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The Descent of Man **Genesis 4:16 - 5:32**

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PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: Cain has murdered his brother. Sin is showing itself present in every way and now we see the spread of mankind and we see both the glory of humanity and its inherent weakness and folly.

I. Introduction.

- A. It is worth reminding you why we are going through these 11 chapters.
- B. Today we will cover several hundred years and we will see many names that carry almost no meaning to most of us.
 - 1. But this is an important section as it serves to connect two major portions of the storyline, the creation and fall with the flood.
 - 2. In the Old Testament there are times where the Lord brings us down into the day by day, moment by moment existence of people and His dealings with them.
 - 3. Other times, He makes brief references to them, with little gems among the words—all leading up to the next big issue. And that is what we have here.
- C. We will consider two groups of people, the people of Cain and the people of Seth. But it is more than merely a contemplation of two lineages. It is the contemplation of the descent of mankind into the grip of sin and the power of sin, which is death.
- D. In considering these two groups of people there are a few interesting side points that are worth noting:
 - 1. Where did Cain get his wife?
 - 2. Where did these cities come from?
 - 3. How do we explain 4:22 and the presence of bronze and iron since those had not been discovered yet?

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4. Is the line of Seth the “godly line” as opposed to the evil line of Cain?

II. The people of Cain.

A. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord (16).

1. Sad and frightening words.

- a. There is much more here than him merely going out onto his wanderings. If you will, he was set adrift into the sea of sin and darkness.
- b. The first mention of this was where Adam and Eve hid from His presence as He sought them in the garden.
- c. Throughout the rest of the Old Testament, this phrase normally speaks of the blessing of God or the unique presence of God for the purpose of worshiping Him.
- d. It is used to describe a relationship of blessing and attention by YHWH. In the Old Testament the clearest expression of this would be the glory cloud seen in the wilderness wanderings.
- e. In the New Testament of course it is Jesus Christ Himself. This presence today is seen in the gathering of the Body of Christ on Sundays.

2. And Cain was sent away from that presence. No more blessings from God. No more expression of God’s presence in the worship of His people. Cain was gone.

- a. Think of Gen. 6:3, *“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.”*
- b. I think of passages like Romans 1 where mankind has spurned the presence of God in creation. Therefore the bible says, *“Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions.”* (1:24-26)

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- c. Or John 9:39-41, “*And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind." Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things, and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.*”
 - d. I tell you the truth, only a fool will push away the grace of God’s gospel, thinking that there will always be tomorrow. That today they will continue to sin. Cain was warned, he ignored it, he found himself in a horrid sin, and he was sent away from God forever.
3. Cain has a wife.
- a. Remember that we have no information regarding whether any other children were born already. Nor how old Cain was. Remembering that the people lived much, much longer the number of children would be extreme in today’s standards.
 - b. His sister or a niece. Not wrong nor forbidden at that time. Until Leviticus 18:6 this was not forbidden and would be a common practice. And Leviticus 18 does not forbid the marrying of cousins. And example if you want to see this is Numbers 36:1-11.
 - c. Remember that Seth was born when Adam was 130. He and Eve could easily have had 80 children by this time. Those children would be marrying and having children by then and those grandchildren would be having babies by then.
 - d. At the time of Cain’s going out was he already married? I think so.
 - (1) The bible does not say that he then got a wife, merely that after going out that he had relations with her.
 - (2) I doubt that any woman would have willingly gone with him into exile under the curse of God. But if he was already married, then the woman would have to go for what God has put together no man was to take apart.
 - (3) One man did the math and figured out that by the time that Adam died, assuming that only half of the children that would normally be born actually lived and grew to adulthood, and half of those actually married, and half of

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those had children, that there would have been over one million alive. Note that this is a very conservative number.

4. He goes into the land of Nod, literally a place of wandering.
 - a. What is interesting is that he then tries to undo what was his curse. He seeks to build a city.
 - (1) The word for city here simply means a couple of homes with a fence. But the way the verb is constructed for him building it implies that he never even completed it.
 - (2) His was a life of fear and wandering. He was a man who would never cast off that curse, for it was a curse from God.
 - b. He may start things, but he would never finish.

B. His children.

1. Mankind was made in the image of God. We were made to have fellowship with God. When we do not have that relationship with God we become spiritual wanderers, moving but with no direction. This is what you see in the lives of so many today.
2. When you have a culture that is void of God you have chaos. There is no goals that are clear. There is hopelessness. There is uselessness. There is sin, because the greatest joy for anyone is to be a love of God. But without that love, then we settle for a worship of pleasure. And this is what we see in his offspring.
3. But we can learn that man, because he still carries the image of God, can accomplish much even with out God.
 - a. Note that the development of ranching (20), music (21), and even metallurgy (22) came out of Cain's offspring.
 - b. But it was without God. It is no different than now. Music for music's sake. Business for money's sake. Industries, research, inventions, all fine in their own right, but of no value without God.
 - c. We even see it in Lamech.
 - (1) In verse 19 he takes two wives, Adah (pleasure, ornament, or beauty) and Zillah (shade, indicating rest and relaxation perhaps). Zillah's daughter was name Naamah (loveliness).

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- (2) It seems that Lamech was a man who typified the culture of Cain. It was a culture pursuing comfort and physical pleasures.
 - (3) It appears that they were not about the work of pursuing the Lord, growing in the fear of the Lord, putting on the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. They had the outer expression of beauty and that is what they exalted.
- d. And Cain taught his children well, and when we look at the one God brings out for us, I believe we see again the mind set of these people.
- (1) Lamech expresses arrogance and pride. In verse 23 we have him crafting a song. What he is doing is boasting of his violence in killing a man who merely wounded him.
 - (2) But the point that is so striking about the message of the song is that he is better able to take care of himself than God was able to take care of Cain. He doesn't look to God, he looks only to himself and his ability.
 - (3) This is the glorification of revenge.
 - (4) It is unclear whether he is boasting of an actual killing, or boasting through the threats of killing. Either is possible. But notice the parallel structure of the last part of verse 23.
 - (a) "wound" is a cut.
 - (b) "bruise" is a much broader term. It involves all sorts of hurts, even if it comes from a child, and young boy.
 - (5) For Lamech, personal protection and glorification was all there was to life. His was a life that said, "Take care of number one."
 - (a) But consider another with me.
 - (b) Isaiah 53:4-5.
 - i) We were guilty, we were sinners.

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- ii) Yet the Lord saw fit to bruise His Son. He saw fit to wound Him for our sins.
- iii) As the whip came down on our Lord again and again, there were no threats, no reviling.
- iv) As men tore out His beard, jammed the thorns down onto his head, spit in His face and began to mock him, there was no retaliation.
- v) No, there was salvation.
- vi) Is it any wonder beloved why the bible says, “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways,’ declares the LORD.”

C. Possible points of light and grace.

1. Two names, in verse 18.
 - a. Mehujael (God is the giver of life).
 - b. Methushael (God is the fountain of life).
 - c. These two seem to show that there were some even within this group who looked to the Lord. They were men who saw the futility of this world and looked to the true life giver.
 - d. It is bothersome how many commentaries pointed out these names. But to a tee each of the rejected even the remotest possibility that they could have become men who believed in God. Why? Simply because they were of the line of Cain.
2. But we can only wonder, because what stands out is that at the end of this short lineage is nothing. They just fade away.
3. Here is this people group. Raised by a hater of God. They, as a whole, have grown into a violent, pleasure-seeking group. They are bright lights in culture and development, and then they were gone.

D. And now God begins to turn our attention to a new group of people 4:25.

III. The People of Seth.

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- A. At some point Seth is born.
1. There is a play on words here where Seth is seen as the substitute for Abel.
 2. They had thought that salvation would come through Cain, but they were wrong. He was of the seed of Satan. But now the one killed was graciously replaced and she named him in such a way as to remind her constantly of that fact.
 3. Enosh.
 - a. “to be weak, sick, frail” the basic emphasis would be on man's weakness or mortality.
 - b. This word is used throughout the Old Testament not as a proper name but as a descriptive one reminding mankind of its transience, its lowly position in contrast to the greatness of God.
 - c. In fact, the Messiah is described as being like the son of man (enosh) a term which describes his close relationship to the human race. That he truly would be one who took on our weaknesses and frailties.
 - d. Seth was of a different stripe than Lamech.
 - (1) Lamech loved his own power. He trusted in himself. He would not fear, he would destroy.
 - (2) Seth, however, looks at this son and he gives him a name to be a constant reminder of humanities need for God. We are frail. We are fallen. We are but dust.
 - (3) And do not see this as a pessimistic thought. It is a biblical one. It is one that is the simple, unvarnished truth. We are frail and weak.
 - (4) But notice in connection to the naming of his son as Enosh, what happened?
 - (5) “then....” Out of that reality came worship. They began to call out to the Lord.
 - e. So you see one line building stuff and another line calling out to God in worship.

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- B. But is the fact that this line early on began to call out to God mean that the line itself is somehow blessed? Is it a unique line, the godly line? Perhaps, but I would like us to look at chapter five briefly and make some observations.
1. “This is the book of the generations of Adam. . . (5:1)” This is a natural break that occurs in the book of Genesis on a regular basis.
 - a. These are natural breaks in the flow of the storyline of Genesis. It is thought that these are separate accounts, either oral or written, accessed by Moses as he wrote the book of Genesis.
 - b. In 2:4 it is used to speak of the history of heaven and earth. Now it is the history of Adam.
 - c. The purpose is to lead the reader through history to the next great event, which is the flood.
 - d. Out of one man we see the flood of humanity spreading out across the earth. The fulfilment of the command to be fruitful and multiply, the call to have dominion.
 - e. But it is all occurring under the power of sin and the result is that this flood mankind will be swept away in the flood waters of God’s judgment.
 2. What stands out in this chapter is the long lives of these men.
 - a. Adam was already 130 when Seth was born. Now assuming he and Eve were having children every 18 months or so he would have already had around 80 other children! Of course, the children were also having babies once they married and so there were many people even then.
 - b. Why the long life? No one really knows because the bible doesn’t definitively say. However, it may be due to a very different type of climate that was prior to the flood.
 - (1) Gen 2:6 speaks of a mist that arose to water the earth. Rain was not a process known then. Some scientists suggest that there was a thick mantle of moisture that protected the people from the effects of the sun but we can’t be certain.
 - (2) So we have all these people living long lives and having babies. And they were all calling out to the Lord right?

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Nope. Some were, but no where does it say that these men and their families were all people of God.

- c. This is seen even more clearly by considering Lamech in 5:28-29.
 - (1) He has Noah and sees that somehow through him YHWH will give them rest.
 - (2) Notice that he also has other children. But they are lost in the flood. They are not saved. They are part of that wicked mass of humanity who were God-haters.
 - (3) Then consider Noah himself. He is five hundred years old and has three sons. It is likely that he has many others but only those three will factor into any important point.
 - (4) So many people born and busy doing what people do. And none of them aware of the growing wrath of God that is ready to pour out upon them.

IV. **Conclusion.**

- A. But perhaps the most important thing in the chapter is the repeated statement, “...and he died.”
 - 1. We see also the sobering reality that though they lived long, though there were those who were calling upon the Lord, they still died.
 - 2. The promises of the Lord are sure. Whether they are promises of blessing or promises of harm, they are still promises of our Lord and they stand.
 - a. Let us look at the chapter and mourn. For over and over again they too had to bury their dead. They had to mourn the loss of loved ones.
 - b. And Adam was alive throughout most of this time leading up to the flood. And played out before him, through the death of children, grand-children, etc. was his sin.
 - (1) Every murder, every rape, every lie he and Eve must have looked at each other and grieved.
 - (2) Even as he delighted in the offspring he would always be confronted with the consequences of his sin.

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(3) Beloved, this is true for us as well. It is miserable unless we use it to keep us humble and filled with grace.

B. You will die.

1. What are you doing with yourself? What are you doing with your children? What are you doing with your grandchildren?
2. They will die but the question is will they die well? Will you?
3. You brought nothing into this world at your birth and you take nothing with you. All your pursuits and pleasures and trophies and clothing and dreams are gone and then you shall stand before your Maker.

C. Our hope only comes from the one who conquered death—Jesus Christ.

1. Owens' great title, "The Death of Death in The Death of Christ."
2. Not merely Jesus' death was conquered but all who are His. He took our sin. He took our punishment (death) and He destroyed them.

Community Group Questions

- If there are any questions related to Cain's wife and the idea of close relatives marrying consider comparing Leviticus 18:6 with Numbers 1-11 and Genesis 24:29 with the story of Rachel and Leah in Genesis 29:15ff. And out of that union came.....? Also it is interesting to see a list of those who married relatives in this wiki:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_coupled_cousins
- I chose to not answer some of my questions at the beginning. Instead let the group figure them out and develop it. Where did these cities come from? How do we deal with the discovery of bronze and iron when history shows us that these occurred later on? What are the possible reasons for the lineage of Seth being written down? His line is often described as the godly line of Seth. Do you agree or not and why? What evidence do you use. I can recommend you go into chapter 6 a little ways to help you think this through.
- I mentioned at the end that we bring nothing into the world and nothing out of it. With this in mind how should we think about various things such as: having a baby; career decisions; when you get something you always wanted; when you lose something you treasured; how you plan out your old age? Your group can do this as simply an exercise and forget it or they can use this possibly to move their hearts to life changes.