

From Adam to the Flood and the Tower of Babel

Genesis 4:1-11:9

You may recall last week we mentioned that **chapter 4** is an extension of the **beginning of human history** and **Earth's first people**. It falls in that **text** from **Genesis 2:4-4:26**. So **chapter 4** which deals with **Adam and Eve's sons**, is part of the heading of **2:4** and the **family line of Adam**. A break in the text will ensue at **5:1** and begin to trace **Adam's descendants** with a **genealogy** down to chapter **6:8**, where it will pause to discuss **Noah's family** and the account of the **Flood** from **6:9-29**. There is another break in the text at **10:1-11:9** that will discuss the **descendants of Noah's sons**, the **Table of Nations** and the **Tower of Babel**.

Today's Text – Genesis 4:1-11:9 Outline

- Adam and Eve's sons ([4:1-26](#))
- Adam's descendants ([5:1-6:8](#))
 - The family line from Adam to Noah ([5:1-32](#))
 - The wickedness of humanity ([6:1-8](#))
- Noah's descendants ([6:9-9:29](#))
 - Noah and the flood ([6:9-9:19](#))
 - The cursing of Canaan ([9:20-29](#))
- The descendants of Noah's sons ([10:1-11:9](#))
 - The clans, languages, lands, and nations ([10:1-32](#))
 - The Tower of Babel ([11:1-9](#))

Adam and Eve's sons ([4:1-26](#))

Notice here the **contrast** between chapter 3 and 4, which reveal the **destructive nature of sin**. In **chapter 3**, **sin** has caused a **rift** in the **relationship** between **God and man**. In **chapter 4** **sin** has caused a **rift** in the **relationship** between **man and man**. This **sinfulness spirals down** until **all humanity** has become **corrupted** by sin and its **effects** (Gen 6:5-6), bringing the **wrath** of **God** in the **Flood** in **chapter 7**.

Chapter 4 continues to **follow** the **family line** from **Adam** to his **sons**, but also takes up **theme** of the **enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent** (Gen 3:15). God **clearly disapproves** of **Cain's worship**, and Cain's **angry response** reveals his **heart**, as **God** calls him to **repentance**. Instead, he **murders** his brother **Abel** the righteous one, and is met by **God's judgment** and

curse to be a perpetual **wanderer**. This **spirals down** in the **line of Cain** until His descendants are apparently **7 times worse** than Cain, as **Lamech** his descendant seeks **vengeance** and **murders** a man for merely striking him (Gen 4:23-24). Clearly **Cain** and his **descendants** are **NOT** the **seed** of the **woman**, but rather the **seed** of the **serpent** (1 John 3:11). Their virtues are not extolled, but rather their **vices** are highlighted and **spoken** of with **contempt**. Also, here we have our **first persecution** of the **righteous** by the **wicked**, Cain **killing** his brother Abel from **envy** of **God's approval** of his **worship** (1 John 3:12). This is a **major theme** in the Bible all the way to the Book of Revelation.

Hebrews 11:4 - 4 **By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts**, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks. NASB

Important notes on Chapter 4:

- **Worship of God is present** and apparently we have faithful worship of God beginning in **Adam's** own family (4:4-5, 25)
 - **Abel's worship pleases God**
 - **Cain's worship does not please God**, angry response to God (4:5-7)
- **God calls Cain to repentance** but instead he **murders** his **brother** (4:6-16)
- **Cain** and his line are **not** the **woman's seed** (4:17-24)
- **Eve is apparently looking for the "seed"** who will come, and is glad when Seth is given, she says, "**25 God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.**"
- **Call on the name of the Lord**, *Bible Exposition Commentary* - *A remarkable thing is recorded in connection with the birth of this boy: at that time, people began to gather together to worship God, proclaim His name, and pray. There was a revival of public worship and believing prayer as the descendants of Seth met together in the name of the Lord. While the worldly Cainites were boasting of their strength and valor (4:23-24), the godly Sethites were giving glory to the name of the Lord.*
- **God's redemptive plan** moves forward from Adam's line down through **Seth**

Adam's descendants (5:1-6:8)

Genesis 5:1-32 is essentially a **genealogy** naming only one person in each generation of the **righteous line** of **Adam** down to **Noah**. This is in **contrast** to the **wicked line** of **Seth** who were named in **4:17-24**. In this **godly line** of **Seth**, God continues His **redemptive plan** tracing the **family line** from **Adam to Noah's sons**,

Shem, Ham, and Japeth. See here **God's sovereign grace** and **choice** of this **family**, the line of the **"seed" of the woman**, to bless and **keep them** down through the **generations** and bring **His plan** to fruition.

Important notes on Chapter 5:

5:1 - This is the book of the **generations of Adam**

5:32 - **Noah's sons** (Shem, Ham, and Japeth)

5:27 - **Methuselah lived 969 years....** people **before the Flood** lived for a very **long time** compared to **after the Flood**

5:22-24 – **Enoch never died** and is described as having **"walked with God"** and apparently **never died** but was taken up from the earth by God

Hebrews 11:5 - 5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; and **he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.** NASB

5:29 - **Noah's name** apparently means **"rest"**... **"29 This one shall give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the Lord has cursed."** This is an indication of the **remarkable changes** to the earth that take place **after the Flood**.

Genesis 6:1-8 highlights the **exceeding depravity** that **humanity** has descended to, including some **terrible perversion** with the **"the sons of God... and the daughters of men (6:4)**. Whatever this perversion was, it produced the **Nephilim**, meaning **"fallen ones,"** who were the **children born** through this **perversion**. This is part of the **great depravity** that is described in these **8 verses**, which depravity is the **reason why** God **destroyed** the earth and all **living things** on it **(6:5-7)**, save Noah and family, in the **Flood**. God was **greatly grieved** at the **depravity of humanity (6:6)**, yet by **sovereign grace** decides to **save Noah** and his **family** who are said to have **"found favor in the eyes of the Lord" (6:8)**.

Nephilim Controversy

There are **2 popular views** concerning who these **Nephilim** are and what is going on here.

Genesis 6:1-4 - 6 Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. 3 Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days

shall be one hundred and twenty years." 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. NASB

The first is that **“the sons of God”** are **men** from the **godly line** of **Seth** and **“the daughters of men”** are from the **wicked line** of **Cain**. In this view the Nephilim are simply great warriors and rulers who are the **“mighty men who were of old, men of renown”** (6:4). This they argue **fits the context** of former chapters that are following these **two lines** of **descent**. The weakness of this view is that it doesn't account for the fact that the words for **“the sons of God”** are only used **4 other places** in Scripture (**Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7**) and always **refer to angels**. It also doesn't explain why this **intermingling** of **godly** and **wicked people** bear **offspring** who are **mighty warriors**, neither does it answer the **contrast** in the words of **“sons of God and daughters of men.”**

The second view is that **“the sons of God”** are **fallen angels** who are rebelling in a serious contemptible way to **intermingle** with the **human “daughters of men.”** So **heinous** is this **activity** that it is a **major factor** in **God destroying the earth** and the **people** upon it. Moreover, the reference to **“angels that sinned”** in **2 Peter 2:4-6** when **Peter refers to the Flood**, are these **“sons of God”** from Genesis 6 and because of their **sin intermingling** with **humans**, Peter says **“God cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment.”** They are also referred to in **Jude 6** where Jude **describes their sin** as **“angels who did not keep their own domain but abandoned their proper abode,”** so that God has kept them **“in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.”** The thought is that **God destroyed the earth** in the **Flood**, and **locked up** these **fallen angels** in **“pits of darkness”** until the final **“judgment of the great day.”** In this view the **Nephilim** are the **offspring** of this **intermingling** of **angels** and **people** and are giants, who are described as **“mighty men who were of old, men of renown”** (6:4). In Genesis 6:4 when it says, **“4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward,”** this afterward refers to **other Nephilim** alive **after the Flood** somehow, like **Og King of Bashan** (Deut 3:11) and **Goliath** of Gath and his brothers (1 Chron 20:4-8). This whole episode is seen as another **Satanic attack**, like the **murder of Abel**, seeking to **knock out** the **godly line** of the **seed** of the **woman** to prevent the Messiah from coming.

Noah's descendants (6:9–9:29)

Genesis 6:9-9:29 is focused on **Noah** and his **descendants** as it gives an **account** of the **Flood** which will bring about a **renewal** on the **earth**. This renewal is a type of the New Creation, or a **cleansing** of the **world** which had become so desperately depraved. Although the **land** is **cleansed** and **released** from its **earlier curse**, still the **human heart** is **depraved** (8:21) by **Original Sin**, which is clearly seen at the **end** of this **section** in the **cursing of Canaan**, Noah's grandson (9:25). This new section opens with a statement of **Noah's descendants**, but also a **reiteration** of humanity's **depravity** and of **Noah's favor** with God.

Genesis 6:9-12 - 9 These are the records of **the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.** 10 And Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 Now **the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence.** 12 **And God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.** NASB

Instructions for **building the ark**, **loading** it with the **animals** and a **warning** of the Flood's comprehensive **devastation** are given in **6:13-22**. This also includes an announcement of the **Noahic Covenant**, and **God's intention** to **save Him** and his **family** through the Flood.

Genesis 6:17-19 - 17 And behold, **I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish.** 18 **But I will establish My covenant with you;** and you shall enter the ark — you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives with you. NASB

What follows is a description of the **onset** of the **Flood**, its massive **devastation** and **global coverage** **7:6-24**, as well as its **receding** **8:1-12**, along with many detailed **chronological indicators** in **7:1-8:12**. Eventually the **earth dries up** and **Noah disembarks** the ark with his **family** and all the **animals** in **8:13-19**. Noah's first order of business was to **worship the Lord** with a **blood sacrifice** upon an **altar** using some of the **7 clean animal pairs** he brought onto the ark. After this, **God speaks** the words of the **Noahic Covenant** (8:20-9:17), including His **promise** to **never flood** the **earth again with water** (9:11) and the **rainbow sign** of the **covenant** (9:11-17). There is also an **apparent reordering** of the **seasons**, and a **removal** of the **curse** of the **ground** (8:21), with an intent to allow the **ground** to **produce fruitfully** for **humanity**, after this **great cleansing** of the **land** has happened (8:22).

Genesis 8:20-22 - 20 Then **Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on**

the altar. 21 And the Lord smelled the soothing aroma; and the Lord said to Himself, **"I will never again curse the ground on account of man,** for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. **22 "While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, And cold and heat, And summer and winter, And day and night Shall not cease."** NASB

Another **significant text** is the **requirement** for **capital punishment** for **homicide** (9:5-6), and also the clear statement allowing the **eating of animals**, including the **fear** and **dread** of man by the **animals** (9:2), an apparent **reversal** of the **pre-Flood** world. All of this in the context of **God blessing Noah** and his **sons**, repeated bookends in **9:1** and **9:7**.

Genesis 9:1-7 - 9 And **God blessed Noah and his sons** and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. 2 And **the fear of you and the terror of you shall be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given.** 3 Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant. 4 Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. 5 And surely I will require your **lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man.** 6 "Whoever sheds **man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.** 7 "And as for you, **be fruitful and multiply;** Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it." NASB

Now in the **post Flood world**, the **whole earth** is **populated** by **Noah** and his **sons**. **Noah** is the **third longest** living man in the story, living some **950 years**, and he becomes the **grandfather** of the entire **human race**.

Genesis 9:18-19 - 18 Now the **sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth;** and Ham was the father of Canaan. 19 These three were the sons of Noah; and **from these the whole earth was populated.** NASB

Although the **world** has had a **substantial cleansing** and **reordering** by **God**, nevertheless the **effects** of **Original Sin** and **human depravity** still remain in **Noah** and his **sons**, and the **entire human race** that **descends** from them. Whatever the activity was in the **episode** of **Noah's drunkenness** and **uncovering** that was **witnessed** by his grandson **Canaan** (9:20-4), it was of such **severe nature** that **Canaan** is **curled** by **Noah** (9:25), which would include **all his descendants**. See here **God in His sovereignty** ordering the **future of nations** according to His

eternal plan and **Decree**. **Canaan** and his **descendants** are **cursed** to be the **servants** of **Shem** and **Japeth**, but **Shem** and **Japeth** are **blessed** by **Noah 9:24-27**. This **prophecy** by **Noah** comes to **fruition** some **900 years** later when the **Shemites**, the **12 tribes** of **Israel**, entire the **Promised Land** in **Canaan** with the **Canaanites** being **subject** to **them** and largely **annihilated** by them. **God's plan** will move **forward** and the **people** of the **earth** must still look with **expectancy** for the **Promised Seed** of the **woman** to come and **restore humanity** to right relationship with **God**.

The descendants of Noah's sons (10:1–11:9)

Here after the **Flood** as the earth's people **descend** from **Noah** and his **sons**, the **nations** are **established** and the earth becomes **populated**. This section is often called the **Table of Nations**. Here we have a real **record** of **early history** naming the **family heads** and showing how things developed after the Flood and how humanity is divided into **different nations**. These are given in lists under the **headings** of **Noah's sons**, and the **geographical places** that their **families** came to **inhabit** in verses 5, 10, 19, 30. Through this narrative, the **family line** of **Shem** continues to be **traced** which will eventually lead down to **Terah** and his **son Abram**, who becomes the **friend** of **God**. By **God's own choosing** and covenant, **Abraham** becomes the **father** of the **faith**. This section of Scripture is **very profound**, as there is no other **record** of this time of **history** like it, explaining how the **nations descended** from the one man **Noah**.

Genesis 10:32 – 32 These are the **families of the sons of Noah**, according to their genealogies, **by their nations; and out of these the nations were separated on the earth after the flood**. NASB

A few important notes in chapter 10;

- Many of the **nations** that are named feature again later in the **Major** and **Minor Prophets** of the Old Testament
- **Ham's grandson Nimrod** is a prominent figure, becoming a **great ruler** and builder of cities, including the great cities of **Nineveh** in Assyria and the original site of **Babylon** or Babel in the land of **Shinar**.
- **Ham's son Canaan** comes to inhabit the **Promised Land** of ancient and modern **Israel**, whose family line becomes **corrupted** with **extreme immorality** and is targeted by God both in the **destruction** of **Sodom** and **Gomorrah** and also for the **Conquest** of **Israel** wherein God command's their annihilation.

- **Shem's grandson Eber** is where the term Hebrew is derived 10:21
- **Eber's son Peleg** is mentioned "**when the earth was divided,**" 10:25 is likely a reference to the confounding of the languages at the **Tower of Babel**

The Tower of Babel (11:1–9)

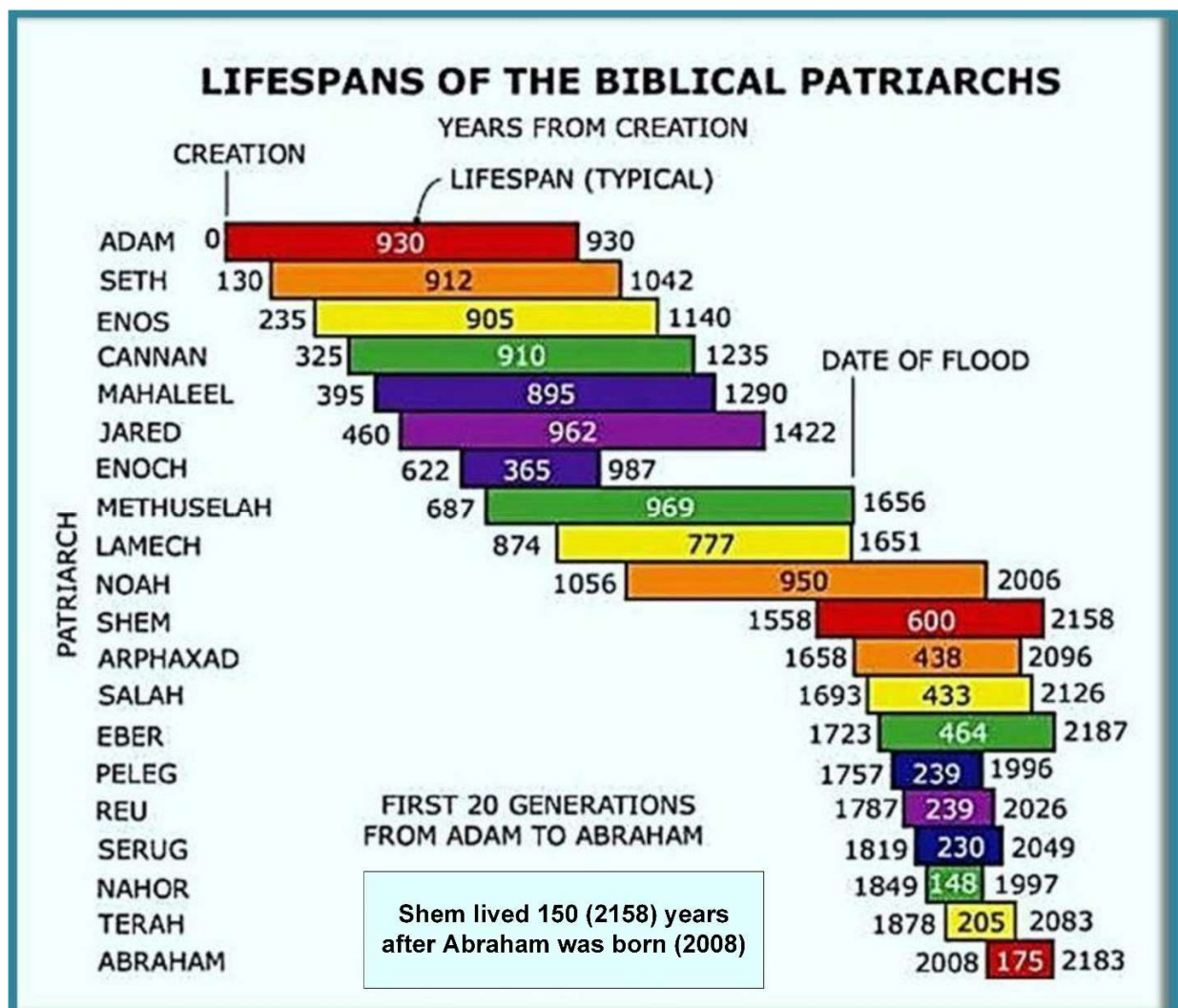
This story takes place as the **nations** had begun to **disperse**. The whole episode is one of **human autonomy** and **pride** seeking to make a "**name for themselves**" and **disregard God's mandate** to fill the earth and multiply. The *ESV Study Bible* notes; ***Come, let us build ourselves a city ... and let us make a name for ourselves. The Babel enterprise is all about human independence and self-sufficiency apart from God. The builders believe that they have no need of God. Their technology and social unity give them confidence in their own ability, and they have high aspirations, constructing a tower with its top in the heavens (11:4). Contrary to God's plan that people should fill the earth (e.g., 1:22, 28; 9:1, 7), the city-building project is designed to prevent the population from being dispersed over the face of the whole earth (11:4). By showing God's continued interest in his creatures, this episode provides the setting for the call of Abram out of this very region, to be the vehicle of blessing to the whole world. End quote.*** In response God comes to them and **confuses** their **language**, which produces the **dispersion** as **communication** became **very difficult**. **God's sovereignty** is again on **display** **guiding** the **nations** according to **His plan** and **His expected end**.

A few important notes in 11:1-9;

- The **one language** gave **humanity a unified purpose** in their **rebellion** against God.
- Notice the **arrogance of purpose**, "**4 Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name; lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.**"
- **11:6-7** – the Lord (Yahweh) said "**let Us go down and there confuse their language.**" This is reminiscent of **Genesis 1:27** where the **one God** says to Himself, "**let Us**"... but here Yahweh "**the Lord**" is used instead of Elohim
- **God's desired effect of dispersion** is the result, "**9 called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.**"

God's Attributes on Display

In the Old Testament one of the **themes** that is constantly present is **God's Sovereignty**, particularly how it is seen in His **Providence**. If God will control **promises** and **fulfilment** to **Israel**, He must **control all nations** and **history** itself. This is **clear** on the **pages** of the **Old Testament**. But many of **God's attributes** are in view including both **communicable** and **incommunicable attributes**. God does **everything He does** for the **manifestation** of His own **excellence** and **glory** as **God**. So as the **Old Testament** is God's **self-revelation**, the highest and **most important** revelation it gives us is a **vision of God Himself**. It shows us **who He is** and **what He is like!**



A chiasm in the story of Noah and the flood (Genesis 6.10-9.19):

- A Noah (10a)
- B Shem, Ham, and Japheth (10b)
- C Ark to be built (14-16)
- D Flood announced (17)
- E Covenant with Noah (18-20)
- F Food in the Ark (21)
- G Command to enter the Ark (7.1-3)
- H 7 days waiting for flood (4-5)
- I 7 days waiting for flood (7-10)
- J Entry to ark (11-15)
- K Yahweh shuts Noah in (16)
- L 40 days flood (17a)
- M Waters increase (17b-18)
- N Mountains covered (18-20)
- O 150 days waters prevail (21-24)
- P GOD REMEMBERS NOAH (8.1)
- O' 150 days waters abate (3)
- N' Mountain tops become visible (4-5)
- M' Waters abate (6)
- L' 40 days (end of) (6a)
- K' Noah opens window of ark (6b)
- J' Raven and dove leave ark (7-9)
- I' 7 days waiting for waters to subside (10-11)
- H' 7 days waiting for waters to subside (12-13)
- G' Command to leave the ark (15-17)
- F' Food outside the ark (9.1-4)
- E' Covenant with all flesh (8-10)
- D' No flood in future (11-17)
- C' Ark (18a)
- B' Shem, Ham, Japheth (18b)
- A' Noah (19)