

Sin and Promise

Genesis 3-15

INTRODUCTION: If you could go and visit any decade of your life which would it be? How many say the 80's? 90's? any 60's? That's the crowd you have to watch out for...

Here's the point – in each of us there is a longing for a time long since gone. I don't mean the 80's I mean LONG since gone.

- You sense it every time you go to a funeral. It's not supposed to be like this.
- You sense it when you work and find your labor difficult and you know deep down, it's not supposed to be like this.
- You sense it when you try to make marriage work and you find it terribly difficult at times.
- You sense it when you feel distant from God.

C.S. Lewis compares this reality to, *“the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited.”*

You see we were born for Eden. But Eden is long sense gone and now we are looking forward to a new city - whose builder and maker is God.

Several things are set into motion in Genesis 3 -

Genesis 3:24 (ESV)

²⁴ He drove out the man, and at the **east of the garden** of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

Genesis 4:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, **east of Eden.**

So you see this movement Eastward away from Eden and Away from God's manifest presence.

Interestingly - when Moses built the tabernacle and later David the temple - they always faced the East as to receive those who wanted to return to God.

But we see 3 things developed in Genesis that will wind through the rest of the Scriptures until they culminate in Revelation.

1. The Progression of Sin -
2. The Promise of God -

1. The Progression of Sin -

So what started as eating forbidden fruit - in one generation develops in to Brother killing Brother.

In Chapter 6 we see this very obscure passage -

Genesis 6:1–4 (ESV)

¹ When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them,
² the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.

3 Primary Interpretations – Only one is correct, but I think that it would be helpful for you to hear all three.

1. Complete Disregard for the Sanctity of Marriage –

a. Motivated by beauty rather than some higher ideal. ² that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful;

b. Polygamy - they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.

A basic cheapening of what marriage was meant to be, ultimately a portrait of Christ and the Church.

2. The Descendants of Seth married the Descendants of Cain

Some say that is what is being referenced in verse 2 - ² that the sons of God (Seth's Godly descendants) saw that the daughters of men (Cain's ungodly descendants) were beautiful

Thus they were unequally yoked, corrupting whatever Godly influence Seth had on the earth.

3. The oldest and most prominent view holds that man had become so wicked that the women were either cohabiting with Demons or Demon possessed men.

That is why verse two uses the phrase - ² .. the sons of God *That phrase is always used to refer to the Angelic race.*

Demons took various wives created a literal spawn of Satan. That would explain verse 4 ⁴ The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore *children* to them. Those were the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown.

Now, I understand that is a pretty wild interpretation, but before you write it off look at the larger context of scripture.

Jude 6 speaks of ... angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

So, fallen angels – demons did something so wicked and evil that God has kept them in bondage until the day of the final judgment.

1 Peter 3:19–20 speaking of a time where Christ ...went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, ²⁰ who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah.

So there we see that in the days of Noah evil spirits did something so bad they were kept in prison.

NOW - keep in mind that when Lot is in Sodom and the Angels visit the city to deliver Lot... what did the men of the city say? Give them to us that we may know them intimately. Do you see where they got the idea that that was even possible?

WHY? Why would demons do such a thing? God had promised that a Messiah would come from the line of Eve ([Genesis 3:15](#)) who would crush the head of the serpent, Satan. So, the demons were possibly attempting to prevent this by polluting the human bloodline, making it impossible for a sinless Messiah to one day be born.

Whatever was happening here it was just one of the reasons God said in **Genesis 6:5–7 (ESV)**

⁵ The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth.

Do you see how great of an understatement that is? Evil is running rampant...

5b. and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷ 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.”

FLOOD - Practically every ancient civilization tells the story of a great flood. Over 200 such stories have been discovered around the world. Ranging from South America, North America - Asia, Africa, India, the Middle East

Not only that but the essence of the stories have 10 parts in common.

- 1 Is there a favored family? 88%
- 2 Were they forewarned? 66%
- 3 Is flood due to wickedness of man? 66%
- 4 Is catastrophe only a flood? 95%
- 5 Was flood global? 95%
- 6 Is survival due to a boat? 70%
- 7 Were animals also saved? 67%
- 8 Did animals play any part? 73%
- 9 Did survivors land on a mountain? 57%

10 Were birds sent out? 35%

This is a horrible story - if you really wrestle with it - it will shake you. As I said last week I've never understood why we decorate our kids rooms with this stuff... it's like using the 4 horsemen of the apocalypse as a play mobile. Johnny... see the little green horsey... his name is pestilence...

Noah is so extraordinary that if you were reading the story for the first time - and knew nothing of the bible you might expect this is the promised one... the male descendant of Eve who would crush the head of Satan.

But then he gets off the Ark and what happens? He's gets drunk and naked.

By the way - every time you think there is a human hero it seems that there is always a fatal flaw.

- Abraham follows God by faith, but then he shares his wife with two Kings.
- David slays Goliath, then he is slain by lust.
- Solomon - the wisest man to ever live makes some of the most foolish decisions.

And on an on it goes...

ILLUSTRATION: I'll never forget riding in a cab in Chicago and having a conversation with the driver. Asking him what he understood the message of christianity to be. He said, "well I guess the bible is a story of good guys and bad guys and we are supposed to try to be one of the good guys". I started showing him all of the character flaws in the so called good guys. Then I said, you see there are no good guys - the bible is a story of bad guys and JESUS.

So we see the effect of sin...

2. The Promise of God -

The lens begins to zoom in from the entire human race... down to one man and his family - the man's name is Abram. The rest of the Old Testament will be concerned with the descendants of this one man.

As a matter of fact the three most prominent religions on our planet trace their roots back to this man. Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

Genesis 12:1-3 (ESV)

¹ Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Abram did something amazing - he went... without knowing the destination, Abram followed God and wandered in the wilderness...

About a decade passes...still no land...no children....Abram is in his 80's

Gen. 15...

¹ After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." ² But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³ And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir."

⁴ And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; **your very own son** shall be your heir." ⁵ And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ⁶ **And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.**

So he didn't just believe IN God - he believed God. There's a difference. You can't believe God unless you believe IN God - but you can believe IN God and not believe God. Make Sense?

⁷ And he said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." ⁸ But he said, "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" ⁹ He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." ¹⁰ And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. ¹¹ And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

Ok, so God didn't tell him to cut them in half but he did... why? Because he knew exactly what was going on. This was the prescription for a covenant.

In Abraham's day - when two Kings made a covenant this is what they would do - they would arrange a sacrifice like this and the two kings would walk through the pieces as if to say - may what happened to these animals happen to us if we break this covenant. May we be torn asunder and may the birds feast on our carcasses if we break covenant.

¹² As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³ 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.

He is foretelling about the Egyptian captivity we will read about in Exodus.

14 But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. 15 As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. 16 And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

17 When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.

These are very difficult words for Hebrew scholars to translate - but they are the same as the words used to describe God's appearance on Mt. Sinai and the same as the Pillar of smoke and fire used to describe God's guiding Israel in the wilderness. So it's the Skakina glory of God.

18 On that day the Lord made a **covenant** with Abram, saying, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.

God himself makes the Covenant - and he alone walks through the pieces. As if to say - I am I alone am responsible for this covenant. I will see to it that it is honored.

Now that word Covenant is very important and you will see it again and again in the scriptures.

There is a sign for Abraham - circumcision to show that he's trusting in the covenant.

Then as the story progresses... there is a promise of a New Covenant. This covenant isn't ratified by walking through torn animals... but it is God himself in the person of Christ being torn upon the cross... it is ratified in his very blood. The sign of the covenant is not circumcision but baptism. Circumcision happened soon after physical birth baptism happens soon after spiritual birth.

Abraham has Isaac, Isaac has Jacob, Jacob has many sons - one of which is Judah... from Judah we are told the scepter will not depart. From Judah ultimately David is born - we are told that a root (or descendant) from David will spring forth to deliver the people - are you beginning to see why those genealogies are so important?