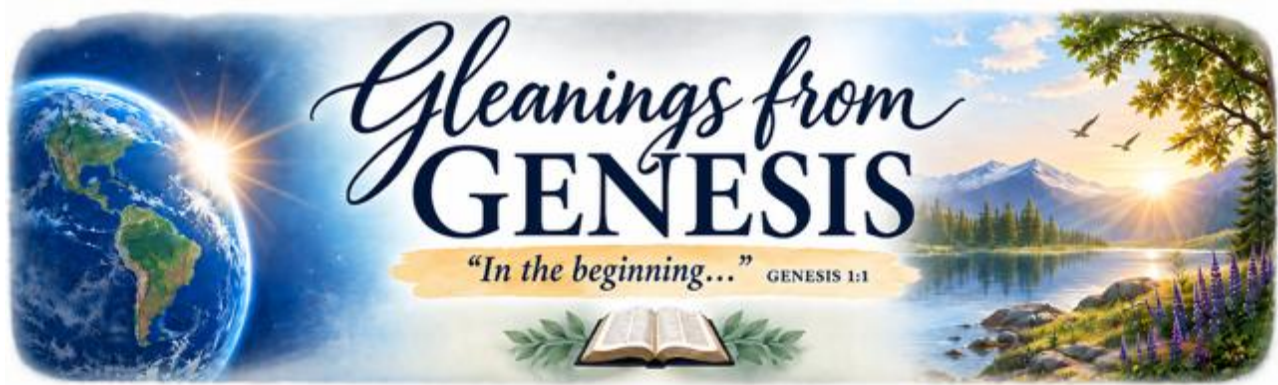




Genesis 4, 6 – When Sin Takes Over

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Introduction

As we look at some of this evil that overtakes the world, we learn more about God. We learn that God is a God of Judgment, a God of Wrath, who does not tolerate sin.

Isaiah 5:20: *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!*

It is still true that you can choose your sin, but you can't choose the consequences.

The First Murder

Genesis 4:1 – 7 (ESV)

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord." And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The Lord said 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 for you, and you must rule over it."

Why did God "have regard" for Abel's sacrifice but not Cain's?

Hebrews 11:1 – 4:

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.

Hebrews 11 is the Bible's Hall of Fame for people of great faith, and Abel is the first example of great faith. Abel's sacrifice was acceptable because he did so by faith. Abel had faith in what he hoped for but had not seen.

"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." (Genesis 3:15)

Abel offers his sacrifice in faith believing that God will keep his promise to destroy evil and would send a redeemer to rescue humanity.

God was not pleased with Cain's sacrifice because he was trying to impress God, to gain favor with God, not in faith, not to worship God. God could see the hearts of both Cain and Abel and therefore he could accept or reject the sacrifices based on God's standards.

We can see Cain's heart by his reaction when his sacrifice is rejected. There is no repentance on his part; no desire to correct his ways.

God tells Cain: *"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 for you, and you must rule over it"* (Genesis 4:7). This is God's warning to Cain. Cain could have changed the outcome of this sad story had he been willing to accept responsibility and recognize the problem with his sacrifice.

Cain will have nothing of repenting and seeing it God's way. He would rather be right than forgiven. He feels that he has not been treated right, throws a pity-party, and walks away.

Genesis 4:8 – 16

Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. ⁹Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" ¹⁰And the Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. ¹¹And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹²When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." ¹³Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. ¹⁴Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." ¹⁵Then the Lord said to him, "Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. ¹⁶Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

What do you think Cain thought he would gain by killing Abel?

1 John 3:12: *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.*

"Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay." (Adrian Rogers) Our culture trivializes sin; God does not.

Noah and the Flood

The story of Noah and the flood is another example of the consequences "when sin takes over."

We have made this story of Noah building the ark into an often lovely depiction of the ark, and the animals. But we need to focus on why there was a flood and what were the consequences of that flood.

Genesis 6:5 - 8

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.

Sin had taken over the entire world as it was known at that time. So bad that God makes a dramatic and consequential decision—to blot out man from the earth.

In verse 6 we are confronted with a conundrum. . . that the Lord regretted something he had done. If God is sovereign and knows and controls everything, how could he regret what he did?

First, the word translated as "regretted" expresses deep emotional pain and sorrow rather than a mistake or a lack of foresight. Also, the Bible often uses anthropomorphism language—that is, the Bible uses human

terms to help us understand God better. So, saying that God regretted that he had made man is using a human term to make it clearer for us humans.

Here are more examples of anthropomorphisms in the Bible:

Psalms 34:15: *The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are inclined to their cry.* (illustrates God's watchful care and attentiveness)

Exodus 33:20 – 23: God tells Moses, "You cannot see My face, for no one can see Me and live," but allows Moses to see his "back."

Psalms 8:3: *The heavens are the work of your fingers.* (uses a human hand to describe creation power)

We know that God cannot literally "regret" as we do, because he never makes a mistake. Again, we know that God never changes.

Malachi 3:6: *"For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed."*

Hebrews 13:8: *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*

James 1:17: Speaks of the Father of lights: *...with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*

Numbers 23:19: *God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind.*

Because every intent of the human heart was continually evil, God's grief moved him to act with justice, deciding to send the flood while preserving Noah.

The Days of Noah

The days of Noah were days of secular philosophy.

Genesis 6:5: *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.*

The days of Noah were days of scientific progress.

Genesis 6:4: *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 identity of the Nephilim is debated. They were giants or mighty men. Evidently they had great intellect. The Days of Noah reached a zenith of achievement; they built great cities.

The days of Noah were days of sexual perversion.

Jesus links the days of Noah with the days of Lot.

Luke 17:26 – 28: *"Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building."*

The days of Noah were days of selfish prosperity.

They had fullness of bread and many idols.

Why was Noah preserved and no others?

Genesis 6:9-10: *These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.*

Certainly there are people in our world who have one purpose in life, and that is to do evil, to stand against God and to have god-like power and use it for evil.

Genesis 6:12 - 14

And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. 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. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch."

How long did it take Noah and his sons to build the ark? Here are some clues:

Genesis 5:32: *After Noah was 500 years old, Noah fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth.*

Genesis 7:6: *Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth.*

It still doesn't tell us exactly how long it took to build the ark, but it could have been up to 100 years.

The Deadliest Event in History

This is the deadliest event in the history of mankind. It was ugly; there was nothing pretty about the Flood.

Recognizing how God hates sin gives us a renewed understanding of how costly redemption was and what God was willing to do to forgive our sins and deliver us from the wrath that we deserve. Amazing love! How can it be? That Thou, my God, would die for me?

Noah was righteous. What was his reward for being the one righteous man? The reward for Noah's righteousness was he was invited to get on the ark—to be saved from destruction.

What is your reward for righteousness? Do you feel you deserve a good life, an easy life, a successful life because you've been living right, you've been praying, you've been obedient? Do you expect your righteousness to get you favor from God?

Your reward and mine for righteousness is that God has put you on the Ark of Jesus Christ. This sin-cursed world will never reward us for righteous living, just the opposite. But we have a reward :

Psalms 119:2 – 3: *Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways!*

Luke 11:28: *But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"*

Those Left Behind

We don't often think of those outside of the ark, but we should. It is God's greatest outpouring of his wrath—at least up until now.

Even as the rain started to come down, people were still did not believe Noah. Do you have a child or a mate or a friend who is persistent in not believing in Christ? You don't have the power to make that person reject sin and accept Christ. You can't drag anyone into God's kingdom.

In the 600th year of Noah's life, God blotted out every living thing – only Noah and those in the ark were left. How could a loving God do this? The more appropriate question is: How can a righteous God not do this?

This story is a reminder of how God deals with sin. We all deserve the waters of the flood – the wrath of God. But God prepared the ark to preserve his loved ones.

Think about the suffering that went on outside the ark, and how Noah is preserved in the ark. Then come to the cross, and the wrath of God that was poured out on Jesus Christ was of greater significance and magnitude than all the suffering that went on outside the ark.

Jesus took the wrath for our sins, so that you and I could be rescued from the wrath of God.

1 John 4:10: *In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

Isaiah 53:10: *Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.*

2 Corinthians 5:21: *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Genesis 7—the Flood—is a tale of horrifying judgment and glorifying redemption. Your life will be characterized by one or the other.