

Man's Progress Toward Evil

Following the death of Abel, and Cain's subsequent punishment, the sacred record reveals a brief explanation of the genealogy of Cain. Then, the scriptures turn the readers attention to the generations of Adam through his son Seth, who was born after the death of Abel. The record follows the generations of Adam through Seth unto Noah. One of the striking facts of the record is the length of life possessed by the early inhabitants of the earth. Men lived eight and nine hundred years. One striking exception is the case of Enoch: "all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: and Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Genesis 5:23-24). In the New Testament, the scriptures tell us, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him: for he hath had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well-pleasing unto God:" (Hebrews 11:5). Some doctrines teach that if Eve, and subsequently Adam, had not sinned, they would still be on the earth. The translation of Enoch shines some light on Jehovah's desire to have mankind "change sides" (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries). Methuselah, Enoch's son, lived "nine hundred sixty and nine years" (Genesis 5:27, and is the oldest recorded life cycle. He passed from this life to the next the same year the flood waters came upon the earth. Methuselah was the father of Lamech, the father of Noah. Very little is said about the first sixteen hundred years of man's existence. The genealogy of Adam is given to direct the reader to Noah. As the narrative unfolds it brings the reader to the time when Noah was five hundred years old and begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Genesis 5:32). In a brief description, the reader is told how the sons of God (those who served God) saw the daughters of men (those who did not serve God) and took them wives of all that they chose (Genesis 6:2). The record says "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thought of the heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). The condition of man had degenerated in such a fashion that Jehovah said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man, and beast, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; for it repenteth me that I have made them" (Genesis 6:5-7). Considering Jehovah's dealings with the nations of the world, it is evident that Jehovah gave pre-flood humanity every opportunity to repent. When Jehovah promised Abram the land of Canaan, he said, "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. But thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. And in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full" (Genesis 15:13-16). When Jehovah destroyed the nations that possessed Canaan, it was due to their sins. Jehovah told Israel, "Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out from before you; and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land vomiteth out her inhabitants" (Leviticus 18:24-25). Even today, when a person degenerates into a condition of no return and becomes a danger to society, they are put away, either by death or confinement for life. The wrath of God has been "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Romans 1:18) time and again. So it was with those of the pre-flood days whose wickedness was great in the earth, "and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." The Apostle Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, said, concerning the days of the flood, that Noah was "a preacher of righteousness"

(2 Peter 2:5) and that through him, Christ in the spirit preached unto those “that aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing” (1 Peter 3:19-20).

Jesus once said concerning those who are spiritually prosperous: “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men” (Matthew 5:13). Noah was that salt, in his day. Thus, God “preserved Noah with seven others” (2 Peter 2:5). “By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith” (Hebrews 11:7).

For sixteen hundred years, mankind drew closer and closer, day by day unto destruction because the “imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” So it is today. Jehovah said, “the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men” (2 Peter 3:7). Will we heed the warning, or be like those of old who failed to recognize God’s right to rule in their life? Ross Triplett, Sr