

Monday - Week Two

Lesson Four: Cain and Abel

Read: Genesis 4

Summary: The long-running war between good and evil can be seen in two of the children Adam and Eve had. Even a short time after the world began there was evil that lurked in human hearts.

Background and Comments

- Martin Luther translated Genesis 4:1 “I have the man, the Lord”. According to this possible translation Eve thought that the Messiah had already come!
- Why didn’t God kill Cain (especially in light of Genesis 9:6)? Perhaps part of the reason is that killing one of the few people in the world would have slowed down the population growth considerably. On a related note, many ask if the first people married their brothers and sisters. The obvious answer is yes. God made allowances for such intermarriage until the population had grown.
- Lamech and his side of the family were skilled in iron and bronze work; Seth’s family was “skilled” in another way: worshipping the Lord.

Lessons for Today

- Read Hebrews 11:4 carefully. This passage tells us that the reason God accepted Abel’s sacrifice was that Abel had faith. Sometimes we get impressed by large gifts that some unbelievers give to schools, charitable organizations and even to the United Nations. While it’s true that these are nice actions they are not good works in God’s eyes because good works are done out of faith (unbelievers have no faith obviously). God looks at the heart while we only see what is on the outside.
- God came to Cain twice (v 6 and v 9) with questions meant to teach Cain a lesson. We can learn an important lesson from God - questions can be a good way of making people think about what they are doing. Also note that Cain did not learn his lesson even though God was the teacher! We can work with a person (and do all the right things) but if the person is determined not to accept our help we won’t be able to help them.

Read: Psalm 6; Matthew 6.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, help me to please You as I let my faith shine. Amen.

Tuesday - Week Two

Lesson five: The History of Adam

Read: Genesis 5:1-6:8

Summary: The world before the flood was much different than today's world. These verses give us a brief glimpse at it.

Background and Comments

- We cannot image living for 900 years. The amount that could be learned over that period of time boggles the mind. Luther summed up the greatest advantage of these long life spans: "It was truly a Golden Age, those days when nine patriarchs lived together and in unity of the Spirit taught the people the promise of the Woman's Seed." Adam himself could tell his "distant" relatives the story of the fall into sin and the promise of the Savior.
- Methuselah lived for 969 years. When we compare all the dates and ages involved we find that Methuselah died in the year of the flood!
- Enoch stopped living on this earth when he was a youngster (365 years young). Enoch never died; instead he simply "was no more". Apparently God took him directly to heaven before he died.

Lessons for Today

- The words "and then he died" resound like a gong throughout this chapter. Death teaches us how horribly serious sin is. Every time someone dies we experience a fierce preaching of the law: the wages of sin is death. Keep this in mind the next time someone you know experiences a death in their family - they have heard the law in its fiercest form and need to hear the Gospel.
- Genesis 6:2 tells us one of the main reasons that the world became so wicked that God destroyed it with the flood. The believers found the unbelievers attractive and married them. We need to impress on our children that the most attractive part of a potential marriage partner is their faith in Jesus Christ.

Read: Psalm 7; Matthew 7.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, please guide me to walk with You just as Enoch did. As I study Your Word make my will line up with Your's. I want to be like You. In the name of Jesus I pray; Amen.

Wednesday - Week two

Catechism Review

Read Questions 1-5

1. Can we logically prove to someone that there is a God? Explain.

2. Everyone's conscience tells them that there is a God. How will that impact your witnessing efforts?

3. When people see your life they can (hopefully) see that there is something different about you compared to this world. Their conscience might even tell them, "You should be more like that person!" What vital spiritual truth can't their conscience tell them? How will that impact your witnessing efforts?

4. The Bible tells us about Jesus and His love. Without the Bible we would not be able to go to heaven. What will that mean as you read the Bible?

Read: Psalm 8; Matthew 8.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for this wonderful world. Not only does it supply us with everything we need for physical life it also shows us Your power and concern for human beings. Focus my attention on the Word of God where I find the full extent of Your love. Amen.

Thursday - Week two

Lesson six: The history of Noah , part one

Read: Genesis 6:9 - 7:24

Summary: God saw that the world had become evil. He gave the world 120 years of grace to repent; unfortunately the world did not forsake its evil ways.

Background and Comments

- Many people wonder how the ark could have kept so many animals alive during the long period of time the water was on the earth. Many of the animals could have gone into a type of hibernation and would not have needed very much food. Most of all, we need to remember that God simply made it happen.
- The destruction the flood caused was amazing. The waters of the deep burst open (causing earthquakes, volcanoes, etc.) and the waters in the air (the vapor canopy mentioned in lesson one?) fell. The waters covered even the mountain tops!

Lessons for Today

- Genesis 6:9 tells us that Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people. Imagine, out of the whole world Noah was only one of a small group of believers. One man made a huge difference. In fact, it's even accurate to say that Noah "saved the world." One person can make a difference - you can make a difference!
- Genesis 6:18 tells us that God made a covenant with Noah and his family. A covenant is simply a promise. God has a covenant with us as well; He promises that our sins have been forgiven. Noah's covenant was good (it promised physical life) but ours is better (it promises spiritual life).
- The unbelievers thought that Noah was crazy for talking about a worldwide flood ... until it started raining; when it started to rain they knew how serious Moses had been. When you warn people about God's hatred of sin people might not believe you. One day they will.

Read: Psalm 9; Matthew 9.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, remind me that You truly do hate sin. When I am tempted remind me that there is only one "real" choice, the choice You want me to make. Also remind me of Your grace, grace that saved Noah and his family. In Jesus' name; Amen.

Friday - Week two

Life Issues

Topic/Question: Why do bad things happen? Where did evil come from in the first place?

Bible References and Considerations

- The Bible does not tell us where evil comes from (it never really addresses the issue). The Bible does tell us that God is perfect. The Bible tells us that God created people and angels with free will; that is, Adam and Eve were not robots who automatically did the right thing. Adam and Eve could make choices. Perhaps the best answer is not to ask the question at all. If God does not answer a question in the Bible then we shouldn't ask it.
- Romans 8:28 tells us that God works all things out for our good. 1 Peter 1:6-7 tell us that God can use trials and suffering to strengthen our faith. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 show us that troubles can actually bring us closer to God and can drive us back to God's love.

Practically Speaking

- Why doesn't God miraculously solve all of our problems with His great power? Several points need to be made:
 1. God does use His power to solve many problems we never find about.
 2. When God miraculously solved all the Israelites' problems (when God led them out of Egypt) they still rebelled. People often fall away when they don't have any troubles.
- When we are in the middle of a tough time it sometimes doesn't help to remember that God is going to work things out for our good. We need answers that appeal to our heart instead of our minds. We need to flee to the cross for reassurance of God's love. There we see the most unfair, evil thing that ever happened: the sinless Son of God died. Thank God for that "evil event" because it made heaven and forgiveness possible for us.
- 1 Peter 4:19 is an excellent passage to think about when we suffer. Peter encourages us to commit ourselves to God; literally he tells us to "hand our soul over to God".

Read: Psalm 10; Matthew 10.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, I pray for those who are enduring pain and suffering today. Make me an instrument of peace and hope in their life. Amen.