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|  | Last week, we saw that Adam and Eve chose to disobey God. The result of their actions was death: separation from God, and ultimately, separation of life from their bodies. In the first few pages of the Bible, we have discovered the cause of death - sin. The remainder of the Bible contains the amazing story of how God is seeking to bring people back into a perfect relationship with Himself.  The greatest sin of all : rejecting the almighty God. |
|  | As we said last week, when Lucifer (and people) walk away from the light of God, there is only one place to go: into the darkness of rebellion and sin. |
|  | We saw three clues in Genesis 3 about what God would do to bring people back to Himself:  1) He is came down to the sinful man and calling out to him, giving him the opportunity to repent  2) Because of sin, we see thorns and thistle grow up where good fruit should have been. We didn’t focus specifically on this last week (as a clue), but you will see later that thorns are a painful reminder of sin.  3) God killed and animal as a substitute death to cover the sin of man. |
|  | In this lesson, we will look at three **true** stories which show us how far men will go away from God. Unless God restrains evil, it will quickly consume us (and we will consume each other). |
|  | Since they were both separated from God by sin, Cain and Abel offered sacrifices to try and please God. In the garden, God had set the pattern of sacrifices by killing a lamb to cover the sin and shame of Adam. But Cain decided to do something different. He was a farmer, and chose to offer his best vegetables to God. To him, this seemed like a good thing – giving your best to please God    But God had already set the pattern of the right thing to do – the blood of the lamb was needed. Even though the animal sacrifice could not take away their sins, it demonstrated agreement with God’s truth that sin results in death. In pride, people try to please God with their own ideas and efforts – we often call this “religion” – man’s effort to save himself. |
|  | Note that God is warning Cain about the temptation to add one sin to another. Sin isn’t a passive enemy – it actively pursues people, taking them further away from God. But Cain already had a plan to cover up his sin…    ***Genesis 4:9-10***    Why does God call out to Cain? – Once again, we see God giving man an opportunity to confess and repent. We also see another reminder that blood represents life – figuratively, it cries out from the ground. Cain was cursed for his actions, made to be a “fugitive” on the earth (separation). |
|  | We have a very sinful tendency to drag God’s glorious majesty down to human level (**Psalm 50:21**). When we do this, we assume that we can satisfy His expectations with our religious activities. But the actual fact is much more serious – our only hope is to submit completely to His way.  When we forget God’s holiness and awesome greatness, we move from an accurate fear of the Lord (**Proverbs 9:10**) to acting as though He needs our collaboration (Isaiah 40:14). Like Cain, we demonstrate our rejection of His definitions of good/evil and replace them with our own.  Inventing religions is a global practice, but it does not solve our biggest sin problem. |
|  | The sad change: Initially, men were created in the image of God, but now, they inherit the sinful genetics of their parents (all the way down to us). |
|  | Notice that God sees the actions of mankind and the condition of their hearts. How did God feel about the wickedness on the earth?  God is creator, owner, and absolute authority. He had every right to destroy His creation, and would be perfectly just to do so. |
|  | In Genesis 6:13-22, God tells Noah that He is going to destroy the people on the earth as well as the earth itself. God tells Noah to make an ark – a huge barge (522 Railroad Boxcars). God tells him exactly what to do, designing a very stable vessel. Over the next 100 years, Noah did everything just as God commanded. |
|  | On the appointed day, God brought the animals to Noah’s ark and shut them inside of the only safe place on earth.  God brought the animals to Noah (**verse 15**), and after they were all in the ark, God shut the door. In verses 17-24 we learn that the water came from above and below the earth (**verses 11,12**) 40 days, covering the mountains to a depth of more than 7 meters. Every person, land animal, and bird that was not inside of the ark died. The waters flooded the earth for 150 days.  God does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked. |
|  | This story is not isolated to the Bible – there are over 270 flood stories like this in cultures all over the earth. Much evidence from geology shows that there was a major flood event, including canyon formation without deltas, sharp layers of sedimentary rock, folded without cracking, and rapid burial/fossilization of plants and animals (including ones that penetrate multiple layers of rock). I can share more information later if interested. |
|  | A recent discovery in China shows the same reality that is found all over the world – geology indicates a massive flood event that resulted in huge, mixed fossil deposits all over the world. |
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|  | What does it take to make a fossil? When an animal or plant dies, it lies on the ground (or just under the surface) and rots away.    To make a fossil requires rapid burial, high pressure and very special conditions. Like those in the great flood… |
|  | It is interesting to consider the fact that, every year, we see thousands of species go extinct, but we never see new ones emerging (i.e. we don’t see evolution happening, we see the opposite).    I love their conclusion: a singular event caused all of these diverse fossils, and it was one that had never been seen before or would be after. |
|  | Throughout the Bible, you will see pictures of God showing judgment and mercy (e.g. warning Noah and closing the door). Here, we see another clue about God’s plan – in the midst of judgment, He provides a place for men to survive. But the only safe place of survival is the one that He provides. |
|  | After the flood, were people better? No, the inclination of the human heart is still evil.  What command did God give to Noah and his descendants? – God told the people to multiply and spread out over the earth. But man desires to do their own thing…  What does this say about the language on the earth at this time? (maybe everyone spoke Chinese ☺). What did the people want to do and why did they want to do this? God told them to spread out, but they wanted to stay together to make a name for themselves. |
|  | As I said earlier, the most serious sin of all is to reject the Creator God of the universe. When we choose to seek our glory instead of His, we are actually doing just that – putting ourselves into His place, making ourselves God. |
|  | Who is the *“Us”* in verse 7? What did the Lord say about the people’s plan? What was the result of God’s introduction of confusion? Once again, the people directly disobeyed God. Why didn’t He just destroy them? This is another good example of God balancing His judgment with His mercy. When I struggle with Chinese, I must remember that our language difference is a result of His mercy!    The people gathered there because they did not want to be scattered over all the earth as God commanded. These men were full of pride! They should have been interested in exalting God’s name, not their own. |
|  | Linguists tell us that, apart from this story of Babel, there is no good explanation for the diversity of languages that exist on the earth.  Studies have determined that there are about 6900 distinct languages around the world, originating from about 15 unique “protolanguages.”  Studies have also shown that, over time, language tends to devolve from complex to simple, not the other way around. |
|  | Tonight, we saw three stories from the Bible demonstrating the evil of mankind. If humans are allowed to do whatever they want, they quickly descend into evil and away from God.  But even though God should have destroyed them, God did not. He continued to show mercy over and over. And He continues to show mercy to us… |
|  | Modern psychology assumes that our big problems are outside of us: societal pressures, financial hardships, unfairness, drugs and alcohol, temptations, etc. It then tries to reach inside of a person and use their “inner strength” to achieve a solution.  But this is not the reality we experience and is certainly not the message of the Bible. The Bible is clear that we all are born with a sin nature, “magnetizing us” to opportunities for sinful actions around us.  Our sinful nature (on the insider) can only be overcome by a greater power from God (on the outside). |
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|  | Yes, there is evil (bad news). But there is also hope.  Remember Ezekiel 33:11 – God does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked. He has a plan to rescue sinful people… |