraham to make him a great nation and through Abraham "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:3b).

Second, chapter ten offers an overview of how God orchestrated his plan and command to Noah to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Mankind had other plans, but God will accomplish his purpose regardless our feeble attempts to ignore or stop him.

Third, Nimrod offers one example of the apostle Paul's intent in 1 Corinthians 10. In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul discusses the value of learning from the experiences of people in the past. He writes,

¹⁴ Oddly enough, as a pastor, Boice seems to discuss Peleg the most and offers as many alternatives as any other commentator. He does conclude that likely Peleg references the separation at the tower of Babel. Wenham hardly considers alternate meanings than "the dispersal of nations at Babel." Uncharacteristically, Westermann offers the least discussion and concludes, "In one sentence it ascribes an event to the generation designated by the name. What is meant is something like what is described in 11:1-9, although one cannot say whether this remark in the genealogy has this or another intent."

Both Kidner and Mathews offer the possibility of a canal or territorial divisions, and Mathews includes the possibility of an earthquake. In the end, Mathews, like the majority, consider the Tower of Babel "the more likely viewpoint, but this linkage cannot be dogmatically held since there is no clear allusion to 11:1-9 because "scattered" (*pûş*) and "divided" (*nîplêgâ*) are different words."

[Boice, *Genesis*, 1:417-18; Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:230-31; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 526; Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, 345; Kidner, *Genesis*, 1:117; Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 1A:463.]

“Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did” (1 Cor 10:6). And a few verses later he adds, “Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come” (1 Cor 10:11). Moses offers Nimrod as one such example. And, through Nimrod, we learn to avoid attempting to foil the plans of God.

God had commanded man to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth. However, Nimrod refused to follow this command. Nimrod was the father of Babel. In chapter eleven, Moses informs us of the intent of those building the tower of Babel. They determined to build a city so that they could “make a name for [themselves], lest [they] be dispersed over the face of the whole earth” (Gen 11:4). Nimrod refused to obey God’s command to fill the earth, but I surmise he also desired to avoid the curse that had been placed on his forefather Canaan. Canaan had been cursed to a position of servitude, and Nimrod purposed to be anything other than a slave. In fact, he proved to be the first mighty man on earth. Nimrod led men and formed around him a people that purposed to “make a name for themselves.”

Boice. This is the normal reaction of the human spirit when faced with God’s curse. It says, “I’ll defy it. I’ll take care of my own problems.” So it creates the arts, raises an army, builds its cities, and marches out to make a name for itself in defiance of God’s decrees. But God’s decrees are not overturned this way. God’s curse is not successfully defied. There is only one way we can escape God’s curse, and that is at the point where God takes the curse on himself.¹⁵

Mankind still attempts to do life in a way that is contrary to God’s expectations, and mankind continues to refuse to accept and reckon with the curse. All mankind is born into a state of sin and misery. We attempt to overcome this by “making a name for ourselves” and accomplishing great tasks – all in an effort to overcome the curse. Only Christ has overcome the curse.

Purpose statement. While man attempts to foil the inevitable and avoid the curse, God orchestrates his plan, unhindered.

¹⁵ Boice, *Genesis*, 1:413.

Message 21:

Dispersion of Nations

(11:1-9)

September 12, 2021

Introduction

“Let us make a name for ourselves.” Is this not humanities utmost desire? To make a name for themselves?

Friday evening, I watched Waterloo’s high school football game against Cambridge. At one point, the announcer said, “and back to kick for Cambridge is # 5...” Here’s the problem. That was the wrong guy. The announcer had given credit to the quarterback instead of the kicker. What amused me was that the kicker actually looked up at the announcer with a slight look of disappointment.” Hey man! Say the right name next time!” I get it. We love having positive attention brought to our name. We love our name in lights.

I think most of us, even in some minor way, want to make a name for ourselves. Whether it’s as simple as a high school football player wanting to be acknowledged, anyone of us wanting some social media post to go viral, an employee wanting to be considered a top employee, a businessman wanting to climb the corporate ladder, a stay-at-home mom with the most engaging blog posts or Pinterest page, a pastor wanting the bigger church or a book contract, or a retiree that simply doesn’t want to be forgotten. We all want to make a name for ourselves – even if in just one little slice of our world. We don’t want to be forgotten.

Let me offer an alternate story to this young football player. Thea Van Halsema documents a story of John Calvin’s humility in her book titled *This was John Calvin*. “On one occasion, the Roman Catholic Cardinal Sadolet passed incognito through Geneva. He wanted to have a look at the famous reformer. He found the simple house on Canon Street and stood there amazed. Could the great Calvin live in this little place? He knocked. Calvin himself, in a plain black robe, answered the door. Sadolet was dumbfounded. Where were the servants who should have been scurrying about to do their master’s bidding? Even the bishops of Rome lived in mansions, surrounded by wealth and servants. Archbishops and cardinals lived in palaces like kings. And here was the most famous man in the whole Protestant church, in a little house, answering his own door!”¹

¹ In his sermon from this same text, Stephen Cole quotes from *This was John Calvin* by Thea Van Halsema. [Steven J. Cole, “Lesson 23: Man Versus God: God Wins (Genesis 11:1–9),” in *Genesis*, Ge 11:5–9. From Thea B. Van Halsema, *This Was John Calvin* [Baker], pp. 164–175.]

John Knox, the Scottish minister and theologian responsible for the Scottish Reformation, also offers a rare view into the humility of a spiritual giant. John Knox wrote an epistle “To the Inhabitants of Newcastle and Berwick.” He wrote, “God is witnesse... thogh in his presence I was and am nothing but a masse of corruption, rebellion, and hypocrisie...I sought neither preeminence, glorie, nor riches; my honour was, that Christ Jesus should reigne²

Both Calvin and Knox’s theology demanded little be made of them and much be made of God. This theology manifest even in Calvin’s burial. One biographer writes. “On May 27, Calvin died. The next day he was buried like any humble citizen, in a plain wooden coffin and without pomp or ceremony. It was his own wish that his burial be modest, and that no stone should mark his resting-place. Somewhere in the cemetery of Plain-palais he was buried. Here the visitor is shown a plain stone slab bearing the initials J.C., but “no man knoweth his sepulchre until this day.”³

We have two options in front of us this morning. We can, like the football player, desire for people to acknowledge us. We can desire to be remembered. We can desire to make a name for ourselves. Or, like Knox and Calvin, we can realize the reality of our own corruption, and instead desire that God be magnified and our lives be forgotten.

[Read Genesis 11:1-9.]

Purpose statement. Live a life making much of God, not yourself.

Immediate context.

1. Note the bookends. Moses begins this section with “the whole earth had one language and the same words” (11:1). He ends this brief account with “the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth” (11:9).
2. The first verse sets up the unity present among the people. The second verse offers a geographical context. The people had migrated East (Southeast) to the land of Shinar. Shinar consists of a district of Babylonia which comprises the region approximately from modern Baghdad to the Persian Gulf.⁴
3. With verses three and four, Moses unfolds both mankind’s actions and their motives. They build a city and a temple. They build motivated by a desire to make a name for themselves and out of fear of being dispersed throughout the whole earth.
4. In verses five through eight, God comes down to the people, confuses their languages and disperses them throughout the world.

We may infer from God’s actions of confusing the languages and dispersing the people that the actions of the people at the Tower of Babel were wrong. Why?

² John Knox, *The Works of John Knox*, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1895), 480–81, <http://archive.org/details/cu31924092463060>.

³ Harkness, Georgia, *John Calvin: The Man and His Ethics*, (New York; Abingdon, 1958), 59.

⁴ “Shinar,” Elwell and Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 1955.

Man's Sin

Don't fashion God to your liking. Those in Babel built a tower to heaven. In so doing, they displayed man's natural desire to fashion God in their likeness.

*The religious reality of the tower.*⁵ Consider the Babylonian ziggurat and its connection to religious practices. The tower was almost undoubtedly a religious edifice. God did at times direct his people to construct buildings so that he could come to his people. A religious building is not inherently sinful. However, this edifice was not directed by God and in fact defied God.

The most prominent building in the early temple complex was the ziggurat. Most interpreters, therefore, have identified the Tower of Babel as a ziggurat...

Throughout Mesopotamian literature, almost every occurrence of the expression describing a building "with its head in the heavens" refers to a temple with a ziggurat.⁶

Ziggurats held inherent religious significance. A particular ziggurat would be dedicated to a particular deity. The ziggurat would likely play a very little role in the average worshipper. Worshipers would worship in a temple elsewhere – likely at the foot of the ziggurat. The people intended for the ziggurat to serve as a place for their gods to descend to them. "It was solely for the convenience of the gods and was maintained in order to provide the deity with the amenities that would refresh him along the way."⁷

Man tries to bring God down. By means of the religious edifice, mankind attempted to bring God down to themselves. Fallen mankind naturally desires a God he can in some manner control. John Walton addresses this reality when he writes, "it is fair to say that the ziggurat was the most powerful representation of... a system in which the gods were recast with human natures."⁸

We desire a god that we can influence which fundamentally contradicts with a God who establishes his throne far above mankind. Through the tower, man attempted to humanize the divine. Walton acknowledges the same when he writes, "people began to envision their gods in human terms. People were no longer trying to be like God, but more insidiously, were trying to bring god down to the level of fallen humanity."⁹ Tozer offered a similar characterization. He

⁵ A couple other possible views were offered by commentators. *Wenham*. From a purely human viewpoint, building a tower as high as the sky is an audacious undertaking, but it seems likely that Genesis views it as a sacrilege. For the sky is also heaven, the home of God, and this ancient skyscraper may be another human effort to become like God and have intercourse with him

Hamilton. The builders also thought that the existence of such a fortified city would be the guarantee of their security. With such a fortress they would be less vulnerable. A plain (v. 2) offers the least amount of protection in time of crisis. Thus settled in, the builders would no longer be scattered over the face of the earth. This hoped-for result flies directly in the face of the divine commandment to multiply and fill the earth.

[Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:239; Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, 353.]

⁶ Walton, *Genesis*, 2001, 373.

⁷ Walton, 374.

⁸ Walton, 376.

⁹ Walton, 377.

wrote, “[l]eft to ourselves we tend immediately to reduce God to manageable terms. We want to get Him where we can use Him, or at least know where He is when we need Him.”¹⁰

Don’t pursue personal prestige. Those in Babel desired to make a name for themselves. In so doing, they display man’s natural craving to be remembered.

Desiring a name is not inherently wrong. God does appeal to Abraham by promising to make his name great.

The point is that it is a natural human desire to leave one’s mark and to be remembered after death. That is in part the attractiveness of God’s offer to Abram, for he promised to make a name for him (12:2). Making a name may be driven by pride, but it does not have to be.¹¹

However, God desires for his name to be great and he chooses who to make a name of. On a couple occasions in one chapter Isaiah mentions this idea. Regarding Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, Isaiah writes, “who caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them to make for himself an everlasting name” (Isa 63:12). And a couple of verses later Isaiah writes, “Like livestock that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest. So you led your people, to make for yourself a glorious name”. (Isa 63:14). Similarly, Samuel writes, And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods?” (2 Sam 7:23).

Nimrod and the inhabitants of Shinar constructed this city and this temple for their own glory. They desired to draw attention to themselves and receive the recognition for their accomplishments. The problem was that they were only significant from their own perspective.

Calvin. This is the perpetual infatuation of the world; to neglect heaven, and to seek immortality on earth, where every thing is fading and transient. Therefore, their cares and pursuits tend to no other end than that of acquiring for themselves a name on earth.¹²

Peter Virmigli. Their wicked goal is further expressed here. They did not want to be scattered, despite the fact that when God blessed Noah’s sons, he would have proposed to them that they should fill the earth. This plan of theirs was to obtain fame and renown for themselves, lest they be scattered, but they were thinking that a fortress would be the key to a kingdom, a monarchy and some sort of mighty government. Truly, people do have great power where they agree and join together.

¹⁰ A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (Fig, 2012), 8.

¹¹ Walton, *Genesis*, 2001, 374–75.

¹² Calvin and King, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 327.

But if the grace of God does not intervene, their efforts always erupt in evil deeds, just as is manifestly clear here.¹³

Don't fear being forgotten. Those in Babel feared being dispersed over the face of the whole earth. In so doing, they display man's fear of being forgotten and irrelevant.

After Noah and his family left the Ark, God commanded them to "be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth" (9:1). While the first two commands (or blessings¹⁴) direct mankind to multiply offspring, the third command appears to direct the people to spread throughout the world.¹⁵ The people out of fear of being dispersed chose to ignore this command of God.

Fear of being forgotten. The text indicates they feared being dispersed. You may wonder how I get to this fear as a fear of being forgotten. People want to do something that matters. They want to be part of something important or great. People want this individually and they want this as a group. Being dispersed inserts the potential of being forgotten – of not being part of the important group that stays and does something special. We want to leave a legacy – something, anything. The people were afraid that in being dispersed they would be forgotten and lose the ability to make a name for themselves.

Let me bring up another scenario from Friday night's game. Our student section started chanting "you can't stop him..." To this, the Cambridge student section chanted back, "let's play basketball..." To which, Waterloo students chanted, "let's play volleyball..." It was humorous and went on for a while. What's my point? Each group wanted to be part of something better than the other group. "Well, you may be good at football, but we'll beat you at basketball!"

Is this not the human condition? We are fine conceding we struggle in certain areas if we can feel like we have the corner of the market in some other area. We tend to define ourselves by our strengths. We root our identity in the thing we do well – and hopefully better than the other people immediately around us.

God's Rule

God comes down. Moses writes, "and the Lord came down to see the city and the tower" (Gen 11:5). I'm pretty sure Moses wrote this with a bit of sarcasm. Motivated by pride, ambition, and a bit of fear, mankind built a tower they considered to be "with its tops in the heavens." They

¹³ George, Timothy, Manetsch, and Thompson, *Genesis 1-11*, 1:331–32.

¹⁴ Walton offers a counter argument worthy of note. He addresses two problems inherent with concluding the sin of coming together was disobedience of God's command to fill the earth. He writes, "(1) When God told them to fill the earth, he was giving a blessing, not a command. It was a privilege, not an obligation, and could therefore not be disobeyed. (2) The means of filling the earth indicated in Genesis 1 and 9 was not by scattering, but by reproducing. The earth is no fuller when people spread out. The only way filling can be disobeyed is by refusing to be fruitful and multiply, and the text is clear that they are doing quite well in that regard." [Walton, *Genesis*, 2001, 375.]

¹⁵ *Wenham*. Possibly the desire to congregate in one place should be seen as a rejection of the divine command "to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth" (1:28; 9:1). *Ross*. It thus appears that the human family was striving for unity, security, and social immortality (making a name) in defiance of God's desire for them to fill the earth (9:1). [Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:240; Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 233–34.]

considered this tower to be the home of the gods, and in making it, something worthy of their name being permanently displayed. However, God had to come down just so he could see it. Of course, Moses uses an anthropomorphism. God didn't come down so he could see. Being omnipresent, God could see just fine. But, from a human perspective, God had to get up and leave the heavens so he could see the scrawny temple mankind had built. "He has to stoop low to see this puny extravagance."¹⁶

God reacts in grace. In verse six, the Lord says, "they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will not be impossible for them" (Gen 11:6).

Moses uses two rare Hebrew words. Only one other Old Testament author uses these two words together. Job writes, "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted" (Job 42:2).¹⁷ Truly mankind can accomplish amazing feats when they work together. However, when mankind is inherently corrupt, their amazing feats reflect this corruption.

This is out of concern for them not out of fear of competition. United, mankind can accomplish amazing and unstoppable feats when they work together. However, these amazing accomplishments in no way pose a threat to God's control or rule. Mankind does not rival God. Rather, unity and peace within mankind results in "collective apostasy." Kidner writes the following:

The note of foreboding marks a Creator's and Father's concern, not a rival's... It makes it clear that unity and peace are not ultimate goods: better division than collective apostasy (cf. Luke 12:51).¹⁸

God in his grace, stopped mankind from becoming as corrupt as they could have.

¹⁶ Boice, *Genesis*, 1:425.

¹⁷ *Westermann*. "The meaning of God's reflection in Gen 11:6 thereby becomes clear; there is the fear that people could become like God (cf. Gen 3:5). The same two verbs (the same roots) occur in Job 42:2 as in Gen 11:6b: זָמַם and בָּצָר. When one adds that זָמַם is a rare word and בָּצָר very rare, then it looks as if there is a fixed formula behind these two verses."

Hamilton. Two verbs in the latter part of this verse call for special attention, if for no other reason than that they are uncommon words. The first is *bāṣar*, rendered above as *be impossible*, and the second is *zāmam*, *they presume*. The former is in the Niphal (*yibbāṣēr*), which occurs elsewhere only in Job 42:2. Both times the verb is followed by the preposition *min* plus pronominal suffix (*mēhem*, *mimmēkā*). The second word, *zāmam*, has as its basic meaning "consider, purpose, devise." The verb does not occur in Job 42:2, but the related noun *mēzimmā* ("purpose, discretion, device") does. These are the only two verses in the OT in which both *bṣr* and *zmm* occur. Both verses make a similar point, but from different directions. Job states, "I know that ... no purpose [*mēzimmā*] of thine can be thwarted [*bāṣar*]." Nothing or nobody can restrain or thwart the workings of God. In Gen. 11:6 Yahweh states that nothing will be able to restrain or thwart the workings of man unless this initial building project, a threat to the divine will and rule, is halted. As in Gen. 3, mankind is trying to overstep his limits, and in fact does so, only to pay a price for that self-exaltation. This proposed or potential action must be thwarted, here as it was in Gen. 3.

[*Westermann*, *Genesis 1-11*, 551; *Hamilton*, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, 354-55.]

¹⁸ Kidner, *Genesis*, 1:119.

In both instances it can hardly be that the heavens trembled because the “advancement” of mankind in any way threatened celestial rule. But, on the contrary, God was troubled over the injurious consequences that would fall upon the human family if left unchecked.¹⁹

God disperses the people.

Theological Implications

1. God still commands us to go.
2. In the future God would come down again but would do so in the person of Christ.

God divided humanity at the Tower of Babel; Christ united humanity through His sacrifice on the cross²⁰

It would not be right to end without noting that the Bible also knows a third use of the word “come” in which an invitation is extended *by God to man for man's benefit*. God says, “Come now, let us reason together.... Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool” (Isa. 1:18). Jesus says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life” (Rev. 22:17).²¹

Purpose statement. Live a life making much of God, not yourself.

Additional Quotes

For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Cush my worshipers, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering. “On that day you shall not be put to shame because of the deeds by which you have rebelled against me; for then I will remove from your midst your proudly exultant ones, and you shall no longer be haughty in my holy mountain. (Zeph 3:9–11). Cf. day of Pentecost

The primeval history reaches its fruitless climax as man, conscious of new abilities, prepares to glorify and fortify himself by collective effort. The elements of the story are timelessly characteristic of the spirit of the world. The project is typically grandiose; men describe it excitedly

¹⁹ Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 1A:484.

²⁰ Mangum, Custis, and Widder, *Genesis 1-11*, Ge 11:1-32.

²¹ Boice, *Genesis*, 1:425.

to one another as if it were the ultimate achievement... At the same time they betray their insecurity as they crowd together to preserve their identity and control their fortunes (4b).²²

The Creation Epic (Enuma Elish), Lines 55-65 of Tablet VI.

When Marduk heard this,
Brightly glowed his features, like the day:
"Construct Babylon, whose building you have requested,
Let its brickwork be fashioned. You shall name it 'The Sanctuary.' "
The Anunnaki applied the implement;
For one whole year they molded bricks. (60)
When the second year arrived,
They raised high the head of Esagila equaling Apsu.
Having built a stage-tower *as high as Apsu*,
They set up *in it* an abode for Marduk, Enlil, (and) Ea
In their presence he was seated in grandeur.²³

Only Jesus by Casting Crowns

Make it count, leave a mark, build a name for yourself
Dream your dreams, chase your heart, above all else
Make a name the world remembers
But all an empty world can sell is empty dreams
I got lost in the lie that it was up to me
To make a name the world remembers
But Jesus is the only name to remember

And I-I-I... I don't want to leave a legacy
I don't care if they remember me
Only Jesus
And I-I-I... I've only got one life to live
I'll let every second point to Him
Only Jesus

All the kingdoms built, all the trophies won
Will crumble into dust when it's said and done
'Cause all that really matters
Did I live the truth to the ones I love?
Was my life the proof that there is only One
Whose name will last forever?

²² Kidner, *Genesis*, 1:118.

²³ James B Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament with Supplement* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2016), 68-69.

Message 22:

God Calls Abraham

(11:10-12:3)

September 19, 2021

Introduction

My football coach used to joke about how when he ran the 40-meter dash, his coach would put stakes in the ground to see if he was moving. This is the same coach that would yell at me, “get the piano off your back Sturgill!”

We love things that are fast. We want everything to go fast. We want our food fast at a restaurant. We want to get where we are going fast. We want the week to go by fast. We want our phone apps to work quickly. We want the school day to end quickly ... humanity loves immediate gratification. The quicker the better. Now, let’s set aside that basic principle for just a moment.

[Read Genesis 11]

How many of you felt like that was a bit tedious? Imagine being the people who lived for those 400 years that had no divine communication from God – at least none that was preserved for us. Certainly, oral teachings were passed down, but from one perspective, God was silent for 400 years. No wonder they struggled making idols so as to have some visible god to worship.

I would like us to look at Genesis 11 from two perspective today. First, let’s consider Genesis 11 through the lens of a biblical or theological principle. God is transcendent. He is not bound to time in the same way we are, and he views and experiences time in an entirely different way.

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. (2 Peter 3:8).

Secondly, being bound to and sensitive to time, mankind selfishly expects God and others to work within their perspective of time. We desire God to accomplish task in our time. We expect God to work in our lives and the lives of others according to our perspective of time.

What we find in this passage is (1) God patiently works in time, and (2) God graciously works in broken people throughout time.

God patiently works in time.

This genealogy shows God's time, both with the nations and with individuals. Genesis 10-11 makes up one of the four historical periods for which Scripture remains silent.¹

1. God patiently waits for 1500 years or more from Seth to Noah (Gen 5). Finally, God chooses to destroy the world due its corruption (Gen 6-9)
2. God patiently waits at least 350 years from the birth of Arpachshad to the birth of Abraham (Gen 10-11). Moses does insert one momentous occasion amid these two chapters (400 years) – the Tower of Babel, likely around the time of Peleg.
3. Assuming Abraham lives around 2,000 BC, the Old Testament writings outline the following 1600 years from Abraham through Israel's history. Ezra writes his book around 400 BC.
4. Four hundred years (the intertestamental period) will go by with no divine revelation (at least that is preserved).
5. The New Testament consists of about 70 years of history surrounding the early church.
6. Nearly 2,000 years have gone by without any additional divine revelation.

Here's my point. (1) God goes extended periods of time with little to no visible or audible interaction with his creation. Of course, he remains in control and works his will, but history includes significant portions of time in which God was not visibly working. Even within many of these times, most people in the world would have been unaware of his work. We possess evidence of him connecting with specific people, but those outside of that moment were unaware of that interchange. For instance, God came to Abraham and directed him, but no one else outside of Abraham's immediate family probably knew of this divine interaction. (2) God goes extended periods of time without taking the next dramatic step in his redemptive plan. Specifically, in Genesis 11, nearly 400 years go by after the flood (a significant divine event) until the next significant redemptive event occurs (Abraham's calling).

God graciously works in broken people.

1. God directs Abraham to go to Canaan and promises to make of him a great nation (Gen 12:1-4).
2. Abraham went to Canaan but moved through and continued to Egypt (Gen 12:4-10).
3. He lies about Sarah being his sister, resulting in Pharaoh incorporating her into his harem for a brief time (Gen 12:11-16). Likely Sarah cohabitates with Pharaoh during this time, unlike the potential adultery in 20:3-4. The Lord afflicts Pharaoh and his whole home with a plague which leads to Pharaoh kicking Abraham out of Egypt (Gen 12:17-20).
4. He attempts to hurry along God's plan by having a child with Hagar (Gen 16).

¹ By silent, I mean, scripture outlines no historical information other than the simple genealogy. Genesis 5 and 11 make up two of these periods for which only a brief genealogy is offered.

5. After having settled a little south of Gerar, Abraham once again lies about Sarah, resulting in Abimelech taking him for himself. God warns Abimelech, however, in a dream, sparing Sarah once again (Gen 20).
6. Sarah gives birth to Isaac, resulting in tension in the home and the unacceptable banishment of Hagar. God intervenes again and promises to protect and make a great nation of Ishmael (Gen 21).

Abraham throughout the Old Testament.

1. Moses uses Abraham's name 155 times within the story of Abraham's life. More than 50% of all biblical uses of Abraham fall within Genesis 11-25.
2. Of about 300 times throughout Scripture, 203 occurrences of Abraham fall within the Pentateuch.
3. The rest of Scripture mentions Abraham 24 times.
4. Biblical authors mention Abraham 72 times outside of Genesis 11-25. Most of these uses consists of phrases such as: God of Abraham, covenant with Abraham, promises to Abraham, land of which I swore to your father Abraham (6x in Deut and 2x in Ex), and offspring of Abraham.

Abraham in the New Testament. New Testament authors mention Abraham 75 times. Forty-five of those occurrences may be found in six significant discussions. The remaining thirty occurrences primarily consists of phrases such as God of Abraham, offspring of Abraham, our father Abraham, etc.

1. Luke 16 (6 of 14). Luke offers the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Lazarus goes to the side of Abraham and the rich man talks with Abraham.
2. John 8 (9 of 9). Jesus interacts with the religious leaders. They claim they are of their father Abraham. Jesus declares they are of their father Satan.
3. Acts 7 (6 of 9). Stephen unfolds Israel's story including God's call to Abraham and the subsequent history surrounding Israel.
4. Romans 4 (8 of 11). Paul discusses justification and declares that Abraham was justified by faith and not by works.
5. Galatians 3 (8 of 9). Paul declares that Abraham believed God and it was counted to him a righteousness. He goes on to discuss how those who are of faith are children of Abraham.
6. Hebrews 7, 11 (8 of 11). In chapter 7, the author discusses Abraham's interaction with Melchizedek. In so doing, he compares Jesus to Melchizedek and declares Jesus a better high priest. In chapter 11, the author discusses Abraham's faith, both in going to Canaan and in sacrificing his son.

Conclusion

Possibly, someone could wrongly conclude from this message that I'm promoting a relaxed passive Christian life. That would be wrong. Even though we allow our emotions and mind to rest because we know God's work and timing conflicts with our natural tendencies, we must still pursue holiness with vigilance and eager pursuit.

The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.... put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Romans 13:12-14).

My beloved ... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ... that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world (Phil 2:12-16).

O man of God, flee these things [greed, conceit, envy]. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. (1 Tim 6:11).

Strive ... for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. (Heb 12:14).

Purpose statement. Patiently wait per God's perspective of time (on God's redemptive plan, his work in you, and his work in others), but pray and pursue holiness per man's perspective of time.

Appendix A:

Humans are Animals. Let's Get Over It

Crispin Sartwell | February 23, 2021 | New York Times

Crispin Sartwell, "Humans are Animals. Let's Get Over It," *New York Times*, February 23, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/23/opinion/humans-animals-philosophy.html>.

If one were to read through the prefaces and first paragraphs of the canonical works of Western philosophy, one might assume the discipline's primary question to be this: What makes us humans so much better than all the other animals? Really, it's astonishing how relentless this theme is in the whole history of philosophy. The separation of people from, and the superiority of people to, members of other species is a good candidate for the originating idea of Western thought. And a good candidate for the worst.

The Great Philosopher will, before addressing himself to the deep ethical and metaphysical questions, pause for the conventional, ground-clearing declaration: "I am definitely not a squirrel." This is evidently something that needs continual emphasizing.

Rationality and self-control, as philosophers underline again and again, give humans a value that squirrels lack (let's just stick with this species for the time being), a moral status unique to us. We are conscious, and squirrels, allegedly, are not; we are rational, and squirrels are not; we are free, and squirrels are not.

We can congratulate ourselves on the threat averted. But if we truly believed we were so much better than squirrels, why have we spent thousands of years driving home the point?

It's almost as though the existence of animals, and their various similarities to humans, constituted insults. Like a squirrel, I have eyes and ears, scurry about on the ground and occasionally climb a tree. (One of us does this better than the other does.) Our shared qualities — the fact that we are both hairy or that we have eyes or we poop, for example — are disconcerting if I am an immortal being created in the image of God and the squirrel just a physical organism, a bundle of instincts.

One difficult thing to face about our animality is that it entails our deaths; being an animal is associated throughout philosophy with dying purposelessly, and so with living meaninglessly. It is rationality that gives us dignity, that makes a claim to moral respect that no mere animal can deserve. "The moral law reveals to me a life independent of animality," writes Immanuel Kant in "Critique of Practical Reason." In this assertion, at least, the Western intellectual tradition has been remarkably consistent.

The connection of such ideas to the way we treat animals — for example, in our food chain — is too obvious to need repeating. And the devaluation of animals and disconnection of us from them reflect a deeper devaluation of the material universe in general. In this scheme of things, we owe

nature nothing; it is to yield us everything. This is the ideology of species annihilation and environmental destruction, and also of technological development.

Further trouble is caused when the distinctions between humans and animals are then used to draw distinctions among human beings. Some humans, according to this line of thinking, are self-conscious, rational and free, and some are driven by beastly desires. Some of us transcend our environment: Reason alone moves us to action. But some of us are pushed around by physical circumstances, by our bodies. Some of us, in short, are animals — and some of us are better than that. This, it turns out, is a useful justification for colonialism, slavery and racism.

The classical source for this distinction is certainly Aristotle. In the “Politics,” he writes, “Where then there is such a difference as that between soul and body, or between men and animals (as in the case of those whose business is to use their body, and who can do nothing better), the lower sort are by nature slaves.” The conclusion is final. “It is better for them as for all inferiors to be under the rule.”

Every human hierarchy, insofar as it can be justified philosophically, is treated by Aristotle by analogy to the relation of people to animals. One might be forgiven for thinking that Aristotle’s real goal is not to establish the superiority of humans to animals, but the superiority of some people to others.

“The savage people in many places of America,” writes Thomas Hobbes in “Leviathan,” responding to the charge that human beings have never lived in a state of nature, “have no government at all, and live in this brutish manner.” Like Plato, Hobbes associates anarchy with animality and civilization with the state, which gives to our merely animal motion moral content for the first time and orders us into a definite hierarchy. But this line of thought also happens to justify colonizing or even extirpating the “savage,” the beast in human form.

Our supposed fundamental distinction from “beasts,” “brutes” and “savages” is used to divide us from nature, from one another and, finally, from ourselves. In Plato’s “Republic,” Socrates divides the human soul into two parts. The soul of the thirsty person, he says, “wishes for nothing else than to drink.” But we can restrain ourselves. “That which inhibits such actions,” he concludes, “arises from the calculations of reason.” When we restrain or control ourselves, Plato argues, a rational being restrains an animal.

In this view, each of us is both a beast and a person — and the point of human life is to constrain our desires with rationality and purify ourselves of animality. These sorts of systematic self-divisions come to be refigured in Cartesian dualism, which separates the mind from the body, or in Sigmund Freud’s distinction between id and ego, or in the neurological contrast between the functions of the amygdala and the prefrontal cortex.

I’d like to publicly identify this dualistic view as a disaster, but I don’t know how to refute it, exactly, except to say that I don’t feel myself to be a logic program running on an animal body; I’d like to consider myself a lot more integrated than that. And I’d like to repudiate every political and environmental conclusion ever drawn by our supposed transcendence of the order of nature. I don’t see how we could cease to be mammals and remain ourselves.

There is no doubt that human beings are distinct from other animals, though not necessarily more distinct than other animals are from one another. But maybe we've been too focused on the differences for too long. Maybe we should emphasize what all us animals have in common.

Our resemblance to squirrels doesn't have to be interpreted as a threat to our self-image. Instead, it could be seen as a hopeful sign that we will someday be better at tree leaping.

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Appendix B:

Rethinking Sexuality

What does Eve have to do with sexual orientation? Everything...

Curt Kennedy | March 2, 2021

Curt Kennedy, "Rethinking Sexuality: What does Eve have to do with sexual orientation? Everything..." *You Can't Handle This Truth* blog, March 18, 2021. Accessed March 20, 2021. <https://curtkennedy.substack.com/p/rethinking-sexuality-fd5>

If you've heard arguments or debates about gay marriage, you have likely listened to the procreation angle from those who oppose gay marriage. The idea connects to a broader view of gender complementarianism. The perspective goes something like this. God created humanity, male and female. He gave them gender components that complement one another to be fruitful and multiply the earth, which means having children biologically through sexual intercourse. For many, procreation is a mandate (The Cultural Mandate) from God and can only happen by God-given complementary parts that both males and females have. Some have even called procreation the actual purpose of marriage. More or less, this is essentially the argument that is often us against gay marriage.

The response from those who are for gay marriage goes something like this. If procreation is a requirement for God-glorifying monogamous marriages, then what does that mean for people who should be able to have children but cannot? Is the Church going to deny people who are physically past the age of a pregnancy from getting married? None of these people can pro-create, so does God not recognize their marriage? These are varying responses people use to push back against the procreation argument. These aren't necessarily strong responses either. These arguments are, at best, an argument from silence because they lack a positive affirmation in the scriptures for gay marriage. Since procreation is affirmed in the Bible and often positive, a more vigorous retort is needed to dismiss the procreation angle. And an argument like, "well, they can't have children either," isn't that convincing.

Pro-creation is biblical and is a gift from God. Adam and Eve were given the mandate to multiply the Earth, as well as Noah and his family. Many have argued that Christians are responsible for continuing this mandate and having many kids where possible. The logic is that more kids will produce more Christians. And so on and so on. But is procreation, in and of itself, a good argument for being against gay marriage? I don't think so.

For one, the mandate to procreate is not exclusively given to humanity. On day 4 of creation, the bible says, "Then God said, "Let the water swarm with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." So God created the large sea-creatures and every living creature that moves and swarms in the water, according to their kinds. He also created every winged creature according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them: "*Be*

fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth." Evening came and then morning: the fifth day.

Procreation, then, is not necessarily an overflow of being made in God's image. At least not in an exclusive sense that humankind is the only creature given that responsibility. There is uniqueness in the procreation that mankind has, but not how I've heard the arguments used. While procreation can only happen in a sexual union between a biological man and woman, or from components that require both male and female participation (sperm, eggs, Fallopian Tubes, Uterus), it is still not a strong enough argument against same-sex marriage mainly because procreation is not a responsibility given only to the institution of marriage.

I've heard some festive arguments that procreation *IS* the purpose of marriage versus love per se'. That love is a modern understanding of marriage and that in antiquity, people married for business arrangements and legacy, which is where the necessity for children comes in. But again, this doesn't pass the sniff test. If humanity were the only ones responsible for multiplying the earth, it would be a much stronger point. But procreative complementarity as a necessary component for marriage and family fall apart, even when we consider the birth of Jesus.

The conditions of Jesus' birth make the procreation complementarity argument a bit interesting. As far as we know, Jesus is the only human being born without the requirements of a biological male and female. Joseph was not Jesus' biological dad. Gabriel told Mary, "Now listen: You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father, David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end." Mary asked the angel, "How can this be since I have not had sexual relations with a man?" The angel replied to her, "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.* Therefore, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

Some people have speculated that since sin came into the world through Adam's disobedience, indwelling sin is transmitted through the sperm of the man into the egg and then the Fallopian Tube and is written in everyone's DNA. But since Jesus didn't have the sperm of a human father, the inherited sin nature and its transmission did not enter into Jesus' DNA. He kept the DNA of his Heavenly Father but took the flesh of his earthly mother etc. All of this is too wonderful for me, but I still think it's an interesting discussion to engage in. But that's not the point of this post.

If you do take the procreation argument in the way I've defined in this article, you're going to have to explain why we don't celebrate animal marriages. They procreate. They show love, maternal and paternal instincts, training, teaching, protecting, and communicating with their children in similar ways humans do. I love to watch National Geographic shows with my family. I'm fascinated by Apex predators like Crocodiles, Lions, Bears, and other animals that love, sacrifice, provide and protect their children. Pretty much the same way we do. A bit of a stretch, but if you're going to use the procreation argument, you need to wrestle with these counterpoints.

Another reason why procreation isn't a great argument against same-sex marriage is that the Bible is pro-family, but not necessarily pro-children as a standard for family. Abraham, the earthly

father of our faith, did not have children until the end of his life. And the narrative that describes him having a child is less about procreation and more about God's specific call to Abraham to bring a nation out of him. Not only that, his child of the promise, Isaac, wasn't about procreation, but about God who promised him a child when he and his wife Sarah were physically incapable of procreating on their own. His child was more about God's Grace and Abraham's faith to trust God for an heir to establish a people who would imitate Abraham's faith. Procreation was not a part of Abraham's life until the very end of his life. And God used him in a significant way though most of his life were without him multiplying the earth.

In 1 Samuel 1, Hannah, a barren woman, cries out to God for a child. Not necessarily to procreate and multiply the earth, but just to have a sense of dignity. In those days, a childless woman was seen as disgraced, even cursed by God. Hannah wants a child, but not for procreation or fulfilling the cultural mandate. Here's what 1 Samuel 1 tells us. "Deeply hurt, Hannah prayed to the LORD and wept with many tears. Making a vow, she pleaded, "LORD of Armies, if you will take notice of your servant's affliction, remember and not forget me, and give your servant a son, I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and his hair will never be cut." As we can see, her prayer was not even to keep the child, which she didn't. He grew up to be the prophet, Samuel.

Lastly, similar to Abraham, we see Zechariah and Elizabeth in the NT. The scripture describes them as, "But they had no children because Elizabeth could not conceive, and both of them were well along in years." So we see another family, of biblical significance, that up until it was physically too late to have children, was given a son. Not for procreation's sake or the cultural mandate, but solely for God's glory. On one level, this means nothing. It doesn't take away from the importance of procreation etc. And some will read this and miss the point. So let me make it again. The Bible is pro-family, but that does not mean having children when married is what it means to be an image-bearer. And it's not what marriage is about. Having kids, even in the Bible, isn't necessarily a cultural mandate issue. It's not even a prominent theme in the Bible. Those who are for gay marriage could have convincingly, to some, successfully pushed back on the procreation complementarianism argument.

Another challenge to the Cultural Mandate argument is there are not many verses on parenting in the scripture. There are plenty about children, but not necessarily about parenting. The more common ones for parenting are:

Proverbs 13:24

Proverbs 19:18

Proverbs 29:15

Proverbs 29:17

Ephesians 6:4

Colossians 3:21

There are a couple more in Deuteronomy that seems to be directed exclusively at the Jews, relaying God's narrative of bringing them out of Egypt. Apart from that, these six verses above are the go-to on parenting. If procreation is such a significant responsibility, its emphasis and

instruction on being a parent are minuscule at best in the scriptures. Consider this the next time you buy a 200 plus page book on parenting. Where are they getting all of that information from? In and of itself, this isn't a strong argument for gay marriage. But it's not a good defense against it either.

Lastly, the call to have children, to apply the "be fruitful and multiply the earth mandate," is presumptuous at best. While I appreciate the Cultural Mandate, there is no guarantee that our children will become believers in Jesus. Yes, children are a gift from the Lord, and we should have them as much as we can be responsible for them, but we need to be careful and not assume that having children always translate to adding more Christians to society and the kingdom.

To be fair, Paul does say to Timothy, "Therefore, I want *younger women to marry, have children*, manage their households, and give the adversary no opportunity to accuse us." But Paul also says this to the Corinthians, "I want you to be without concerns. The unmarried man is concerned about the things of the Lord how he may please the Lord. But the married man is concerned about the things of the world how he may please his wife- and his interests are divided. The unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the things of the Lord so that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But the married woman is concerned about the things of the world how she may please her husband. *I am saying this for your benefit, not to put a restraint on you, but to promote what is proper and so that you may be devoted to the Lord without distraction.*"

I am not saying procreation isn't essential or necessary. I have three boys myself, and I love them to death. I love kids. Always have. I am saying that, in this age of gay marriage and the Equality Act, opposition to it better be sharp and convincing. The Cultural Mandate (Procreative Complementarianism), as I've heard it presented thus far, from multiple people, is not a strong argument against same-sex marriage.

I had to study pro-gay theology a few years ago because there were people in my church who weren't convinced the Bible condemned gay marriage. I read and read. I watched many debates on the topic. I read again. I learned many of the pro-gay perspectives trying to understand where they were coming from. I wanted to understand. After intense study of pro-gay theology, and multiple conversations with people who are gay and profess to be in Jesus, I concluded that there is no way to make a biblical case for gay marriage. You would have to ignore too many truths; the bible clarifies sexuality, marriage, and identity in Christ. But what I also learned was that we need to be able to use more than just the exegesis of the "lobber passages" to make a biblical case against gay marriage. And I also learned there are some deeper truths in scripture that can help all of us understand how to walk this out.

I would use the procreation angle but not as a standalone argument. There is a much deeper reality that procreation submits itself to. But some questions need to be explored on a deeper level to use the Cultural Mandate argument effectively.

Since the Godhead is identified as male (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, also described as "He"), and the angels are called Sons of God, as well as Satan described as being a "he," why did God make

Eve for Adam instead of Steve? Perfect unity exists in the Godhead as male, but when God created a companion for Adam, he created a female. Why?

Why was Eve the only creature created from another creature instead of from the ground? Every animal was formed in the environment in Genesis 2. Including Adam. But Eve was created from Adam; why?

What does it mean to be made in God's image? God is described as Spirit (1 John 4:24). If God is Spirit, then was his making man in his image, an idea that would resemble God when he became human? Or was it something else?" In other words, why are we human instead of the spirit if we are made in his image and likeness?

Procreation fits in a more profound conceptual framework than the "Cultural Mandate" argument can handle by itself. Answering the questions above and a few others that aren't listed here can help us see the bigger picture. And we need to. This movement is coming. We need to be ready to answer the hope we have received. My next "Rethinking Sexuality" post will answer many of the questions raised above and a few more.

Can you handle this truth? Nah, you can't!

Appendix C:

You Need More Than God Alone

Scott Hubbard | August 6, 2018 | Desiring God

“All I need is God.”

The words were becoming increasingly familiar in his new Christian vocabulary. He sang them in verses and choruses on Sunday morning. He heard them in sermons and testimonies. And, of course, he read some variation of them all throughout his Bible. “All we have, all we need, all we want is God.”

The words often felt false on his lips. He thought of how many things he treasured after God. Big things like his parents, his girlfriend, and his nephews. Small things like his bike, his books, and the river by his house. He knew he wanted these things. At times he felt like he even needed them — they energized him, delighted him, comforted him.

He wondered, Can I really say I need God alone?

What a Quiet Time Can't Do

The phrase “all I need is God” captures the cornerstone of Christian hope, but it is not the only word God himself speaks over the Christian life. To be sure, God alone in Jesus Christ is our greatest and final need. He is the one we need to be born again, justified, forgiven, adopted, and placed on the road to glory. God is also the only one in this world that we cannot truly live without. But when the Bible talks about how Christians fulfill their mission, or find strength in depression, or feel comfort in sorrow, or mature overall, it has more to say than simply God alone.

As we keep repeating, “All I need is God,” over time the phrase may elbow out other biblical ways God gives himself to us. We may subtly give the impression that the Christian who is always alone with his Bible, away from the world, will be first in the kingdom. And we may foster a false sense of guilt for brothers and sisters who, try as they might, need more than prayer and Bible reading to cope with trials and temptations.

Throughout Scripture, God's people often need more than God alone — they need God through the things he has made. They need not only the grace of God in the gospel, but also the gifts of God in creation.

Consider the stories of three biblical characters: Adam, Elijah, and Paul.

Flesh and Bones in the Garden

As Adam walks through Eden, a sinless man in a perfect garden, with the trees and rivers clapping their hands, and the shalom of God pulsing through the air, two words smack against the sky like a bird hitting a window: “not good.”

“It is not good,” God says, “that the man should be alone” ([Genesis 2:18](#)). In order to fulfill his mission to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it ([Genesis 1:28](#)), Adam needed more than God alone. He needed “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” ([Genesis 2:23](#)). He needed Eve.

And then, even together, Adam and Eve needed more than God alone. If God had wanted to, he could have created Adam and Eve as pure spirit — two angels alongside Michael and Gabriel and the rest of heaven’s hosts. Instead, God made a man and a woman, spirits fastened to flesh and bone. And then he placed them in a world teeming with more than God alone: stars and moons, tulips and oaks, dolphins and rabbits, and a few billion other plants, animals, and minerals.

In God’s very good world, Adam and Eve needed the rain to grow their food, and wine to gladden their hearts, and oil to make their faces shine, and bread to strengthen their bones, and lights to mark the seasons ([Psalm 104:13–15, 19](#)).

Adam and Eve needed more than God alone in order to fulfill their mission. They needed God’s help through each other and every other good thing.

Eat, Sleep, Repeat

Jump forward a few thousand years. The prophet Elijah stumbles through the wilderness outside Beersheba, running from a queen who wants his head. “If a sword is not thrust through that prophet by this time tomorrow,” Jezebel had said, “so may the gods do to me and more also” (see [1 Kings 19:1–2](#)). A hundred miles later, Elijah collapses beneath a broom tree, exhausted, depressed, and ready to die ([1 Kings 19:4](#)).

Elijah needs God to revive his faith. He needs God to speak to him. He needs God to show himself. But first, he needs to sleep and eat.

And God knows. After letting his prophet rest, God sends his angel with these most practical of words: “Arise and eat” ([1 Kings 19:5](#)). So Elijah eats, and then he sleeps again. The angel comes back: “Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you” ([1 Kings 19:7](#)). Man shall not live by bread alone — true. But man should not try to live without bread.

Elijah needed more than God alone to find strength in his depression. He needed God’s help through food and sleep.

God of All Friends

What about Paul, the single apostle and frontier missionary? Didn’t he find all his help in God alone?

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul calls God “the Father of mercies and God of all comfort” ([2 Corinthians 1:3](#)). The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is a God of comfort — a God who tracks us down in the wasteland of our fears and anxieties, wraps his arm around us, and leads us back home.

But how does God deliver his comfort? Sometimes, God comforts us directly through his word. When Paul felt the thorn pierce his side, and when he pleaded for relief, Jesus met him with a word: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” ([2 Corinthians 12:9](#)).

Other times, God comforts us through his people. When Paul came into Macedonia, and was “afflicted at every turn,” God wrapped his comfort in a person: “God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus” ([2 Corinthians 7:5-6](#)).

Often, God sends comfort to his people by sending them a friend. He sees us in our affliction, taps one of his image bearers on the shoulder, and says, “Go and show him what I’m like.” So we get a knock on our door, or a conversation after church, or friends who ask how they can pray for us. And through them we feel our Father’s comfort.

Paul needed more than God alone to feel comfort in his sorrow. He needed God’s help through a good friend.

From Whom All Blessings Flow

“We may ignore, but we can nowhere evade, the presence of God,” C.S. Lewis writes. “The world is crowded with him. He walks everywhere incognito” ([Letters to Malcolm](#), 75).

Throughout Scripture, and throughout our lives, God often ministers to us incognito. He wraps the world he has made like a cloak around him, he masks himself with his creation, and he walks about the earth on a mission to bless his people.

So when we find help from more than God alone, we should not be surprised. All of God’s created gifts are medicine from our Physician, green grass from our Shepherd, flowers from our Bridegroom. And therefore, they are avenues for adoring him.

We may need more than God alone, but he alone is the fountain from whom all blessings flow, the giver of every good gift ([James 1:17](#)). So he alone deserves the glory for all the strength and hope and comfort we find — wherever we may find it.

Appendix D:

Why Was Adam Lonely If God is Enough

John Piper | December 2, 2014 | Desiring God

Audio Transcript

Bennett writes in to ask, "Pastor John, I recently read the following in a book: 'God purposely created the world to function in such a way that he is not enough for us. This is why God says, 'It is not good for the man to be alone.' If God were all that Adam needed, then Adam would not be alone. But he is alone. Not because God is there, but because one of his kind is not. By choice, God limited his ability to be everything Adam needed.'

This flies in the face of what many of us have heard. On a regular basis, I hear people say, 'All you need is God. God is enough.' Well, that sounds nice, but the problem is that it isn't true — or even biblical for that matter — from a relationship point of view. If we're talking about grace, then these statements are true. God's grace is enough. However, if we're talking about relationships, they're not."

So, Pastor John, does [Christian hedonism](#) teach that God is enough to satisfy every relational longing for our souls? Or has he created us with an intrinsic need for others that God cannot satisfy?"

That is an absolutely excellent question, and the reason it is an excellent question is that it grows out of a text, [Genesis 2:18](#): "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'" So, on the face of it, God clearly does not want Adam to respond, "No, thank you. You have got it wrong, God. I am not alone. I have you." God thinks the present state of creation is not the final good that he intends — namely the man and the woman having God, together. Having another human being is not a luxury in God's mind.

God-Created Needs

It seems Bennett's case here is pretty strong. It looks like an overstatement to say to Adam in the garden, "God is all you need." Let's make the case stronger by adding a few other texts, like [1 Corinthians 12:18-21](#):

God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is there are many parts, yet one body. The eye — so let's say Tony Reinke is the eye — cannot say to the hand — John Piper — "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

So, there is God Almighty in his word saying flat out, "You dare not say to another member of the body of Christ, 'I don't need you.'" That is a sin to talk like that. In other words, God forbids us from saying, "I have God. I don't need members of the body of Christ."

Lots of other examples could be cited. We are commanded to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread” ([Matthew 6:11](#)). And we are told not to be anxious about food, about clothing, because Jesus said — mark these words — “Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all” ([Matthew 6:31–32](#)). So clearly God created a material universe — not just a world of spirits. And he created other souls — not just one soul to relate to him. And he created society and the church — not just isolated souls relating to him. And in doing all of this — creating the world, creating the Church, creating society — he ordained that we be benefited by all these things and that some of them be essential for life: food, water, shelter, clothing, air, and others be essential for obedience, like “love your neighbor as yourself” ([Mark 12:31](#)). You couldn’t obey that command if there were no neighbors. You need a neighbor in order to obey the command, “love your neighbor.”

So it is not wrong to talk about needing the neighbor in the sense that God has set it up that way. And all this is a result of God not creating just idolatry or occasions for idolatry, but creation. He created these things. He created us with those kinds of needs that he himself would meet only in the sense of giving them to us, but not being them for us.

God as the Center of Our Needs

So, question: Should we say, “God is enough?” Or, “I don’t need anything more than God?” There is a good reason why those statements stick in our craw. I can tell they do by this question: Why do they sound belittling to God when we say them? When we say, “God is not enough” or “I have enough. I don’t need God,” why do they sound belittling to God?

“God has, in creating what is not God, created a world in which God himself would be most fully known and most fully enjoyed.”

The reason is that one of the most important teachings of the Bible is that when all our human needs go unmet, and we are utterly alone and on the brink of death, God will never fail us. And in that moment, he will be enough. That is what we mean when we honor God by saying he is all we need. In other words, if all my needs fail to be met, he will never fail. That is the point of [Romans 8:35](#): “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?” The point of that list is that all those God-given needs — they are real needs for life and for obedience — may fail. Famine may take food away. Nakedness may take clothing away. Sword may take life and limb away. In other words, “every good gift and every perfect gift” ([James 1:17](#)) that God has given us to need in one sense is being shown in this moment not to be needed ultimately. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors. Nothing can separate us from Christ ([Romans 8:37–39](#)). He is enough in that moment. That is why we feel like we are dishonoring him if we say that we don’t need him, or we have other things that we need also, and he can’t satisfy.

Now I emphasize in that moment because God is still committed to the world he created, and in the resurrection, he will give back what he has taken away in death. He will have taught us in the moment of death to rely only on him. Paul talks that way in [2 Corinthians 1:8–9](#).

Then one more thing needs to be emphasized. Even in wife, food, church members, and all the other life-sustaining, life-enhancing needs that God gives us, he himself remains the cream of all

those pleasures, the way the Puritans talked. When we have those pleasures rightly, we are enjoying God in and through wife and nature and wonders and food so that they are not really in competition with him. And in one sense we can say, "I have God in all those things, not just God in addition to all those things which satisfy me." So in the end our need for people and our need for food become ways God says to us, "See, here I am in this gift. Do you see me? Do you enjoy me in this?" So it turns out that God has, in creating what is not God, created a world in which God himself would be most fully known and most fully enjoyed.

Appendix E:

What Does the Bible Say About Transgenderism?

Kevin DeYoung | TGC | September 8, 2016

DeYoung, Kevin. "What Does the Bible Say About Transgenderism?" *The Gospel Coalition* (blog), September 8, 2016. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/what-does-the-bible-say-about-transgenderism/>.

Some would argue that the Bible says nothing about the explosion of the transgender phenomenon in the Western world. After all, there is no verse that says, "Thou shalt not transition from a man to a woman." But neither are there any verses that talk explicitly about gun violence, anorexia, waterboarding, fossil fuels, vaccines, GMOs, HMOs, or Pokemon Go. We should not expect the Bible to speak in 21st century terms to every 21st-century eventuality.

But that hardly means the Bible provides no guidance for Christians trying to make sense of our transgender moment. In fact, when it comes to transgenderism, the Bible actually has a lot to say—not by a proof-text here or there but by a rich and pervasive understanding of gender and sexual identity.

Obviously, transgenderism, as a cultural trend, is massively complex, touching on fields as disparate as genetics, fashion, medicine, law, education, entertainment, athletics, and religious liberty. We need Christians thinking through, and talking to, all of these issues. We also need Christians patiently loving, counseling, and befriending those who feel that their psychological identity as male or female contradicts their "assigned" biological sex. In asking the question, "What does the Bible say about transgenderism?" we are asking a question that can take us in a dozen different directions.

I want to focus on just one of those directions. If we are people of the Book—people who believe, like Jesus, that the Scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35)—then the transgender question, if it is to yield fruitful responses in any of these areas, must start with a biblical understanding of male and female.

And what is that understanding?

In short, the Bible teaches that God made us male or female, and no matter our own feelings or confusion, we should act in accordance with the biological reality of God's good design.

Transgenderism falls short of the glory of God and is not the way to walk in obedience to Christ.

There are three big Scriptural building blocks that lead one inexorably to this conclusion.

1. Gender Binary

The Bible knows no other gender categories besides male and female. While men and women in Scripture may express their masculinity and femininity in a wonderful diversity of ways, Scripture still operates with the binary categories of men and women. You are one or the other. The

anomaly of intersex individuals does not undermine the creational design, but rather gives another example of creational “groaning” and the “not the way they are supposed to be” realities of a fallen world. Likewise, the eunuchs in Matthew 19 do not refer to sexless persons, but to men who were born without the ability to procreate or who were castrated, likely for a royal court (for more on the challenge of intersex, and the question of eunuchs, see Denny Burk, *What Is the Meaning of Sex?*, 169-183).

The biblical understanding of male and female is more than just an assumption writ large on the pages of Scripture. We know from Genesis 1 and 2 that the categories of male and female are a part of God’s design for humanity. Indeed, when God created the first human pair in his image, he created them male and female (Gen. 1:27). He made the woman to be a complement and help to the man (Gen. 2:18-22). Far from being a mere cultural construct, God depicts the existence of a man and a woman as essential to his creational plan. The two are neither identical nor interchangeable. But when the woman, who was taken out of man, joins again with the man in sexual union, the two become one flesh (Gen. 1:23-24). Dividing the human race into two genders, male and female—one or the other, not both, and not one then the other—is not the invention of Victorian prudes or patriarchal oafs. It was God’s idea.

2. Gender Identity

Someone with respect for Scripture may say at this point, “I agree that God makes us either male or female. But you are confusing biological sex with gender. I know transgender Christians who desire to embrace God’s design for men and women, but they also believe that who God created them to be does not correspond with the sex assigned to them at birth.” I don’t doubt that there are persons like this out there (and in our churches). While some people embracing a transgender identity may do so on a lark, many strongly feel that only by living as the opposite sex can they full embrace their true self.

The question is not whether such persons and feelings exist. The question is whether the *is* of our emotional or mental state equals the *ought* of God’s design. Most Christians reject this thinking in a host of other areas, from eating disorders to unbiblical divorces. We understand that following Christ means dying to ourselves (Matt. 16:24), being renewed in our minds (Rom. 12:2), and no longer walking as we once did (Eph. 4:17-18). **Being “true to ourselves” is always a false choice when it means going against God’s Word.**

As much as contemporary academia says otherwise, the Bible believes in the organic unity of biological sex and gender identity. This is why male and female are (uniquely) the type of pair that can reproduce (Gen. 1:28; 2:20). It’s why homosexuality—a man lying with a man as with a woman (Lev. 18:22)—is wrong. It’s why the apostle Paul can speak of homosexual partnerships as deviating from the natural relations or natural function of male-female sexual intercourse (Rom. 1:26-27). In each instance, the argument only works if there is an assumed equivalence between the biology of sexual difference and the corresponding identities of male and female.

3. Gender Confusion

The third building block follows naturally from the other two. If the binary of male and female is God's idea, and if we are meant to embrace, by divine design, our biological and creational difference as men and women, then it stands to reason that the confusion of these realities would be displeasing to God. And so we see clearly in the Bible that men should not act sexually as women (Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-10), that men should not dress like women (Deut. 22:5), and that when men and women embrace obviously other-gendered expressions of identity it is a disgrace (1 Cor. 11:14-15). We do not have an inalienable right to do whatever we want with our physical selves. We belong to God and should glorify him with our bodies (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

I have not begun to answer all the important questions about pastoral care, counsel, and compassion for the hurting and confused. But with the cultural winds gusting as they are, we cannot assume that Christians—even those in good churches—know what to think about gender or why to think it. Hopefully this brief post, and these three building blocks, can help us ensure the right foundation is in place. After all, the goal is not to build a wall to keep people out, but that God might build up his church in truth and grace that we can welcome people in, calling his image bearers to embrace the life that is truly life (1 Tim. 6:19).

Appendix F:

Is Anyone Born Gay?

Christopher Yuan | Desiring God | September 8, 2018

Yuan, Christopher. "Is Anyone Born Gay?" *Desiring God* (blog), September 8, 2018. Accessed April 22, 2021. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/is-anyone-born-gay>

"This is *who* I am."

In 1993, I grounded my coming-out narrative in this forthright declaration — and I meant it in every way. "I didn't choose being gay," I reasoned. "I'm born this way!"

I was wholly convinced my sexuality was the core of *who* I was — not simply *what* I desired or did. It felt like I finally had discovered my true self. My heart and friends affirmed this, as did the world around me. "This is *who* I am. I *am* gay."

Sexual orientation seemed self-evidently true. But *what truth* did it reveal?

Should we simply accept sexual orientation as the way things are, as the only terminology to describe enduring and unchosen same-sex attractions? Or should we step back and critically assess this idea in light of *God's truth about who we are*? Honestly, we cannot begin to understand human sexuality until we first start with theological anthropology, meaning what God thinks, and reveals, about who we are.

Getting Reoriented

The modern concept of sexual orientation originates from the discipline of psychology, which is rooted in a secular understanding of anthropology that rejects original sin (for a critical assessment of "sexual orientation," see Rosaria Butterfield, *Openness Unhindered*, 93–112). For example, the idea that same-sex sexual orientation is only a disability (that is, a natural consequence of the fall, like deafness), and not a moral consequence, is dangerously close to the ancient heresy called Pelagianism, a denial of original sin, condemned by the church in the fifth century. In today's world of infinite shades of grey, sloppy ambiguity on biblical sexuality is essentially flirting with heresy.

The American Psychological Association provides this definition for sexual orientation:

Sexual orientation refers to an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men, women, or both sexes. Sexual orientation also refers to a person's sense of identity based on those attractions, related behaviors, and membership in a community of others who share those attractions.

Gay neurologist Simon LeVay explains that sexual orientation is “the trait that predisposes us to experience sexual attraction” (*Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why*, 1). In an international human-rights document, it is defined as a “capacity for profound emotional, affectional, and sexual attraction.” Elsewhere, the American Psychological Association describes these attractions as generally unchosen. Thus, sexual orientation conveys a capacity for unchosen and enduring sexual and romantic desires, and this predisposition has been relegated to a new category of personhood.

Unfortunately, we have pigeonholed ourselves into this secular and humanistic paradigm of defining selfhood through sexuality. We think there is no other option. However, when there’s a choice between a biblical framework and a secular one, should not Christians favor the biblical over the secular? And might God’s word provide us a better framework for understanding the capacity to experience unchosen and persistent sexual and romantic desires toward the same sex?

Yes, it does. That framework is called sin.

Being Gay?

I am not saying that the *capacity* to have same-sex attractions or temptations is what theologians call “actual sin” (sinful thoughts, desires, words, and actions). However, the concepts of original and indwelling sin fit every description of a same-sex sexual orientation. **Original sin is an unchosen condition, and indwelling sin is a persistent pattern of sinful desires or behaviors.** Why try to reappropriate and redeem a term when a working biblical framework already exists?

Some today say that sexual and romantic attraction for people of the same sex is rooted in the image of God, not the fall — and that it’s therefore good or even sanctifiable. This stems from the misunderstanding that “being gay” includes appreciating same-sex beauty. However, if we broaden sexuality to include non-sexual and non-romantic appreciation for beauty, then everybody would be gay. That is as nonsensical as it is unhelpful.

However, if *acting* on same-sex sexual and romantic desire is sin, then there’s nothing neutral or sanctifiable about it. These desires stem from the fall, not the image of God. Sexual sin always involves a moral component. Same-sex attraction finds its genesis in original sin. And let’s be crystal clear: there’s *nothing* neutral or innocent about original sin.

With same-sex attractions, the problem is sin. But for Christians, our God has not left us without the answer.

Whatever Way You Were Born

But aren’t people born gay? Listen to the media and pop culture, and it seems to be a fact science has unquestionably proven. However, of the numerous studies conducted to investigate the potential biological and environmental factors that may influence the development of same-sex attractions, nothing yet has been conclusive.

The American Psychiatric Association made this statement as recently as 2015: “Some people believe that sexual orientation is innate and fixed; however, sexual orientation develops across a person’s lifetime.” Scientists are far from discovering the factors that contribute to the development of sexual attractions, so it’s untenable and irresponsible to claim that the innateness of sexual attractions is a proven reality.

In spite of a lack of evidence, the belief persists that people are *born gay* and that makes it okay. Yet, for Christians, innateness doesn’t mean that something is permissible; being born a sinner doesn’t make sin right. We must point people to a far more important claim: Regardless of what was true or not true when you were born, Jesus says that you must be born again.

It doesn’t matter whether you think you were born an alcoholic; you must be born again. It doesn’t matter whether you think you were born a liar; you must be born again. It doesn’t matter whether you think you were born a porn addict; you must be born again. It doesn’t matter whether you think you were born with any other sexual sin struggle; you must be born again.

Very Good News

When we are born again (through God’s word, 1 Peter 1:23, and by his Spirit, John 3:5–8), the old has gone and the new has come — we’re a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). We’re able to hate our sin without hating ourselves. Our sexuality is no longer who we are, but rather how we are. We put to death our old self so that Christ can live in us (Romans 8:13; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:5). The effect of sin is so pervasive, so complete, so radical, that complete rebirth must occur for anyone to enter the kingdom of heaven (John 3:3).

Whatever our sinful condition upon coming into the world, we need a total transformation — the kind that only our God and Creator has wonderfully made possible by grace through faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:4–10). This isn’t a message just for the gay community, or only for those who experience same-sex attractions. This is a message for everybody: you must be born again. And he is the one, according to his great mercy, who causes us to be born again (1 Peter 1:3).

And this, dear friends, is very good news.

Appendix G:

Men and Women in the Church

Summary of Kevin DeYoung's Book

Starting in Genesis¹

The opening chapter of Genesis offers several principles regarding manhood and womanhood.

1. The man and the woman were both created in the image of God...
2. Man has both singularity and plurality...
3. The man and the woman were given joint rule over creation...
4. Within this joint rule, the man and woman were given different tasks and created in different realms...
5. Man was given the priest-like task of maintaining the holiness of the garden...
6. Man was created before the woman...
7. The woman was given as a helper to the man...
8. The man was given the responsibility for naming every living creature...
9. The man and the woman were created in different ways...
10. The names "man" and "woman" suggest interdependence...
11. In marriage, the man leaves his family and holds fast to his wife...
12. The two came from one flesh and became one flesh...
13. Adam is reckoned as the head and representative of the couple.
 - a. God addresses Adam first.
 - b. Paul states that "sin came into the world through one man. In other words, Adam, not Eve, was the federal head.
14. The man and the woman experience the curse in different ways, each in their fundamental area of responsibility...
15. The relational wholeness between the man and the woman had been ruptured by the curse.

¹ Kevin DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church: A Short, Biblical, Practical Introduction* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 25-32.

Women in the Old Testament.

1. Only men exercise official leadership.

The Old Testament doesn't emphasize the father's rule in ancient Israel as much as it underscores the central role the father fulfilled as the provider and protector of the household.²

- a. The Patriarchs
- b. Priests and Levites
- c. Judges with one exception
- d. The monarchs of Israel with one exception
- e. All the writing prophets
- f. All those who rightly occupied a governing office in Israel were men
- g. The exceptions
 - i. As a judge, Deborah did not exercise a military function but came alongside Barak when he failed to go into battle by himself (Judg. 4:8).
 - ii. Several women prophesied in the Old Testament, including Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah... but they possessed no institutional authority. [Similarly, women prophesied in the early church but held not institutional authority.]
 - iii. Esther was a heroic queen, but she was not the ruling monarch, and she did not serve over Israel.
 - iv. Athaliah was the only women to sit on the throne over Israel, but she rose to be queen not by God's choosing or anointing but by assassinating all the royal heirs (2 Kings 11:1).

2. Godly Women display heroic character

3. Godly women helping men

- a. Sarah
- b. Rebekah
- c. Rachel and Leah
- d. Rahab
- e. Ruth
- f. Deborah
- g. Abigail

² DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church*, 36–37.

- h. Esther
- 4. Ungodly women influencing men for evil, ungodly men mistreating women
 - a. Ungodly women
 - i. Jezebel led Ahab into greater wickedness
 - ii. Delilah tricking Samson
 - iii. Michal rebuking David's worship
 - b. Ungodly men
 - i. Shechem raped Dinah (Gen 34)
 - ii. David abuses Bathsheba (2 Sam 11)
 - iii. Tamar mistreated by Judah (Gen 38)
 - iv. Lot's daughters offered to the town (Gen 19)
 - v. Levite's concubine (Judges 19)

Women in the New Testament

1. Jesus freely and publicly spoke to women (Luke 7:12-13; John 4:27; 8:10-11)
2. Jesus regularly met the needs of hurting women (Mark 1:30-31; Luke 13:10-17; Matt 9:20-22; Mark 7:24-30)
3. Jesus allowed women to minister to him (Matt 26:6-13; Luke 7:36-50)
 - a. Some financially
 - b. Some with hospitality
 - c. Part of Jesus band of disciples
 - d. First witnesses to his resurrection
4. Throughout Jesus' ministry, he acted with the assumption that women had enormous value and purpose.
 - a. his mother, Mary, who is called highly favored in Luke 1:28.
 - b. the widow of Zarephath (Luke 4:26),
 - c. women at the second coming (Matt. 24:1),
 - d. the woman in search of her lost coin (Luke 15:8-10).
 - e. the persistent widow as an example of prayerfulness (Luke 18:1-5)
 - f. the poor widow's offering as an example of generosity (Luke 21:1-4)
5. Jesus' teaching on divorce treated women as persons rather than property (Matt 5:32, 19:9)

6. Jesus' instruction on lust protected women from being treated as nothing more than objects of sexual desire (Matt 5:28)
7. However, Jesus' revolutionary treatment of women and his immense estimation of their value did not result in him changing the creation pattern.
 - a. Jesus had no issue confronting and breaking social taboos and Jewish interpretations of the law, so then if male leadership were simply a cultural reality, Jesus would have had no problem confronting it.
 - b. However, Jesus never rejected Old Testament teachings
 - c. Jesus honored women in a countercultural way without rejecting fundamental biblical principles regarding men and women
 - d. Male leadership within the disciples and throughout the early church was a constant.
 - e. Jesus was a man. In coming as a man, he embodied true manliness – saving, protecting, rescuing, leading, teaching, and serving.

Four New Testament texts.

1. 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 14:33-35

- a. What does it mean that the husband is the head of the wife

Even if by “head” Paul means “more prominent/preeminent partner” or (less likely) “one through whom the other exists,” his language and the flow of the argument seem to reflect an assumed hierarchy through which glory and shame flow upward from those with lower status to those above them. In this context the word almost certainly refers to one with authority over the other.³

 - i. In Ephesians 1 Christ is the head of the church – clearly a role of authority
 - ii. In Ephesians 5 Paul says wives are to submit to their husbands because the husband is the head of the wife
 - iii. Note the text indicates that God has authority over Christ, and this authority in no way diminishes the value of Christ.

To be sure, there *is* an important point to be made from the God-Christ parallel in verse 3—namely, that headship does not imply ontological inferiority. To have authority over someone—to be head of another—is not inconsistent with equality of worth, honor, and essence. But even here we should be careful to note that there is an “economic” expression of the Son in view in verse 3 (“Christ”), not an immanent or ontological expression (e.g., “Son”). We should not use the Trinity “as our model” for the marriage relationship, both because it is not necessary for complementarianism to be

³ Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 509.

true and because the metaphysical inner workings of the ineffable Trinity do not readily allow for easy lifestyle applications.⁴

- b. What “head” does the women dishonor?
 - i. When a man prays with his head uncovered he dishonors his head – in praying with his physical head uncovered he dishonors his spiritual head
 - ii. Similarly, the wife dishonors her spiritual head (ultimately Christ but also her husband) when she prays with her head uncovered.
- c. What does Paul mean by “authority”? ESV translates this as “sign of authority.” the head covering functions as a sign of submission to her husband *and* as a sign that she is therefore able to pray or prophesy in the assembly.⁵
- d. What does Paul mean by referring to “nature itself”?
 - i. This does not refer to a majority opinion or prevailing culture
 - ii. This does refer to God’s design
 - iii. Nature does not teach us how long our hair should be but rather teaches that men ought to adorn themselves like men and women adorn themselves like women. In essence, God’s design is that there should be distinction between the sexes.
 - iv. Nature dictates that men should embrace their manhood and women embrace their womanhood.
 - v. Culture does matter. When a custom is good we should accept it. Regardless, God wants men to look like men and women to look like women but what that physically looks like will vary from time to time and place to place.
- e. How can Paul command women to be silent (1 Cor 14:34) and allow women to pray and prophecy (1 Cor 11)?
 - i. Paul assumes that with the right symbols (ie. head coverings, etc) women can pray and prophecy in church (cf. 1 Cor 12, 14)
 - ii. Therefore, women were not wholly silent in the church.
 - iii. So then what does it mean for women to remain silent?
 - 1. Some think Paul is contradictory.
 - 2. Others think chapter 11 is in informal gatherings and chapters 12 and 14 are formal gatherings.

⁴ DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church*, 51–52.

⁵ DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church*, 55.

3. Others just think Paul was exaggerating because he was tired of the chatty Corinthian women.
4. Most likely – Paul allowed women to prophecy but did not allow them to participate in the weighing of prophecy. Most commentators now agree that 1 Cor 14:34-35 refers to the sifting the words of the prophets – or a cross examining of a prophetic word. This act takes on a more authoritative/teaching role. Theoretically a wife may have to tell her husband to submit to her examination of his prophetic word. Instead, Paul asks the wives to discuss this with their husbands at home. Therefore the prohibition to speak was in a very specific context – that of interpreting a prophetic utterance.

2. Ephesians 5:22-33

- a. For the wives: “Wives, in submitting to their husbands, ought to support, respect, and follow them as to the Lord.”⁶
 - i. The motivation for obedience to this command is Christ.
 - ii. Christ is the supreme absolute authority; all other authority is only derivative.
 - iii. A husband’s authority does not trump the authority of Christ and his commands.
 - iv. This submission is not dependent upon cultural norms or even a husband’s love. Instead this submission roots itself in the theological principles that (1) a husband is the head of the wife and (2) her submission ought to reflect the church’s submission to Christ.
 - v. Note the important term – *freely*. The command is given to the wife not the husband.
 - vi. Three words to describe freely given submission.
 1. Wives, support your husbands.
 2. Wives, respect your husbands.
 3. Wives, follow your husbands.
- b. For the husbands: “Husbands, in loving your wives, lead, sacrifice, and care for them as Christ does for the church.”⁷
 - i. Men’s number one command in marriage is to love like Jesus.

⁶ DeYoung, Men and Women in the Church, 65.

⁷ DeYoung, Men and Women in the Church, 68.

John Witherspoon said 250 years ago, "If superiority and authority be given to the man, it should be used with so much gentleness and love as to make it a state of as great equality as possible."⁸

- ii. The husband freely gives love. The wife is not to demand love.
- iii. Three words to describe freely given love

- 1. Husbands, lead your wives.

If Christ loves the church, his wayward bride, and continually woos her back from her spiritual adulteries, how much more should you woo back your wife after a disagreement when half the time it will be your fault anyway?⁹

- 2. Husbands, sacrifice for your wives.

- 3. Husbands, care for your wives.

If a man doesn't treat his wife right, I don't want to hear him talk about Christianity.¹⁰

3. 1 Timothy 2:8-15

- a. Regarding men praying (8): Posture is not the point; piety is.
- b. Regarding women's modest dress (9-10): (1) Women are to dress with modesty and self-control. (2) Women are to dress not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes. (3) Women are to dress with good works.
 - i. Some have argued that if braided hair is cultural then the other commands for women must be as well.
 - ii. However, braided hair is not the point. Paul's focus is on internal maturity and its accompanying external modesty.
 - iii. Cross reference Peter's similar discussion (1 Peter 3:3-4). Peter's concern is that women labor to make themselves beautiful on the inside, not on the outside.
- c. Learn quietly with all submissiveness (11)
 - i. Worth noting – Paul directing women to learn would itself have been countercultural.
 - ii. Quietness is not meant to demean. Rather, in the context of corporate worship, women are not to be teachers, but quiet learners.

⁸ DeYoung, Men and Women in the Church, 69.

⁹ DeYoung, Men and Women in the Church, 71.

¹⁰ DeYoung, Men and Women in the Church, 73.

“a woman who learns quietly embraces her submissive role and honors God’s design for the sexes.”¹¹

d. I do not permit a women to teach (12)

Some argue that Paul is commanding women to not teach error. But, what other kinds of teaching are permissible? If this was the case, would not Paul have as well commanded men to not teach falsely?

e. Exercise authority over a man (12)

i. Some think “authority” refers to domineering not just leadership. [This would be how we understand rule in Genesis 3:16.] However, this is unlikely seeing that Paul is talking to men and false teachers that were men.

ii. Due to the close link between teaching and authority – they must both be either positive or negative. Paul is either forbidding women from teaching error and domineering or forbidding them from teaching and having authority over men altogether. Because *didaskhein* (teaching) is almost always positive in the Pastoral Epistles, this phrase does not likely refer to false teaching. Additionally, Paul would not have needed to offer the reasons for the commands (13-14) if he was referring to false teaching.

f. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived... (13-14)

i. Order of creation.

1. What about the animals? Paul is not making a definitive statement about all the creation sequence.
2. He is consistent with the idea of firstborn throughout OT. The firstborn was accorded special rights due to order of birth.

ii. Eve was deceived.

1. One possibility: Paul may be making a statement about the nature of women – that they are more easily deceived. Those who hold such a view do not view women as inferior, but rather assume that the general design of women (their heightened relational sensitivity and awareness of others) may make them more prone to doctrinal deception.
2. Second possibility: Paul may be making a statement about what happens when the roles are reversed.

Adam was supposed to be the head, responsible for loving leadership and direction. But he abdicated his role, and Eve’s

¹¹ DeYoung, Men and Women in the Church, 80.

leadership influenced him for evil. As a result of this role reversal, sin entered into the world.¹²

3. Regardless the view, Paul does not ground women's silence in first century culture but instead God's original design.

g. Saved through child-bearing.

- i. Some believe this refers to Mary and the Messiah entering the world through child-bearing. Paul has already referenced Genesis and within that context lies a Messianic promise as well. If this is the case, the article present in the Greek but not the English would be emphasized. "Women are not saved through childbearing, but through *the* childbirth, the birth of Jesus."¹³
- ii. A second opinion: At times in the NT salvation does not refer to justification. If salvation is viewed more broadly, giving birth is one of the ways in which a woman demonstrates obedience to her God-given identity.

4. 1 Timothy 3:1-13

Elders carry out the ministry of the word; deacons carry out the ministry of mercy.... The ministry and giftedness of the entire church can be summarized as word and deed (Rom. 15:18; Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:10–11), so it is no surprise that the officers of the church reflect this basic demarcation: elders minister in word; deacons in deed.¹⁴

a. Male only elders

- i. An overseer must be the husband of one wife. Literally he must be a one-woman man. Paul does not require marriage as a prerequisite but instead requires faithfulness. An elder will be a faithful man.
- ii. The immediately preceding context in which women are told to not teach or exercise authority reinforces the idea that elders were to be men. Further examination of elder qualifications reveals the primary roles for an elder are teaching and ruling which were explicitly withdrawn from women in the church (1 Tim 2:12).

b. Female servants

- i. The discussion in 1 Tim 3:11 either refers to women deacons or wives of deacons.
- ii. If the word means *women*, Paul would be offering a subset of deacons.
- iii. Evidence for translation to be *their wives*.

¹² DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church*, 85.

¹³ DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church*, 86.

¹⁴ DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church*, 90-91.

1. It would be strange to introduce another office at this point.
2. The discussion in verse 12 (husband of one wife) makes more sense immediately following the qualifications for those wives.
3. If Paul were giving requirements for deaconesses, you would think that he would include something about their families, about being a one-man woman.
4. The deacons must be tested first (3:10), while this is not required of the women in verse 11.
5. The reason the character of elders' wives is not mentioned is that, though they can partner with their husbands in important ways, the wives of elders would not assist in their teaching-ruling ministry in the same way that the wives of deacons would help in their service work.¹⁵

Whether the verse is talking about wives who help their husbands in their diaconal work, or about women doing diaconal work as deaconesses, the outcome is that women are doing the same kind of work.¹⁶

Nothing inherent in the role of deacon precludes women from the role.

Life Together in the Church. In this section, DeYoung offers some really helpful and practical ways in which women can and should be ministering within the church.

In general, I see two bad approaches to applying complementarian principles. The first approach is too restrictive, defaulting to “traditional” women’s roles that may or may not be rooted in Scripture. The second approach is too loose, insisting that a woman can do whatever an unordained man can do. Both approaches lack the nuance necessary to apply all the realities we’ve seen—from the design in Genesis, to Jesus’s inclusion of women, to Paul’s twofold prohibition against women teaching men and having authority over men.¹⁷

Questions and Applications

1. Objection 1: Galatians 3:28 – neither Jew nor Greek
2. Objection 2: Ephesians 5:21 – submitting to one another
3. Objection 3: Slavery
4. Objection 4: Women in Ministry in the Bible – Deborah, Prophetesses, Priscilla, Phoebe, Junia, Euodia and Syntyche, Elect Lady

¹⁵ DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church*, 92–93.

¹⁶ DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church*, 93.

¹⁷ DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church*, 94.

5. Objection 5: Gifts and Calling

Following Christ as Men and Women

DeYoung offers what I have found to be the most helpful analogy so far in a discussion about complementarianism and egalitarianism.

“Suppose you have two identical basketballs—one you reserve for outdoor use and one you set aside for indoor use. The “rules” of complementarianism are not like the arbitrary labeling of two basketballs. They both work the same way and can essentially do the same thing, except that God has decreed that the two basketballs be set apart for different functions. That’s a capricious complementarianism held together by an admirable submission to Scripture, but in time it will lack any coherent or compelling reason for the existence of different “rules.” But suppose you have a basketball and an American football. They are similar things, used toward similar ends. You could even attempt to use the two balls interchangeably. But the attempt would prove awkward, and in the long run the game would change if you kept shooting free throws with a football or kept trying to execute a run-pass option with a basketball. The rules for each ball are not arbitrary. They are rooted in the different structure, shape, and purpose for each ball. It’s not the nature of a basketball to be used in football. In other words, the rules are rooted in nature.”¹⁸

He went on to write in the section, “If the husband is called to be the head of the family, then the wife is called to be its heart....This design is reflected not only in the “very good” of Eden, but in the very bad as well. The sin in the garden was, among other things, a reversal of the family order. Eve took charge, and Adam followed her. Eve sinned not just as a person, but as a woman and a wife; Adam sinned as a man and a husband.... When the man exercises authority in the home, he is not just filling a role; he is living out what it means to be a man. And when the woman supports her husband and cares for her children, she is doing the same relative to being a woman.... We should think of marriage not as the only place where the design of Genesis is lived out, but as the place where God’s design is lived out most clearly.... To be sure, men and women should not relate to every other man or woman as husband and wife. And yet there is something about the marriage relationship that shows for everyone the sort of people men and women were made to be.”¹⁹

¹⁸ DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church*, 133–34.

¹⁹ DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church*, 134–136.

Appendix H:

The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men (Gen 6:1-4)

John Murray in *Principles of Conduct*

John Murray, *Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957).

Whatever view we adopt regarding the 'sons of God' mentioned in this passage, the wrong involved in the marriages contracted and the evils resulting therefrom bear directly upon the sanctity of marriage as the institution for the procreation of life. The interpretation of the passage obviously turns on the view we are to adopt respecting the 'sons of God'. Are they preternatural angelic beings or are they members of the human race who are distinguished from the rest of humanity by this title?

The former view has been adopted by many interpreters and the identity of the 'spirits in prison' of 1 Peter 3:19 has been, either wholly or partially, fixed in terms of that interpretation. The *Book of Enoch* has naturally exercised great influence in this direction because it definitely regards the episodes of Genesis 6:1-3 as the sexual conjunction of angels with the daughters of men. 'And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another: "Come let us choose us wives from among the children of men and beget us children." ... Then swore they all together and bound themselves by mutual imprecations upon it. And they were in all two hundred; who descended in the days of Jared on the summit of Mount Hermon ... And these are the names of their leaders ... And all the others together with them took unto themselves wives, and each chose for himself one, and they began to go in unto them and to defile themselves with them ... And they became pregnant, and they bare great giants, whose height was three thousand ells: who consumed all the acquisitions of men' (VI, 1, 2, 5, 6, 7; VII, 1, 2, 3; cf. X. 1-15; XV, 1-12; LXIV, 1, 2; as translated by R. H. Charles: *The Book of Enoch*, Oxford, 1912). Most recently Bo Reicke: *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism* (Copenhagen. 1946) and E. G. Selwyn: *The First Epistle of Peter* (London, 1946), pp. 196ff., 314-362 have ably presented the case for this interpretation of 1 Peter 3:19 and, by implication, of Genesis 6:1-3. Without question, if 1 Peter 3:19 refers to angelic beings, whether exclusively or partially so as to include also the disembodied souls of men, this interpretation would necessarily turn the scales in favour of the view that the sons of God in Genesis 6:1-3 were angelic beings.

Genesis 6:1-3 does appear to lend support to the view that 'the sons of God' are non-human. We should naturally suppose that 'the daughters of men' represent mankind and that those designated 'sons of God' must not only be contrasted with the women of mankind but also with mankind. We might expect that if the contrast were simply between 'daughters' and 'sons', that is between the women and the men, the distinction would be drawn in terms of 'the daughters of

men' and 'the sons of men'. Also, it must be granted that angelic beings could be called 'sons of God' (cf. Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7).

If we are to be guided by considerations of a biblico-theological character there are overwhelming objections to this interpretation. However helpful extra-canonical literature may be in arriving at the sense of Scripture, extra-canonical considerations may never be pitted against the evidence which the Scripture itself determinatively provides. The arguments in support of the view that 'the sons of God' in Genesis 6:2 refer to members of the human race have been ably presented by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch in their *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Eng. Trans., Grand Rapids, 1949), Vol. I, pp. 127–139, and by William Henry Green in an article, 'The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men' (*The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, Vol. V (1894), pp. 654–660). With some abbreviation and modification I shall present the argument as developed by them.

(1) There is no reason why בְּנֵי־אָדָם in Genesis 6:1 should not be used in a generic sense and בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים in Genesis 6:2 in a specific sense to designate a division within mankind. The evidence from Hebrew usage adduced by Keil and Delitzsch (*op. cit.*, pp. 130f.) and by Green (*op. cit.*, pp. 658f.) demonstrates the feasibility of this construction. Besides, it may not be necessary to take בְּנֵי־אָדָם in verse 1 in the generic sense; it may be used in the specific sense in which it is used in verse 2 and thus in both verses contrasted with 'the sons of God' in the sense to be explained presently. But, in any case, usage indicates that there is no necessity to suppose that, because 'the sons of God' are distinguished from 'the daughters of men', 'the sons of God' cannot belong to the genus humanity. They may also be men; only they are called 'sons of God' to distinguish them from other men who do not belong to the classification by which the former are distinguished.

(2) In the preceding context the family of Seth is distinguished by the significant observation that within that lineage 'men began to call upon the name of the Lord' (Genesis 4:26). There is an eloquent contrast between this mark of piety within the Sethite family and that delineation which we find in the immediately preceding context of the family of Cain. Notable distinction is shown to exist within the human family. This notification of distinction in terms of the fear and service of God is certified in the genealogy of Genesis 5 which follows. 'And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years ... and Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him' (5:22, 24). 'And Lamech lived ... and begat a son: and he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us in our work and in the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed' (5:28, 29). We are thus definitely prepared for distinctions, drawn within the human family, in respect of the very relationship which the title 'sons of God' might be expected to connote or specify. It is neglect of this factor which appears so conspicuously in the two genealogies immediately preceding Genesis 6:1–3 that gives plausibility to the argument that 'the sons of God' must refer to preternatural beings. When the contrasts of the preceding narrative are taken into account this plausibility dissipates. Quite naturally the title 'sons of God' can be taken as another specification of the discrimination already established.

(3) The passage implies that some grievous wrong had been perpetrated in the marriages concerned. Verse 3 refers to the judgment of God upon it. It is significant that the judgment has

respect to man alone. If the sons of God were angels we should expect some intimation of the judgment executed upon them. The sons of God were the initiators of this travesty—‘they saw ... they took’. If they were angels the severest penalty would have been inflicted upon them. But the narrative has in view only the judgment upon men. ‘And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not rule in man for ever in their erring; he is flesh, and his days shall be a hundred and twenty years.’ To say the least, we are led to suspect that only mankind was involved in the wrong.

Furthermore, if holy angels were the perpetrators of this wrong, they must have fallen from their holy estate, and if they fell thereby the heinousness of the sin would have been greatly aggravated. Since it occurred on the scene of this world we should all the more expect that the judgment upon them would have been intimated (*cf.* Genesis 3:14, 15).

(4) There is no suggestion anywhere in Scripture that angels or demons are capable of sexual functions. As W. H. Green says, ‘Sexual relations are nowhere in Scripture attributed to superior beings. There is no suggestion that angels are married or are given in marriage; the contrary is expressly declared (Matt. 22:30) ... The whole conception of sexual life as connected with God or angels is absolutely foreign to Hebrew thought, and for that reason cannot be supposed to be countenanced here’ (*op. cit.*, p. 655).

(5) The phrase **לָקַח אִשָּׁה** used in verse 2—‘and they took to them wives’—is the common Old Testament expression for marriage. It is not the expression that would conveniently denote the utterly abnormal and monstrous relationship constituted by the sexual conjunction of angels and the women of mankind. As we shall see later, there is no indication in this passage that the marriages as such were of an abnormal or monstrous character. The wrong is of a different type.

(6) Men are called ‘sons of God’ in the usage of the Old Testament and, more particularly, in the Pentateuch (*cf.* Exodus 4:22, 23; Deuteronomy 14:1; 32:5, 6; Psalm 73:15; 82:6; Hosea 1:10; Malachi 1:6). There is no reason why some division of the human race, or certain persons by reason of religious privilege or political authority, should not be given this designation in order to distinguish them from others.

(7) The supposition that the *nephilim* mentioned in verse 4 are the offspring of these abnormal sexual conjunctions and that they were superhuman monsters because they were the issue of angelic beings has absolutely no warrant in the text. The supposition is an importation which the syntax does not support and against which the terms definitely militate. All that is stated is that the *nephilim* were in the earth in the days in which the sons of God took wives from the daughters of men. And the natural construction is that they were already in the earth when these marriages took place, that after the offspring of these marriages were born the *nephilim* exercised the rôle of warriors, and that they long antedated these marriages and the situation arising from them. There is no suggestion of genetic connection between the *nephilim* and the marriages concerned. To insist that there is violates the canons of sober exegesis.

We must conclude therefore that there is no biblical support for the view that ‘the sons of God’ were angelic or preternatural beings. The biblical evidence militates against this interpretation and decisively supports the view that the marriages concerned were those between one classification of mankind that could be designated ‘sons of God’ and another classification that could not be

thus designated. The narrative itself points to this discrimination as that between the Sethites and the Cainites, between those who feared the Lord and those who were worldly.

The lesson derived from this passage is directly pertinent to the sanctity of marriage. In the judgment pronounced upon this episode of human history we have the condemnation of unholy marital alliance. The point is not that these marriages were *per se* illicit, or that the sexual relations were of a monstrous character, but that they were contracted in disregard of the principles that should guide the people of God in the selection of marital partners. We have portrayed for us the evil that is entailed in, and results from, the failure to remember that in marriage we are not to please worldly and fleshly impulse but to seek wedlock that conserves and promotes the interests of godliness. In wedlock we must preserve the line of demarcation between the people of God and the ungodly world and have respect to the unity in faith and the bond of peace which will insure godly nurture. How early in the biblical history we have advertised and sealed the principle that marriage is not only for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue but of the church with a holy seed. We have here what becomes more explicit in the onward progress of covenant revelation, that the godly should marry only in the Lord.

If the *nephilim* of verse 4 do not have genetic connection with the marriages of verse 2, what, we may ask, is the purpose of the reference to them in this sequence? We do not need a great deal of ingenuity to find the answer. The first three verses deal with the vice of mixed marriages and the judgment resulting from it. The succeeding part of the chapter (verses 5ff.) deals with the corruption which abounded in the earth and with the violence that became rampant—‘all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth’ (verse 12) and ‘the earth was filled with violence’ (verse 11). What more significant datum could be mentioned as a transition than the reference to the *nephilim*? If the *nephilim* were in the earth and they exercised the rôle of warriors, the implication is that their prestige and activities had a decisive influence, either for good or for evil, in the abounding iniquity of that period.

If we were to suppose that the influence of the *nephilim* was for good, then we should have to regard them as the guardians of justice and order and as offering resistance to the rampant vice. On this hypothesis the resistance they offered would only accentuate the potency and prevalence of vice, for, notwithstanding their power and renown, violence still abounded. It is more reasonable to believe, however, that the *nephilim* were themselves agents in promoting violence. We are told that the whole earth was corrupt before God and it is not likely that the *nephilim* were notable exceptions. It is more natural to think that the *nephilim* were the main perpetrators of violence and because of their might and renown played the rôle of dictators or tyrants and thus gave impetus to the violence that filled the earth. The relevance of allusion to these *nephilim* in the narrative of events is apparent.

There is one further observation that may be made regarding the *nephilim* and the context in which allusion to them occurs. It is to the effect that the passage as a whole shows the close interaction of the various kinds of vice. While the connection between the *nephilim* and the marriages is not genetic, there is, nevertheless, a moral connection. The degeneration presupposed in, and again resulting from, these unholy alliances provided fruitful soil for the violence in connection with which the *nephilim* played a decisive rôle. The breakdown of moral and

religious restraints evidenced by these marital alignments gave rein to the vice of violence and oppression. The indulgence of sex vice in any form kindles the flames of passion which break out in other directions, particularly in the direction of violence. Marriage is the institution for the procreation of life. Holy marriage is an indispensable means of conserving and promoting godly families and the nurture of faith; it is the institution for the propagation of godly life. When the proprieties which govern such marriages are desecrated, then the gates are flung open to the most violent of vices. This is the lesson written plainly on Genesis 6:1–13.

Appendix I:

Chiastic Structure, Genesis 6-9

9 These are the generations of Noah Noah was a righteous man blameless in his generation Noah walked with God
10 And **Noah** had three sons

Shem Ham and Japheth

11 *Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and the earth was filled with violence* 12 And **God saw the earth and behold it was corrupt for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth** 13 And God said to Noah I have determined to make an end of all flesh for the earth is filled with violence through them Behold I will destroy them with the earth

14 **Make yourself an ark** of gopher wood Make rooms in the ark and cover it inside and out with pitch 15 This is how you are to make it the length of the ark 300 cubits its breadth 50 cubits and its height 30 cubits 16 Make a roof for the ark and finish it to a cubit above and set the door of the ark in its side Make it with lower second and third decks

17 For behold **I will bring a flood** of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven Everything that is on the earth shall die

18 But **I will establish my covenant with you** and you shall come into the ark you your sons your wife and your sons wives with you 19 And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you They shall be male and female 20 Of the birds according to their kinds and of the animals according to their kinds of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive

21 Also **take with you every sort of food** that is eaten and store it up It shall serve as food for you and for them

22 *Noah did this he did all that God commanded him*

7:1 Then the Lord said to Noah **Go into the ark** you and all your household for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation 2 Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals the male and his mate and a pair of the animals that are not clean the male and his mate 3 and seven pairs of the birds of the heavens also male and female to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth

4 For **in seven days** I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground 5 And Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him

6 *Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth*

7 And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood 8 Of clean animals and of animals that are not clean and of birds and of everything that creeps on the ground 9 two and two male and female went into the ark with Noah as God had commanded Noah 10 And **after seven days** the waters of the flood came upon the earth

- 11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life in the second month on the seventeenth day of the month on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth and the windows of the heavens were opened 12 And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights 13 On the very same day Noah and his sons Shem and Ham and Japheth and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them **entered the ark** 14 they and every beast according to its kind and all the livestock according to their kinds and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth according to its kind and every bird according to its kind every winged creature 15 **They went into the ark** with Noah two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life
- 16 And those that entered male and female of all flesh went in as God had commanded him And **the Lord shut him in**
- 17 The flood continued **forty days** on the earth
- The **waters increased** and bore up the ark and it rose high above the earth 18 The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth and the ark floated on the face of the waters
- 19 And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered 20 The waters prevailed above the **mountains covering** them fifteen cubits deep
- 21 And all flesh died that moved on the earth birds livestock beasts all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth and all mankind 22 Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died 23 He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens They were blotted out from the earth Only Noah was left and those who were with him in the ark 24 And the waters prevailed on the earth **150 days**
- 8:1 **But God remembered Noah** and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark And God made a wind blow over the earth and the waters subsided 2 The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed the rain from the heavens was restrained
- 3 and the waters receded from the earth continually At the end of **150 days** the waters had abated
- 4 and in the seventh month on the seventeenth day of the month the ark came to rest on the **mountains** of Ararat
- 5 And the **waters continued to abate** until the tenth month in the tenth month on the first day of the month the tops of the mountains were seen
- 6 At the end of **forty days**
- Noah opened the window** of the ark that he had made
- 7 and **sent forth a raven** It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth 8 Then he sent forth a dove from him to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground 9 But the dove found no place to set her foot and she returned to him to the ark for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him
- 10 He waited **another seven days** and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark 11 And the dove came back to him in the evening and behold in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth
- 12 Then he waited **another seven days** and sent forth the dove and she did not return to him anymore 13 In the six hundred and first year in the first month the first day of the month the waters were dried from off the earth And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked and behold the face of the ground was dry
- 14 *In the second month on the twenty-seventh day of the month the earth had dried out*

- 15 Then God said to Noah 16 **Go out from the ark** you and your wife and your sons and your sons wives with you 17 Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth that they may swarm on the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth 18 So Noah went out and his sons and his wife and his sons wives with him 19 Every beast every creeping thing and every bird everything that moves on the earth went out by families from the ark 20 Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar 21 And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma the Lord said in his heart **I will never again curse the ground because of man for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth** Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done 22 While the earth remains seedtime and harvest cold and heat summer and winter day and night shall not cease
- 9:1 And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth 2 The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea Into your hand they are delivered 3 **Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you** And as I gave you **the green plants I give you** everything 4 But you shall not eat flesh with its life that is its blood
- 5 *And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning from every beast I will require it and from man From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man* 6 *Whoever sheds the blood of man by man shall his blood be shed for God made man in his own image* 7 *And you be fruitful and multiply increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it*
- 8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him 9 Behold **I establish my covenant with you and your offspring** after you 10 and with every living creature that is with you the birds the livestock and every beast of the earth with you as many as came out of the ark it is for every beast of the earth
- 11 I establish my covenant with you that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood and **never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth** 12 And God said This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you for all future generations 13 I have set my bow in the cloud and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth 14 When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds 15 I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh 16 When the bow is in the clouds I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth 17 God said to Noah This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth
- 18 The sons of Noah who **went forth from the ark** were
- Shem Ham and Japheth Ham was the father of Canaan 19 These **three** were the **sons of Noah** and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed
- 20 **Noah** began to be a man of the soil and he planted a vineyard
- 21 He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent 22 And Ham the father of Canaan saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside 23 Then Shem and Japheth took a garment laid it on both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father Their faces were turned backward and they did not see their father's nakedness 24 When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him 25 he said Cursed be Canaan a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers 26 He also said Blessed be the Lord the God of Shem and let Canaan be his servant 27 May God enlarge Japheth and let him dwell in the tents of Shem and let Canaan be his servant 28 After the flood Noah lived 350 years 29 All the days of Noah were 950 years and he died

Appendix J:

Cutting a Covenant, and When Covenant People Can't Cut It

Ben Witherington | October 27, 2007 | benwitherington.blogspot.com

One of the most valuable part of my education over thirty years ago at Gordon-Conwell Seminary was learning the nature of covenanting, or making treaties in antiquity. Meredith Kline, one of my OT professors was brilliant when it came to this stuff, as he had studied ANE covenanting and how it worked in detail, particularly how ancient suzerainty treaties worked, including Hittite ones and Biblical ones. If you want to read an interesting tiny book long out of print, read Kline's 'By Oath Consigned'. There are many insights that come from such a comparative study of ancient treaty making, but here are the salient points. You can also find some resources on line from Kline as well if you Google his name.

Firstly, as Kline showed in detail, there were various different sorts of covenants or treaties in antiquity, and the kinds which we find in the Bible are suzerain-vassal treaties. They are not parity agreements between equals. All such parity covenants, treaties, or contracts are not analogous to what we have in the Bible, because of course God does not relate to his people as equals.

In a suzerain vassal treaty/covenant, it is the suzerain who dictates all the terms, lays down the law, makes certain promises, and explains the sanctions if the covenant is violated. It is entirely at the discretion of the suzerain whether he cuts a new covenant with his people if they have not kept the old one. He is under no obligation to do so. It is also true, that if the covenant is basically kept by the people in question, then the suzerain has the option to renew it on the same terms, or on different terms, if he wishes. The point is, it is entirely at his discretion what happens in such matters.

Secondly, covenants while many were unilateral, were almost always conditional in nature. This is the very nature of a covenant with stipulations, which if they were not kept, the suzerain had obligated himself to enact the curse sanctions. Thereafter, it was up to the suzerain to decide whether even to do another covenant or not. Fortunately for us, the Biblical Suzerain, our God, has chosen to continue to re-up, either renewing (some of the OT covenants), or in the case of the new covenant, starting afresh with a new covenant, which promised to be more permanent.

Thirdly, there were a variety of kinds of covenants, just as there were a variety of kinds of treaties or contracts. Sometimes you will hear about a covenant being mainly a law covenant, or a covenant could be more like a promissory note, emphasizing promises. But in fact, so far as I can see all covenants in antiquity involved both stipulations by the Suzerain (rules and laws), and also some promises.

The old covenants in the OT involved both law and promises, both stipulations and obligations. There is no such thing as a 'grace' less or a 'promise' less covenant in the Bible, and in regard to this particular matter we should not contrast the old and new covenants.

The new covenant most certainly has laws. Paul calls these the Law of Christ (see Gal. 5-6; 1 Cor. 9). The old covenant certainly had elements of grace and promise as well. However, and this is the crucial point, because the stipulations and promises and sanctions are in various regards different between the various old covenants and the new one, it is clear enough the the new covenant is not simply a renewal of any of the old covenants. Paul does inform us that the new covenant involves the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham through Christ, but this is a different matter. God has chosen to carry over certain promises into the new covenant and have them fulfilled by and through Christ.

The form of ancient covenants was all basically the same: 1) historical preamble explaining why the covenant was made or what circumstances caused it to be made (cf. the description in 1 Cor. 11 as to how the Lord's Supper came to be celebrated); 2) covenant regulations or stipulations, such as the ten commandments; 3) promise or blessing sanctions if the covenant was kept (see Jesus' beatitudes and woes), and curse sanctions if it was not. All such covenants were inaugurated by means of a sacrifice.

There was often as well a covenant sign, and the sign itself usually was the sign of the oath curse, a reminder of what would happen if the covenant was not kept. For example, circumcision was a sign of the warning— 'if you do not keep the covenant I will cut you and your descendants off'. What more graphic reminder of having yourself and your descendants cut off than the circumcision of the organ of generation, from which descendants come?

Notice as well that circumcision is a male specific covenant sign in Israelite culture, whereas baptism is a gender inclusive sign. This clearly enough signals a major difference between various old covenants and the new covenant. The sign of the covenant indicates something of the character of the covenant. There was a phrase we hear from time to time in Israelite literature— 'to cut a covenant, 'karath berith'. This could refer to the cutting of its stipulations it in stone, or the cutting its sign in the flesh, but it meant that the covenant was inaugurated and valid.

In the NT we hear language about Christ's death being both like a circumcision, a cutting off, and like a baptism, a symbol of drowning by water ordeal (also a curse sanction), and further more Christian baptism is associated not primarily with repentance, but rather as Rom. 6 makes clear with death and burial— of the old person. The reason for this is clear enough— the covenant sign symbolizes the curse sanction.

In the death of Christ God enacted the the curse sanctions of the Mosaic covenant on Jesus. And here is the crucial point—once the curse sanction has been enacted, the covenant is over and done with. It is abolished and finished. It is fulfilled and done away with. It becomes obsolete. This is made perfectly clear in the NT at various junctures.

For example, in Gal. 4 Paul likens the Mosaic covenant to a child minder, a paidagogos, which one out grows when one comes of age. The job of Jesus, as Gal. 4 says that he was born under the Law to redeem those under the Mosaic Law out from under that Law. Or in 2 Cor. 3 Paul reminds that

the glory of the Mosaic covenant was a fading glory. Notice that he is not saying it was a bad thing, just not a permanent covenant by any means. It has been eclipsed by the permanent glory of Christ and his new covenant. Or again, notice what Heb. 9-10 make so very clear. Christ is a mediator of a new and better covenant, and not only so he died as a ransom to set free those who needed to be set free from the penalty for the sins committed under the 'first' covenant (by which he means the old one— see Heb. 9.15).

What is especially amazing about the death of Jesus from the perspective of covenantal theology is three things: 1) his sacrifice for sins is 'once for all', not only once for all time, but a ransom once for all persons (see e.g. 1 Tim. 2.6). Previous sacrifices only had a temporal and temporary benefit, and did not cover sins committed with a 'high hand' for which there was no forgiveness under OT Law. This is not true of the new covenant cut by Christ; 2) Christ's death exhausted God's righteous anger against sin committed under the old covenant, and indeed his general wrath against sin even of non-covenantal peoples. In other words, the curse sanction was exhausted on him, and so the OT covenant ended on the cross, in Christ's sacrifice; 3) but equally amazing is the fact that the inaugurating sacrifice for the new covenant was this same death of Christ. It served a dual purpose of ending the old covenant and beginning the new one, in the same act. It thus is the ultimate place where we see the convergence on God's justice and mercy, his holiness and his grace, in a single act.

There, is so much more I could say about all of this, but here are some of the implications:

1) when a new covenant is inaugurated, a suzerain may choose to carry over some of the promises and stipulations and sanctions into the new covenant, as well as adding to them new promises, stipulations, and sanctions. One of the reasons Christians get confused about the relationship of the old and new covenant is that they both have some of the same rules and regulations and features. This is hardly surprising since God, who makes these covenants, has not changed in character.

But it needs to be stressed, that only those commandments given as a part of the new covenant are binding on Christians. Thus for instance, Christians are not obligated to keep the sabbath, food laws, and a host of other stipulations we find in Leviticus. On the other hand, Christians are obligated to love their enemies, turn the other cheek, and leave retaliation or vengeance entirely in the hands of God. This is a striking difference between the old and new covenants. The reason why Christians keep the commandment— 'No adultery' is because Jesus stipulated it was part of his law for his disciples. Not because it is part of the ten commandments. In fact Jesus basically reaffirmed most of the ten commandments, but not the sabbath commandment. And as Mk. 7.15, he also declared all foods clean. This did not make him a Law breaker, because, in Jesus' view the new eschatological covenant was on the way, and the old one was in any case irreparably broken, and there remained only the curse sanction of the old covenant still to be enacted, something which he himself would endure on behalf of God's people on the cross.

2) The last supper has to be the most amazing Passover celebration ever. Here Jesus inaugurated a new way of celebrating it, with bread and wine symbolizing his body and blood. But notice that he is symbolically distributing the benefits of his death—before he ever died on the cross. That is, so sure was he of the outcome of the cross, and that it would be beneficial for his disciples that gave

them tokens and pledges of the benefits before he even died. He was not simply celebrating a Passover meal— he was inaugurating a new meal practice with new symbols and signs, for he was both the fulfillment of the old Passover, and the inaugurator of an entirely new one on the cross.

This is more than enough, perhaps too much to process all at once. But if you want more of this, then have a look at my two little books on the sacraments now out from Baylor Press— ‘Troubled Waters’ and ‘Making a Meal of It’. My third book in that series on the Bible as the ‘Living Word of God’ will be out next month as well.

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