

ReGroups 8/6/23

Origin Stories: Crossroads - Genesis 4-5

The Tale of Two

On the heels of Cain murdering his brother, Genesis shows the continued downward spiral of humanity. Chapter 4 highlights an egregious example of how Cain's descendants were even more defiant and rebellious than him. In contrast, Genesis 5 offers a ray of hope and suggests that all is not lost. In the shadow of their loss, Adam and Eve have another son who goes on to father a lineage of believers.

These back-to-back passages clearly embody the crossroads that the world faced in the aftermath of the Fall. Many would no doubt follow the rebellious, self-righteous path of Cain, while a remnant would pursue the righteous path of Abel and Seth. These narratives lead right into the complete crumbling of society as recorded in Genesis 6, culminating with the global flood.

In this study we will discuss and theorize what could have been pre-flood, while also learning what made Seth's line truly stand out and led to one family finding salvation from God's judgment.

Farther, Farther East

Perhaps the most telling verse of Cain's wayward heart is **Genesis 4:16**. After asking God for mercy, and God promises to spare and protect Cain, his actions suggest he wasn't truly sorry. The Bible makes a distinction between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow, that is true remorse vs faking it. Read **2 Corinthians 7:10** and **discuss the difference** between these two types of regret.

Clearly Cain wasn't serious about repenting and turning back to God, as proven in his drifting farther and farther away. As we discussed in an earlier lesson, we see that Cain continues the eastward trajectory that Adam and Eve showcased when they left Eden. While no direction is sinful by nature, this theme is seen throughout the early chapters of Genesis to emphasize mankind's continued, downhill slide. If Eden was the spiritual and moral center that represented God's perfect will, the world was going hard and fast away from it.

What's important to note is how sharp and sudden the decline was for the human race after the fall. It's easy to think that the world today is much worse than the world that was thousands of years ago, but just consider the fact that when there were just four people on the planet, one of them was literally *murdered* by his brother. **Have you ever thought about that? What does that tell you about the shadow sin cast over the world?**

To add further emphasis, "*Nod*" means wandering in Hebrew, suggesting that Cain wasn't really headed in any concrete direction. He was just lost, without any sense of where he was going. "Lost" becomes the preferable way the Bible refers to people separate from God. Our problem isn't that we are necessarily bad or wrong, but rather we've just lost our way. **See Matthew 18:10-14** and **discuss** how lost is the most fitting way to describe all of us apart from God.

Tragedy and Mockery

Read Genesis 4:17-24 and notice these two different trends:

- There's reference to the swift progression and advancement of culture and civilization in Cain's lineage. They go from pitching tents to hammering out tools of bronze and iron. In the post-flood world, for whatever reason, this same jump from simple innovations to more intense engineering would be separated by much more time. We also see that Cain's descendants were renown for their musical ingenuity and giftedness.

It's safe to say that these notes are here to show us what might have been from this fallen lineage. It also punctuates that none of our earthly accomplishments and accolades amount for anything that truly matters if they we are not living for God. Who among us remembers *Jabal? Jubal? Tubal?* Sadly, *nobody does...* and that alone proves the point.

We've all heard the poem written by C.T. Studd, "*Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.*" **Romans 14:7-12** assures us that our lives are meant for God's glory alone, **2 Corinthians 4:18** tells us that we should focus our lives on Eternity above all else, and of course, **Mark 8:36-37** questions the gain of living for anything that's not Eternally valuable. **Read** these and **discuss** the tragedy of Cain's lineage and how this passage is meant to cause us to mourn their lost potential, while also sending a message about true purpose and impact.

- Secondly we see Lamech go as far as mocking the grace and mercy that God showed to Cain. After committing multiple murders, he was completely defiant towards any sort of accountability towards God. He showcased a sense of entitlement and arrogance, disregarding any sort of repercussions for his actions. **Galatians 6:7** and **Hosea 8:7** make it clear that God will not be mocked. *What could be of a mockery toward God than to belittle His grace and presume on His kindness?* While this isn't the last we'll hear from Cain's family tree, it's a foreshadow of just how depraved the world had become.

A New Hope

Read **Genesis 4:25-26** and see how the chapter ends with the promise of hope and reason to believe in redemption still yet. God wasn't about to break the promise He made to Adam and Eve in chapter 3, proving that He always has a plan. Can you imagine how despondent they must have been when their family fell apart in the absolute worst way? That's not even bringing into consideration how they must have been feeling about the prospect of a Savior coming into the world through them. **Truly when God says all things work out for the good, He means it doesn't He?**

After Seth followed in their pursuit of God, it wasn't long before his lineage established themselves as a people with hearts for God. They began to call on the name of the Lord, and we know where that always leads: **Romans 10:13**

A Quest for Restoration

Read Genesis 5:1-5 and consider the following points:

- In this summary passage, we're reminded yet again that God made Adam in His image, yet after the Fall, children were born in Adam's image. While God's image and design is still retained in Adam's DNA, their nature is fallen from the perfect ideal. This text captures the tension that would always exist in the hearts of all people. We bear the thumbprints of God, yet we suffer under the brokenness of Adam. At the heart of the redemption story is God's determination to restore us completely, which He would accomplish by sending Christ to bear the fallen image of Adam and restore us *from the grave up*; see **Romans 6:4**.

- Probably one of the saddest verses of the Bible is Genesis 5:5, “... *and Adam died.*” Adam was God’s first, choice creation, yet he never realized God’s dream. Adam makes it 930 years, while some of his descendants live even longer, namely Methuselah down in chapter 5:27. All of them fall just short of 1000 years, which the Bible puts forth as the perfect length of time on this earth. This is why that before this earth gives way to the New Heaven on Earth reality, there will be a prolonged period of peace that will last for this mythical, unreachable 1000 years (**Revelation 20:4**). Consider also how **2 Peter 3:8** describes a day with God - Could this be saying that this side of eternity no one has never obtained true, unfettered fellowship with God?

Walking With God

Finally, read **Genesis 5:21-23** and hear the story of Enoch. He was a man who become so close to God, so in-step with God, that God raptured him. This is one of two instances of this happening in the Old Testament, with the second being Elijah being given a chariot ride to Heaven.

Enoch embodies the close connection that we can all obtain with God this side of eternity, characterized in the New Testament as “walking in the Spirit”.

Romans 8:9-13 describes the new brand of life we find through the Holy Spirit’s indwelling, and **Galatians 5:22-26** details the kind of lifestyle we can come to know.

Questions about why God raptured Enoch can be answered in knowing that Enoch was taken the Heaven *the very same year* that Noah and family would’ve entered the ark. Thus, Enoch is a picture of the Church being taken from this world before the Tribulation, while Noah’s family is a picture of Israel being sheltered from the storm *but remaining on earth*. **Have you ever heard this before? Does this help make sense of why he was given special attention? Does this picture help you understand God’s future end-times plan?**

Before you dismiss, review all that you’ve learned tonight. What stands out the most from these passages? What else would you like to know about this time period of the ancient world?