

The On-going Effect of Sin

Gen. 4-5-6

Introduction:

1. Our study last Sunday evening was entitled “Damaged but Restored.”
2. In that lesson we observed that when God completed His creation Gen. 1:21 says, “Behold, it was very good” (ESV).
3. Sin entered the picture in Gen. 3 and the whole of creation was damaged. Death and deterioration entered the picture. Death both spiritual and physical began. Oh, Adam and Eve did not die physically the moment they ate of the forbidden fruit, but the deterioration process had begun.
 - a. Their relationship with God was changed.
 - b. Their relationship with one another was changed.
 - c. Their relationship with the creation was changed.
4. In a gracious move, God separated them from the tree of life lest they “eat and live forever” (3:22) in this deteriorating circumstance. Here He began a restoration process. He would come to help man. He came and demonstrated His power to restore by healing the sick, making the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, and the dead to come back to life. He would prove His gracious intervention by raising Jesus from the dead. A new creation, a new heavens and new earth wherein righteousness dwelt was in His vision. There would be no more crying. No more pain. No more deterioration. And access to the tree of life would be restored. Damaged but restored!!
5. But there is a lot of history after Gen. 3 and all of it is reflective of God’s original plan of creation.

Discussion:

- I. The deteriorating effect of sin in relationships is evidenced in Gen. 4 with the account of Cain and Abel.
 - A. Cain was angry when His offering was not regarded and Abel’s was (4-7).
 1. Both Cain and Abel faced a decision in their relationship with God. They could do well and their countenance be lifted up or they could not do well and sin would master them.
 2. Abel chose to do well. Cain chose not to.
 - B. The result was that Cain killed Abel. The consequence was that the ground would not yield its strength to him. He would become a vagrant and wanderer on the earth. Additionally, he was hidden from the face of God (14). He expected that whoever found him would kill him (14).
 - C. Cain was able to reproduce (17ff). Everyone is concerned about where he got his wife. The text simply does not say. Gen. 5:4 says that Adam had other sons and daughters and so perhaps his wife was a sister?

II. Gen. 5 indicates that physical death continued one generation after another.

- A. The first two verses remind us of man created in the likeness of God. Is this image perpetuated in Adam and Eve's descendants?
- B. The answer is "Yes." Seth was in the likeness and image of Adam (3-5).
- C. So while the image of God in man may be marred it is still there, perpetuated from Adam.
- D. And yet, death is perpetuated too. This is indicated by the repeated phrase, "And he died." Eight times this phrase is repeated in Gen. 5. There is one exception. Verse 24 says, "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him."
 - 1. What does that mean?
 - 2. What is clear is that His "walking with God" somehow resulted in his being an exception to the "and he died" phrase. God is somehow associated with an exception to the "and he died."
- E. How come these people lived such a long time? No answer is given.

III. Gen. 6 generalizes the effect of sin when it says, "Every intent of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually."

- A. The big question in 1-4 is, "Who are these sons of God and daughters of men?" Many theories exist.
 - 1. Perhaps these sons of God are spirit beings (angels) that interrelate with the humans and giants are produced.
 - 2. Perhaps these sons of God are humans that are doing well (like Abel, Seth, Enoch) and the daughters of men are those who are not doing well (like Cain, Lamech, and others).
 - 3. Why are they divided into "the **sons** of God" and the "**daughters** of men?"
- B. The chief point is clear in verse 5-7, and that is that "every thought and intention of man's heart is only evil continually." This introduces the flood and God's intention to curb the problem of rampant wickedness and so the flood is introduced.
 - 1. Verse 11 says, "The earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence."
 - 2. Just how bad was it? How does it compare with the corruption of our age? Was it worse? Is the corruption in our age just as bad, not so bad, worse? We really do not know the answer to that. It was bad enough that God said, "I will blot out man on the earth . . . for I am sorry that I have made them."
 - 3. Sometimes comparing and making assumptions we conclude that God is about ready to destroy the earth again. Fact is we just do not know.
- C. What we do know is the world of Noah's time was destroyed.

IV. In all the tragedy, we see glimmers of hope scattered throughout the text. And we are reminded of God's gracious dealings with man. Additionally, the genealogical record begins to follow a particular line.

- A. God created everything and it was very good.

- B. After sin there is this vague statement in Gen. 3:15: “He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”
 - 1. What does it mean? We are not exactly sure, but bruising the head of the serpent and only being bruised on the heel is suggestive of some positive element.
 - 2. A little glimmer of hopefulness comes through future offspring.
- C. God making skins to cover man’s nakedness suggests some empathy from God to cover our shame.
- D. Being removed from access to the tree of life lest we eat and live forever in the deteriorating circumstance. A glimmer of hope for the future rather than just being stuck in a dying state. Or being destroyed immediately.
- E. When Cain is angry God reminds him of his choice to do right and be lifted up. When Cain feels threatened by death from others should he be found. God protects his life.
- F. God appointed additional offspring for Adam after the murder of Abel (4:25).
- G. And then there is this interesting statement: “At that time people began to call upon the name of the Lord” (4:26). Following the birth of Seth there is seemingly a new direction.
 - 1. Some may interpret “calling on the name of the Lord” as prayer.
 - 2. But it may be more than that. It seems that men are turning toward God rather than away as Cain had done. And the transition point is the birth of Seth. More on this in a moment.
- H. With the genealogical record of chapter 5 there is this exception to “and he died.” Enoch “walked with God, because God took him.”
- I. Then with the flood Noah and his family are the exceptions. “Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.” And so, God’s graciousness is evidenced.
- J. And then after the flood there is the rainbow with the promise that God will never again destroy the earth with a flood.
- K. And there are sacrifices. Cain and Abel. Noah. And God positively responding (4:4; 8:20). All the way through the text we are seeing glimmers of hope founded upon God’s gracious disposition.
- L. One other thing. There is this following of a particular genealogical history.
 - 1. Adam.
 - 2. Seth. “Men began to call on the name of the Lord.”
 - 3. What about the descendants of Cain? It’s like they begin to evaporate from the text and the descendants of Seth are followed up on.
 - 4. Adam and Eve had other sons and daughters (5:4) but the descendants of Seth are followed up on and the others evaporate from the limelight.
 - 5. Gen. 5 is all about the descendants of Seth.
 - 6. It leads up to Noah.
 - 7. Noah will have three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. The genealogical record will follow Shem. Why???? Terah, one of the descendants of Shem, will become the father of Abraham. Just so you know . . . Luke’s account of the genealogy of Jesus traces back through Abraham, Shem, Noah, Seth, to Adam, the son of God. Isn’t that interesting???

Conclusion:

1. What are we to make of all this?
2. There are severe consequences to sin.
3. Yet, we see evidence of God's kindness. Sacrifices are favorable as soothing aromas to God.
4. Destruction is not inevitable. There is opportunity for life, but there is a decision to be made. If we do well our countenance will be lifted up. If we walk with God good things happen. If we call on the Lord there are positive results.
5. Favor with the Lord can be found that leads to the preservation of life.
6. There is something unfolding here in the genealogical record that provides hope.