

THE EXPANSION OF EVIL: BEFORE THE FLOOD

FRACTURED (GENESIS, PART 2) · GENESIS 4:17-6:8 · MARCH 5, 2023 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

“The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.” (Genesis 6:5)

The Internal Conflict of Humanity (4:17-26)

- Cain and future human accomplishment: a city, technology, the arts
- Lamech: a representative of vengeance beyond Cain
- Seth: a new beginning and the worship of the LORD God

The Generations (5:1-32)

- The story of Genesis as a story of God working across the generations (toledot)
- The generation from Adam to Noah
- Examples to explore:
 - Enoch who walked with God
 - Lamech and his son, Noah

The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men (6:1-4)

- Who are the sons of God?
 - Godly descendants of Seth versus descendants of Cain?
 - Angelic beings of some sort?
 - Dynastic tyrants descended from Lamech?
- The absolute contamination of even the best humanity

The Response of God to the Expansion of Evil (6:5-8)

- God sees
- God grieves
- God acts
- God extends favor

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When you look at the world, do you think evil is increasing or decreasing? Why or why not?
2. This weekend we continue our preaching series, “Fractured,” that corresponds with the journey of Lent and also continues our walk through Genesis by looking at Genesis 4-11.

This week we look at a long stretch of Scripture from Genesis 4:17-6:8. Begin your study in prayer by asking God to speak to you through His Word, and then, whether you’re on your own or with a group, read that entire Scripture text aloud.

3. What stands out to you about Cain and his descendants as described in Genesis 4:17-24?
4. Some scholars see a subtle critique in 4:17, 20-22) of the assumption that human development (cities, technology, the arts) is automatically a good thing. What do you think about this?
5. 4:25-27 brings a sort of “restart” for Adam and Eve. What do you notice about this new generation and what follows?
6. Genesis 5 provides an important connection between Adam and Eve by use of the toledot (“This is the account of...”) structure. As you read through this chapter, what captures your attention about some of these people and their lives?
7. Sometimes we skip over the genealogies in the Bible. Why might it be valuable for the original readers of them? What does it communicate to us today?
8. Genesis 6:1-4 is a very odd portion of this story. Summarize in your own words what happens here. Why might this be significant to the story of the expanding reach of evil?
9. With 6:5-8, we receive a deep commentary from God about the state of humanity. How would you describe the situation of humanity as recorded in verse 5?
10. What do you notice about God in verses 5-8? What does God notice, feel, and do?
11. Why might verse 8 be important, not only for the upcoming story, but also for our understanding of God and what God is doing?
12. What is one thing God is revealing to you through this study? If you’re on your own, write that down, pray over it, and share it with someone this week. If you are with a small group, share your answers with one another before closing in prayer.

DIG DEEPER:

- Memorize Genesis 5:1-2 or 6:5
- Consider reading the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Romans, chapters 1-7, as a helpful background about the expansion of evil in the human race
- Watch the Bible Project video series, “Intro to the Bible”: bibleproject.com/explore/category/how-to-read-bible-introduction/
- Read one of the following:
 - Tremper Longman, *How to Read Genesis*
 - Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*