

Open Heart, Open Bible

Genesis and Luke's Gospel

Linking Theme: Covenant

Passage for weekly reading (Week 2):

Genesis ch. 's 3 – 5

Calamity and Consequence

James 1 v.'s 13-15 say this: “**When tempted no-one should say “God is tempting me.” for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death.**”

I don't know if James had in mind Genesis 3 when he wrote these words, but they perfectly describe the sequence of cause and effect in this week's passage - i.e.-temptation, sin, death. It is true that Adam was created as the perfect man on day 6 of Genesis 1, but that “perfection” did not mean that he was an automaton, programmed to say “yes” to his Maker in every situation. His “perfection” included an independent will, by which he could always choose morally to please his Lord. Likewise, Jesus had an independent will, and always had to choose the will of His Father (Matthew 26 v.39). The difference between the two was that Adam failed, whereas Jesus succeeded. Hallelujah!

The other thing to bear in mind is that it's not sin to be tempted. Jesus was tempted, supremely in the wilderness, but also in many other situations that Scripture does not record (Hebrews 4 v.15), and He always overcame. The Lord's purpose in life is to train us to be overcomers, and thereby be given the right, which Adam never had, to eat from the tree of life in the paradise of God (Revelation 2 v.7).

Since we know from other references that satan can appear in different guises, (i.e.- Rev.12 v.9) he was here taking the form of a serpent, as we read of him putting the pressure of temptation on Eve which became irresistible to her. She knew, presumably from Adam, that they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but the incentive of becoming “**like God**” (v.5) is more than she can cope with, and she quickly gives way. The seeming ease with which Adam is led the same way is so disappointing. The “age of innocence” has come to an abrupt end!

The Lord obviously knows the answers to the questions He asks Adam and Eve as He “**walks in the garden**”, and it is pathetic to read of the man transferring blame

on to both God and then Eve to justify himself (v.12). Eve, in contrast, answers honestly. (Are men more prone to self-justification than women? Think about it!)

The curses which follow have blighted human existence right down to our day, and will do so until the renewal of all things. In Christ Jesus, the curse is of course broken, but we still live out our lives in a world “gripped” by satan (1 John 5 v.19), and have to interface with it! (The Great Commission – Matthew 28 v.’s 18-20).

First, the serpent is condemned to its lowly state, and the “enmity” between his “offspring” and the offspring of the woman is pronounced. (Jesus later described the Jews as having been fathered by the devil, those, that is, who sought His life. This applies equally to all Gentiles who are in a place of unbelief, for we are all conceived in sin, and therefore live under the wrongful dominion of the “god of this age”- 2 Corinthians 4 v.4. Only God’s mercy can wrest us from his grip – Titus 3 v.’s 4&5). There is always enmity between those who belong to the world and those who belong to Jesus. Although the serpent’s offspring “**strike the heel**” of the woman’s seed, the woman’s offspring “**crush the head**” of the tempter. The offspring of the serpent certainly struck the heel of Jesus on the cross, our Lord being “stricken” or “bruised” there (Isaiah 53v.’s 4&5), and the death sentence was passed on our enemy at that point. His ultimate “crushing” is still to come, however (Romans 16 v.20).

The consequences to Eve of her sin relate to childbearing and the loss of her role as co-leader alongside her partner. She is now subservient to the man. Adam bears the brunt of the curse over the ground, for he is now condemned to “**painful toil**” as thorns and thistles will always threaten his crops if he allows himself any rest. Man’s existence does indeed now become a struggle for survival, instead of the privileged security of Eden, and the process of dying has now begun in his physical body which will eventually claim his life. (“ashes to ashes, dust to dust”!)

V.21 tells us that God made “garments of skin” for the now embarrassed pair, to cover them. The fig leaves with which they had covered themselves were not adequate! Whilst God did trust man in the garden situation, the significance of Adam’s banishment from Eden is that this is no longer the case. Relationship is not over, but it is sadly spoiled. Before he rebelled, the Tree of Life was of no temptation to man, for death was not inherent in his make-up. He would never die - he may be translated into God’s immediate presence at some point, but this is not death (i.e.- the “translation” of both Enoch and Elijah). After the fall, however, the other Tree became as great a temptation as the first one had been. Man is driven out, and there is no way back!

Whilst Gen.ch.3 tells us of the consequences of sin to Adam and Eve, ch.4 tells us of the consequences to their immediate offspring, Cain and Abel. The grace of God is available to both brothers (2 Timothy 1 v.9), but Cain goes the way of rebellion,

Abel the way of faith (Hebrews 11 v.4, 1 John 3 v.12 & Jude v.11). Jesus said that His coming would bring division (Luke 12 v.'s 51-53), but that division has always been in the world because of differing human responses to the Spirit of God. I said earlier in this paper that there is always enmity between those who belong to the world and those who belong to Jesus. How clearly this is seen in this chapter!

The reason that Cain's offering was not acceptable to God is not spelled out in the scripture, but it seems that there was something half-hearted about it. Some feel that it did not involve the shedding of blood, as did Abel's, and this is obviously true. More important to me seems that the word "first" is missing in Cain's sacrifice. He was not a shepherd, like his brother, so he could not readily offer animal sacrifices, but he did bring some of his own produce - i.e.- the "**fruits of the soil**" (v.3). There is no indication that these fruits were firstfruits - the best he could bring - whereas Abel's were clearly the best of his flock. Hebrews 11 v.4 tells us that Abel brought his offering to God "in faith". In other words, it was a costly offering to him. David said to Araunah the Jebusite "**I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing**" (2 Samuel 24 v.24), and my reading of Gen.ch.4 in this respect is that Cain's offering lacked in that crucial dimension of faith - it cost him nothing. Faith must cost us in order for it to be faith!

V.'s 6&7 give us the essential link between "doing what is right" and holiness, defining holiness for now as mastery over sin. My study Bible says this: "To conquer the sinful nature by God's grace requires a decision first that we want to overcome sin" (Jesus - "Go now, and leave your life of sin" - John 8 v.11). God works in us that which we want Him to!

Cain obviously made no such decision. Rather, he chooses to go deeper into rebellion by becoming the first ever murderer, committing the horrific act of fratricide. His jealousy consumes him. He was given a clear opportunity to go God's way, and spurned it. In murdering his brother, he belonged to the evil one (1 John 3 v.12), and his eternal destiny lay apart from God at that moment of time. He is doubly cursed by the Lord as a result of his actions. As a farmer, he already labours under the Adamic curse over the ground, but now that ground will not yield any crops for him. Cain is remorseful, but not repentant - he feels sorry for himself, but not sorry towards God.

Which brings us to one of the most recurring questions of this early Biblical record - who did Cain marry? Many claim that there must have been other peoples on earth at this time, people not descended from Adam and Eve, if Cain were to be able to find a wife.

To be true to scripture, it is clear that there was only one man at the beginning. (This was another evidence of the uniqueness of man amongst the other creatures

also having the breath of life – the man was created singly, and then, from him, the woman). This being the case, his wife could not have come from another race of people, she was born of Adam. Gen.5 v.4, in giving the line of Adam from Seth, tells us that he (Adam) had other sons and daughters, whilst not identifying them. Seth replaces Abel, according to Eve's confession of 4 v.25, and 5 v.3 tells us that Adam was 130 years old when this happened. The only wife available to Cain was from his father, and he took her with him to the "land of Nod". Working totally from scripture, brothers had to marry sisters in order to fulfil the Lord's directive to "**be fruitful and multiply**".

Objections to this lie mainly in the knowledge that it is neither legal nor healthy to procreate at such close quarters. This is certainly true to-day, but was not true for those early generations of our ultimate forebears. Even Abraham married his half-sister (Gen.20 v.12), and it was not for another 400 years or so that such relationships were forbidden under the law of God (Leviticus 18 v.'s 6-20), and specifically cursed in Deuteronomy 27 v.'s 20-23.

The other argument, that children from close relatives are much more likely to have congenital deformities, would not be so nearly applicable to these early ancestors of ours, because they were physically far superior to ourselves. "Mistakes" in our genes have proliferated down the generations (the result of sinfulness), so that the genetic irregularities of close relatives would almost certainly give rise to disabilities in children. Those early offspring were not liable to this sort of risk. We are talking about a world almost incomprehensible to us now, with people inhabiting it who were of a different order physically - look at the age to which they lived if you need convincing!

V.'s 17-24 give us the genealogical line of Adam through Cain. What we see here is the first clear example of generational sin, as Lamech, the sixth from Cain, testifies to murder and to his "right" to vengeance. He is also the first recorded polygamist, his wives being Adah and Zillah. Although this was an ungodly line, it was still a talented one, musicians and engineers being numbered amongst them. The people of God have never had a monopoly of talent! In ch.5, we have a detailed look at the line of Adam through Seth, the line through which the Lord will work to produce the nation of Israel and, ultimately, Jesus Himself (see Luke's genealogy, Luke 3 v.'s 23-28). It was this line that "**began to call on the name of the Lord**" (4 v.26).

Ch.5 v.1 tells us that the record it contains is "the written account of Adam's line". The likelihood is that Adam himself wrote it down as far as he was able (he lived until Lamech was 126), and then one of his grandsons carried on the account. Such records helped Moses in writing down these ancient details. V.'s 2&3 give a good example as to how the name "Adam" can be used in a general as well as in a particular sense. Where v.2 says "He (God) called them "man" (N.I.V.), K.J.V.

actually uses the name “Adam “ and says He called their name (plural) “Adam”. In this case, Adam is being used as a representative name for the race of men, but the following verse reverts to singular usage again in saying that Adam was 130 years old when he fathered Seth.

Adam, we are told again in v.1, was made “**in the likeness of God**”, and Seth was born in the likeness of Adam. There is a sense, in the repetition of this phrase at the beginning of Adam’s line through Seth, that the likeness of God is still present, although tarnished. The same phrase is not used of Cain’s line in ch.4, for we are told that Cain “**went out from the Lord’s presence**” (4 v.16). We have to keep company to retain likeness!

What we are reading of here is a population explosion that is in fulfilment of the Lord’s directive to man to “**be fruitful and increase in number**” (1 v.28). He was still overseeing the man’s development, He had not abandoned overall direction, but the ease and intimacy of relationship had been forfeit because of human disobedience and pride. Man still had to “**rule over**” the other living creatures, he still had to “steward” or look after the planet which had been created for him to inhabit, and he could still seek God for the way in which he did that.

As we read down the list of sons, each one has “sons and daughters” who are not mentioned by name, and each one of them became a grandparent many times over. As we follow the genealogical table down to Noah, we can see something of the remarkable way in which each life is meaningful in the plan of God, and has a significance according to the given name.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Age of Father</u>	<u>Meaning of name</u>	<u>Significance</u>	<u>N.T. references</u>
<i>1) Adam</i>	130 i.e.- when Seth born, and so on	to form, to produce. “red earth”	God’s creation	<i>Acts 17 v.26</i>
<i>2) Seth</i>	105	to found, to appoint	God’s choosing	<i>Luke 6 v.13</i>
<i>3) Enosh</i>	90	to be frail	God’s dealing	<i>2 Corinthians 12 v.9</i>
<i>4) Kenan</i>	70	to make weapons, to possess	God’s equipping	<i>2 Corinthians 10 v.4</i>
<i>5) Mahalalel</i>	65	to live by promise	God’s faithfulness	<i>2 Corinthians 1 v.10</i>

<i>6) Jared</i>	162	to be descended from	God's perseverance	<i>Hebrews 13 v.8</i>
<i>7) Enoch</i>	65	to be consecrated	God's requirement	<i>2 Timothy 1 v.9</i>
<i>8) Methuselah</i>	187	to be aimed, as a dart or a javelin; "he dies and it is sent"	God's intervention	<i>Luke 2 v.'s 28-32</i>
<i>9) Lamech</i>	182	to be poor, a pauper	God's glory	<i>James 2 v.5</i>
<i>10) Noah</i>	600 up to the flood, 950 at death	To rest, or to comfort	God's presence	<i>John 15 v.'s 7&8</i>

Having created Adam, God chooses Seth, who therefore becomes the foundation, or cornerstone, for succeeding generations. (Compare Jesus' choosing of Peter, foundational for the building of His Church - Matthew 16 v.18). For those who respond to the call of God, they do so in weakness, for His strength can only be revealed through human weakness, thus Enosh follows Seth. God gives us the weapons we need to wage effective warfare, however, and equips us with "everything good for doing His will" (Hebrews 13 v.21). Kenan follows Enosh. As we do that will, we prove the faithfulness of God, true to His every promise, as Enosh fathers Mahalalel. Jared is next in line, the constancy of God through the generations - He does not change (James 1 v.16).

Our response to that enduring covenant love is that we consecrate our lives to Him. Enoch's life is an outstanding early example of that consecration - he "walked with God", so much so that he didn't die, he was "taken" (v.24). He thus became the father of the one whose life was prophetic of the judgment to come, Methuselah, whose name means "he dies and it is sent" - i.e.- the flood. God intervenes in human experience either in judgment or mercy, and sometimes uses a particular life to be a specific sign of that divine act and confirm its timing (Simeon seeing the Baby Jesus - Luke 2 v.'s 28-32).

Lamech shows how God uses those who are poor in the eyes of this world to be rich in faith, those through whom He can display His glory. As such as these worship Him, they can live in the glory of His presence, both in this life (in preparation), and the next (in fulfilment). Through Lamech's offspring, God's rest, His comfort, would come.

N.B. A simple calculation shows that Methuselah died in the year of the flood. He was 369 when Noah was born (187 plus 182), and the deluge came when Noah was

600. 600 plus 369 = 969, the length of his life. Adding up the figures in the second column of the table gives a total of 1,656 years, the length of time from the creation to the flood, assuming the genealogy of Gen.5 is complete.

Food for thought / discussion / prayer

1) Regarding the serpent, some question why, on an earth which was in every respect “good”, one such as this creature should be present, who obviously was not “good”. The usual understanding is that satan had been deposed from heaven at this juncture, and is on the earth, here appearing in this particular guise. From Isaiah 14 v.12 we can gather that one called “Lucifer” (K.J.V.) or “morning star” (N.I.V.) has been cast down, one who has the ability to “weaken” or “lay low” the nations. Jesus corroborates this in Luke 10 v.18.

As a spirit being, satan had access both to the immediate presence of God (Job 1 v.6; Zechariah 3 v.1), and to anyone on earth, in any location. He is not omnipresent, but he is very mobile! My understanding of Revelation 12 v.’s 10-12 is that satan lost the ability to enter God’s presence with the victory of Jesus on the cross, and he also lost his power to tempt or accuse us, unless we allow him to. Allow him to we do - very often! We see from Rev. 12 v.11 that we still need to overcome. When were you last tempted? Did you overcome? If not, how can you? When were you last accused? Did you silence the accusation? If not, how can you?

2) Several vital principles come out of Gen.4. Here are several:

a) when we give God of our best, we will be spiritually empowered. Cain did not, and he was spiritually disabled.

b) when we turn to God in repentance, as He convicts us, we are blessed in proportion. Cain did not, and it was he who suffered.

c) when sin remains undealt with, it causes us to wander away from God, and we will live in fear. Cain imagined that he would always be “looking over his shoulder”.

d) that same undealt-with sin affects succeeding generations, until its effects are broken in the power of the Holy Spirit, by the blood of Jesus. Lamech’s attitude to life was a hardened and more vicious form of that shown by his great, great, great grandfather. (This Lamech not to be confused with the one of the same name in the line of Seth).

How have you experienced one or more of these realities in your walk of faith thus far?

3) Does the reading of ch.5 encourage you in God’s specific, and very particular, plan for your own life? He will fulfil it gloriously as you commit to doing His will!

Next week’s passage: Genesis 6 - 8

