



GENESIS 5:1-6:8

STUDY #5 2021

INTRODUCTION

After reading this text you'll be left asking a whole host of questions. There are many perplexing things about the Genesis chapters that precede the call of Abram (Genesis 12:1-3). Once he has arrived on the scene we sense that we are in a world similar to our own and that the pre-flood account belongs to a distant and strange past. Things are much more straightforward for us as from Abram onwards. Nevertheless, there is much that we can learn from the chapters of Genesis covered in this study.

THE BOOK OF THE GENERATIONS OF ADAM - 5:1-32

Our author writes of the book (or written account) of the generations of Adam in 5:1. "These are the generations of" is a recurring phrase right throughout the book of Genesis (see 2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10, 27, 25:13, 19, 36:1, 9, 37:2).

1. All these verses combine to create an overall impression on us as readers. What impression do you come away with from reading them?
2. 5:3-32 seem to be written to a formula. What does the constant repetition communicate to us?
3. Why do you think Cain is not mentioned?
4. What do you make of the notable exceptions where the formulaic pattern is broken? (see 5:21-24, 28-28) If there's a link with Genesis 3:15 in what way do these unusual verses in chapter 5 give us hope for the future?

HOW LOW CAN THINGS GO? - 6:1-6

As we read this passage it is perhaps helpful to try to grasp what the Israelites at the time of Moses would have made of the details of these enigmatic verses.

The classic questions you'll be sure to be asking include:

- Who were the sons of God? (verse 2)
- Who were the Nephilim? Did they have anything to do with what verse 2 has told us? Are the 2 linked? (verse 4)

- Who were the mighty men of old and the men of renown? (verse 4)
- Is there something here about beings (celestial or otherwise) transgressing their God-given, normal boundaries, overstepping their realm?

Bible interpreters of the past have understood the sons of God variously to be either:

- Angelic beings
- Human descendents from the line of Seth with the 'daughters of man' being understood to be the descendents of Cain
- Human kings who engaged in polygamy owning for themselves vast harems.

Some see a link between these verses and Jude 6-7 as well as 2 Peter 2:4 which would seem to favour the first interpretation. Whatever the case these verses are highly enigmatic. The pre-flood accounts in Genesis are decidedly more difficult for us to understand than the post-flood world in which we are introduced to Abram. (Nephilim is an obscure word that was translated "giants" by the Authorised version without much warrant. Numbers 13:33 mentions them again and could well give credence to that idea.

We were struck in last week's study from Genesis 4 by the seemingly unbridled nature of the growth of sin in the world: Cain's violence followed by Lamech's terrifying actions and boasting. However here in the summary statement of 6:5 it would seem that the sinfulness of mankind has reached an all-time low. (see also 6:11-13)

5. What do we learn in verse 7 about the LORD's response to this situation?¹

In response to this verse Derek Kidner writes "... *all life is bound together With man's fellow creatures sharing his doom and, as the story develops, his deliverance - a theme that is taken further in Romans 8:19-20*"

FUTURE HOPE

Once again our chapter ends with a glimmer of hope. Where is hope found here? Verse 8. What comfort can we take from the fact that God's judgement is not his final word.²

PRAYER AND FINISH

Praise our heavenly Father thanking him for his justice and great goodness as shown in his ongoing commitment to humanity and his creation.

¹ About the LORD grieving or regretting see also 1 Samuel 15,29,35

² "Left to our own natural intuitions about God, we will conclude that mercy is his strange work and judgement his natural work. Rewiring our vision of God as we study the Scripture, we see, helped by the great teachers of the past, that judgement is his strange work and mercy his natural work." Gentle and Lowly, Ortlund, D., Crossway 2020, p 144