

Foundations: The First 2,000 Years of History

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The Nature of History

Here, we are going to be looking at some very early history. And, before we start, it is very important that we know our sources. How do we know whether any ancient history that we have been taught is true or not? Somebody could have just made it all up. Well, we look at the sources. Do we have physical evidence, archaeological evidence, contemporary documentary evidence as to whether a certain event took place or not? And even if the answer is yes to all of these things, they could still all be faked. Not only that, but most historical reports are going to be biased and written from the standpoint of the observer anyway. Very little in history books is actually objective. So, how can we know **for sure**?

Well, the fact is that we can't. For recent events, it may be fairly straight forward. Some people will still be alive to remember certain things. These days, records are meticulously kept for anything of importance that occurs. But go back even a century, before "records" began and after everybody who lived then had long since died, and we begin to be unsure about what actually took place.

Go back a few centuries. We have some details which we can say were probably true, but the further and further we go back, the less and less we really know. Go back to the creation of the world, and the only thing we can say **for sure** is that it is not possible to know anything about such things for ourselves, because all the usual channels of supposed "evidence" are no longer examinable by us.

This doesn't stop scientists though. They, with straight faces, take it deadly seriously when they tell us that everything started from a big bang billions of years ago and that we all evolved from fish. There is no logical, evidential reasoning behind any such conclusions, other than that's what they want to be the case. And they want that to be the case because they don't want there to be a God who created everything. That would mean that they would be directly responsible to Him, and they don't like the concept of responsibility. They want to be free to do, and believe, what on earth they like, with no consequences to any of their actions,

Scientists are always speculating about things they can never possibly measure. They can only measure what they see now, so they think it's always been like this, and they extrapolate backwards in time to produce their theories. They observe, in time, white moths changing into black moths, and conclude that, given enough time, fish can change into men. But that just does not follow. They don't know. None of us knows. If we're going to know anything about times long ago, we can't use our own thought processes to try to work it all out for ourselves. We need other means.

So, how can we know, **for sure**, anything about the early history we are going to be dealing with here? Well, we do have the best proof possible, in the form of unbiased, documentary evidence. But we still can't "prove" to anyone's satisfaction that what we say here is true. The problem is not with the proof, but with the modern day scientist and historian, who will not accept the proof we present him with as being definitive. Our proof is the Bible.

Many readers will burst out laughing at this point. There have always been people who scoff at the Bible's account of things. There is nothing new in this:

2 Peter 3:3,4

There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

Such people will nearly always have never read the Bible seriously. They don't want the contents to be true, so, to them, they're not. But, the fact remains that, if we are to know anything about very early history, we cannot possibly trust in men to reveal it to us, because a vast majority of them weren't there, and in any case, men are dreadfully biased in everything they think and do. The truth can only come via a direct revelation from God. And that's exactly what we have in the Scriptures.

The Scriptures of God

So, what has God given to us in the Scriptures? Well, we must realise that He hasn't given us everything we might want. He has only given us the most important things. Things that we need to know. There is plenty more information that He could have given to us, but He hasn't, because it would be altogether irrelevant to our lives here, none of it is necessary. In any case, even if we did spend all our time just studying the Scriptures and nothing else, we'd still only scratch the surface really. What we have been given ought to more than satisfy us.

When people complain all the time that they want to know more, they should always remember this. We don't need to know everything.

Here, we are going to be looking at the first 2,000 years of the history of the world. And, because it is so far back in time, our knowledge is going to be completely limited to what God has chosen to reveal to us in the Scriptures about it.

The Scriptures as we know them today, were written down by men, under the direct inspiration of God, throughout the period between approximately 2,500 years and 4,000

years after the creation of the world. Moses was the first one whom God used to properly begin writing Scripture. Others added to it at various stages throughout this period until its completion soon after our Lord Jesus Christ had lived on the earth. He was the culmination of God's plan of salvation. Since then, we have had no more need of further revelation. The Scriptures are complete. What we have now is going to be all we will ever have. Indeed, it is all we will ever need.

The first 2,000 years of world history cover the period between the creation of the world and the coming of Abraham. This was still about 500 years before Moses. So how did Moses get this information?

Some things may have been written down before this, but nearly everything in those days would have been transmitted by word of mouth, which wouldn't have been difficult then, because everybody lived such long lives.

But, more importantly, throughout that time, there was always a visible "church" on the earth, a place where the worship of the true God took place. God used this "church" to make sure His testimony was kept accurately. When Moses wrote the parts of Scripture regarding events before his time, he would have got all the information he needed from this testimony. And, just as God kept the information accurately then, so He has done with the rest of the Holy Scriptures throughout history since:

Romans 3:1,2

What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

1 Timothy 3:15

....the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

The record of this first 2,000 years is preserved for us today in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, the first book of the Bible. This is all we have. In this rather brief account of things, we are given the basic, foundational truths of everything we need to know about this world. Everything else that God revealed subsequently, is built upon this initial framework.

In these chapters, we have:

- The creation of the human race. Adam and Eve.
- Evil entering the world. They ate the forbidden fruit.
- Mankind separated into two groups: the "church" and the "world." Cain and Abel.
- God's wrath on human sin. Noah and the flood.
- Man's continued arrogance, even after such a judgment. Babel.

That's the foundation. It may be only eleven chapters in the Bible, but it actually covers 2,000 years of world history. And this is the material we are going to concentrate on in this book.

The rest of Scripture builds on these themes, and develops them more fully. In brief:

In the rest of the first five books of the Bible, we have:

- God choosing a physical people for Himself. Israel.
- God giving them His Law, detailing what He requires of His people.
- God giving them a system of animal sacrifices, symbolising the taking away of sin.

The rest of the Old Testament is the sad history of how most of these people thought that just **having** such privileges given to them by God, rather than actually **doing** anything God said, was enough to keep them in His favour. They became so proud of their status as God’s “chosen” people, that they turned away from Him, becoming worse than all the other nations around them.

Upon Christ coming into the world, we now have the New Testament, which reveals to us:

- God choosing a **spiritual** people for Himself. He changes His people from within. In this, we find that the choice of an outward, physical nation in the Old Testament was only ever a picture of the true, spiritual reality of His choosing a people inwardly, in the heart.
- Practical details about how God’s truly changed people should then live. In this, we find that the Law of God, given in the Old Testament, was impossible for fallen man to keep. It was only ever given to shew them they couldn’t keep it, to shew them their need of putting their trust in the Saviour that God had promised was going to come. All those who do call on Him are truly, **spiritually**, changed within by the Spirit of God, and are given that Law written on their hearts. They are given a new desire in their hearts to please God, and the beginnings of an inner ability to keep it.
- The life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ to take away sin. In this, we find that all the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament could never take away sin, but were only ever a picture pointing to this one, true sacrifice which **really** took away the sins of all God’s people once for all.

And, just as in the Old Testament, the New Testament finally gives us sad warnings about how, in subsequent history after the completion of the Scriptures, most of those who call themselves “Christian” – i.e. the “church” – will go exactly the same way that the nation of Israel went in the Old Testament. They will become proud of their **being** members of God’s outward “church,” rather than actually **doing** anything God said, and they will turn away from Him, eventually becoming worse than the world all around them.

This is reality. This explains this world. The Scriptures are given to us by God to teach us all these things. The Scriptures are therefore sufficient for our every need. We need nothing else to explain all we need to know.

Creation and Evil

So, let’s look at the first eleven chapters of the Bible – the foundational material given to us by God over the first 2,000 years of history.

And we start at the beginning of time. God created the heaven and the earth:

Genesis 1:1,2

[1] In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. [2] And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

This phrase “*without form*” means “chaotic,” and the word “*void*” simply means “empty.” In other words, God created something, – namely, the heaven and the earth, – but it didn’t mean anything, it didn’t actually do anything at first. By itself, it was meaningless. It was just a blob of matter rolling around. Until, that is, God’s Spirit moved and He spoke order into being. Ever since that time, this world has been ordered. Every tiniest detail in this world is ordered and controlled by God. Nothing ever happens by “chance.” If God stopped ordering something, anything, then that thing would simply cease to function in this world. It would decay and disintegrate. For example, we all die:

Ecclesiastes 12:7

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

But it doesn’t seem like the world is ordered very much. And it doesn’t seem like God is in control of anything much either. It seems like man can do whatever he likes and get away with it. But he can’t. Despite what man thinks, everything he can ever do, is always still controlled and ordered by God, even the most wicked of acts. God would not allow anything to come to pass if He wasn’t going to be in total control of the situation.

This concept becomes so important to us, especially after the introduction of evil into the world, as we shall see.

Proverbs 16:33

The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.

Proverbs 16:1

The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.

And then in the rest of Genesis chapter one, we come across an account of God creating the world and everything in it in six days. And it was all very good. The world laughs at this idea. It believes it took billions of years for the world we know it today to come into being, and that, by itself. But we must remember that, to God, even six days is a long period of time. He could just have said the word and it was. But He took six days over it, and then, furthermore, the seventh day is described as Him “resting”:

Genesis 2:1-3

[1] Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. [2] And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. [3] And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

But God is God. He doesn’t need to rest. Why does it say that He “rested?” The whole point of him taking six days followed by one rest day is purely as a pattern for us to order our lives. There’s no other purpose behind creating the world in this way. God has ordered this world solely for the benefit of man.

God created man on the sixth day. The first two humans, Adam and Eve are placed on the earth and told, just as the animals had been, to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth:

Genesis 1:27,28

[27] So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. [28] And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

God put them in a garden, and gave them work to do, to dress it and to keep it:

Genesis 2:15

[15] And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

This work wouldn't have been difficult or toilsome, in fact it would have been delightful.

However, God also gave them one, simple commandment. The command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were free to eat of every other tree, but not that one:

Genesis 2:16,17

[16] And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: [17] But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

The tree was called the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." The name itself implies that eating of it would give the recipient the "knowledge of good and evil." So, we can conclude that before they ate of it, neither Adam nor Eve had any knowledge of the concept of "good and evil" whatsoever. In other words, it wouldn't even have crossed their mind to sin against God in any way. God's law would have been written on their hearts, and they would always have done good without thinking, and without any thought or desire of doing anything else. They wouldn't even have understood the name of the tree fully. "Evil? What's that?"

That is until the serpent came along. He tempted Eve by explaining to her more fully some things about this tree, things that were actually true:

Genesis 3:4,5

[4] And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: [5] For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Upon eating of the fruit of the tree, it was true that they wouldn't physically die immediately. Although they would immediately die spiritually, and would physically die eventually. It was also true that upon eating the fruit, they would become "as gods knowing good and evil," because God confirms exactly this later on:

Genesis 3:22

[22] And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil....

Once these ideas had been planted in Eve's mind, she also came to some more true, and, indeed, rather pleasant conclusions about the tree for herself:

Genesis 3:6

[6] And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

So, they both ate of the fruit that God told them not to eat of. And after eating the fruit, everything changed immediately:

– They now had a conscience, and tried to hide from God:

Genesis 3:8

[8] And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

– Work had now become toilsome, and the ground started to produce thorns and thistles:

Genesis 3:17-19

[17] And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; [18] Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; [19] In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

– Childbirth had become painful, and inordinate, uncontrollable desires would begin to exist between men and women:

Genesis 3:16

[16] Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

This is the world we live in today. It is a fallen world. It's a wretched world. Not only did their eating the forbidden fruit affect them personally, it affected everyone descending from them. And it also affected the whole of the creation:

Romans 8:19-22

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from

the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

The fact that the rest of creation is fallen too, gives people today the totally false impression that the ways of this world are “normality.” They think it’s always been like this, and never been any different. So, it’s all right to go around killing each other, after all, nature does it in the survival of the fittest. It’s all right to go off with other men’s wives, after all, it’s just following our “natural” instincts. All these sordid, wrong practices are “normalised” because the creation around us is in a fallen state too. This is all we see. We can no longer see outside of this worldview any more.

God put that tree of the knowledge of good and evil into the garden in the first place. And, what’s more, it was “*good for food,*” and “*pleasant to the eyes.*” So, why did God make something available, which looked so nice, but that would cause so much misery if anyone ever ate of it? Does that make God the author of sin?

Well, God gave a command not to eat of it. Yet, Adam and Eve ate of it anyway, so it was fully their fault for breaking the only external law that God had ever given them. They didn’t have to do it, they had no sinful desire in their heart driving them on to do anything of the kind. But they did it.

But, the fact is that God understood exactly what they would do with His commandment, the moment He gave it to them. God knew full well that they were going to eat of that tree. So all this mess we have now was always in His plan. He would never have allowed their eating the fruit to come to pass in the first place, if He hadn’t already got a plan to sort it all out in the end. This is why it is so important to realise that God is in control of everything. We see the depth of depravity in this world as a result of Adam and Eve eating of that tree, and it can seem quite overwhelming sometimes. But we must always remember that order and control, down to the very last fly, sewer rat, bullet and virus, is in Gods hands. So no matter how bad things seem to become for us, we needn’t worry about anything:

Matthew 10:29,30

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

The First Family

There was another tree in the garden too, called the “*tree of life,*” which allowed Adam and Eve to happily go on living as long as it was freely available to them. But another aspect to their punishment was that access to that tree was now barred:

Genesis 3:24

[24] So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

So, death has now come upon every man. We all must needs die:

Genesis 3:19

[19]for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

2 Samuel 14:14

For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death

So why didn't God strike Adam and Eve dead immediately? Well, as we have seen, they did die spiritually, straight after eating the fruit. They suddenly found that they no longer had the free communion with God that they'd had before. But their physical death was delayed for many centuries. Why did God do this? Because God was being gracious to them. And He's gracious to every one of us as well. Every breath we have is given to us by God. Do we deserve it? No. So we must ask ourselves: What are we doing with this life that God has given to us?

Whether we realise it or not, we're in the same condition as Adam and Eve were after they fell. We're all born dead spiritually. Naturally, we don't know any other way. We don't know God. We don't want to know God. We're born with no higher thought than to live for ourselves and our own desires. And, we're given 70 or 80 years of life in this world before we die physically too. Or we could be run over by a bus tomorrow. And, again, whatever God gives us, that's God being gracious to us. Every second on this earth is a gift from God. And we ought to be thankful to Him for everything we have been given. But we're not.

So, what happened to Adam and Eve after their banishment? They started a family:

Genesis 4:1,2

[1] And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. [2] And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

So, Adam and Eve start to fulfil God's original commandment to "be fruitful and multiply," and they had two sons, Cain, the firstborn, and Abel.

Both Cain and Abel grew up and started working for themselves. They earned a living. They didn't just sit at home scrounging off their parents. They went out and worked. It's God's plan for us all to be busy, to do something useful with our lives, as much as we're able. And not waste it.

Neither Cain nor Abel's occupations were sinful. Both were quite legitimate things to do for a living. Cain followed his father's occupation, tilling the ground. And Abel kept sheep.

But we need to think about this. What actually was the purpose of keeping sheep? Before the worldwide flood in Noah's day, which was 1,500 years after these events, all men were vegans. God had only allowed them to eat fruit and vegetables:

Genesis 1:29

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

It was only after the flood that God allowed men to eat animal flesh:

Genesis 9:3

Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

So Abel couldn't have been keeping sheep for food. Not even milk. There's no mention of milk as food before the flood either. And there was no need for wool either. Not so long ago, Adam and Eve had been running about naked. The outside temperature must have been warm enough to allow that. They didn't need woollen clothes for warmth. They were only covered after their fall into sin, to hide their shame. Only after the flood did we begin to have extremes of temperature:

Genesis 8:22

While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

So, meat, milk and wool, before the flood, were pretty useless commodities. So, what was the point of Abel keeping sheep? That's what Cain must have been thinking to himself. Cain must have thought how practical and useful he was being, producing food, and continuing his father's family business. Abel, on the other hand, was rearing sheep, which, to Cain, were good for nothing. Why was Abel rearing sheep? Was he stupid? There's only one thing that sheep would have been useful for in that early society. Sacrifice.

Cain and Abel would both have learned from their parents the need for the shedding of blood to take away sin. It's hinted at when, soon after Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit, God covered them with skins. That presupposes the killing of animals:

Genesis 3:21

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

God could've made grass skirts to cover them. He could've accepted the aprons of fig leaves that they'd made themselves. But He didn't. He slew animals, to show them the need for sacrifice. And that's an important principle throughout the Scriptures that we need to keep reminding ourselves of:

Hebrews 9:22

Without the shedding of blood there is no remission [of sin.]

The First Murder

Genesis 4:3,4

[3] And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. [4] And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof.

Cain knew full well that God required an offering. His parents had taught him that. But, rather than bringing a blood sacrifice, he offered some of the fruit of the ground he'd produced. He was proud of his crops. He wanted to boast to God (and to men) how he'd been far more useful than his brother Abel. We can tell by his attitude that he didn't take God seriously. He didn't even bother taking the first-fruits, or the best of his crops. He just grabbed any old handful of the fruit of the ground and offered it. But Abel brought the first and the best of his sheep for his offering to God. And this teaches us that we should put God first in our lives too:

Matthew 6:33

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

To Cain's surprise, God accepted Abel's offering, but not his own:

And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: [5] But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

So Cain got angry. But he'd got no excuse. He'd been taught from his parents the need for a blood sacrifice to take away sin. What he should've done was to sell the best of his crops to Abel in return for a sheep to offer to the Lord. That's exactly what Abel was in the business of providing. This shews that underneath, in his heart, Cain thought that sacrificing animals was a stupid idea. And consequently he thought that his parents' religion was nonsense. He had only vaguely acknowledged God's existence in the first place, by making an offering of crops simply to please his parents. And we can learn from this that what really counts in anything we do, is what is truly in our hearts.

But then, remarkably, God came and actually spoke to Cain:

Genesis 4:6,7

[6] And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? [7] If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

The Lord didn't punish Cain at this point. He simply gave Cain a warning about sin. If he would flee from sin and do well, he would still be accepted. But if he gave in to sin, then it would end up having dominion over him. Just by God giving him a warning like this, is an act of grace. There was still hope for him.

And that's a warning to us today. We're all sinners by nature, spiritually dead. Sin is always lying at our door. It's so easy for us to give in to sin. It's pleasant to our senses. It's easy just to live our lives for our own sinful pleasures. We can't see God, so why bother with Him? Maybe He's not even there. So let's live our lives for ourselves. This is how we

think. All of us. What wretched people we really are. Yet, even though we're in such a desperate state, God still offers hope. But it involves repentance and following Him.

Before Adam and Eve fell, they'd had a close relationship with God. But that intimacy had been lost. God had forgiven their sin, He'd provided a sacrifice to cleanse them of their sin, but their relationship with God would never be the same as before. Now, they no longer had such direct access to Him. Now, they could only come before God through the system of animal sacrifices that God had shewed to them. Cain, on the other hand, had never known a relationship with God at all. All he had seen of his parent's religion, was an outward ritual. A bloody ritual involving death. And he thought the whole thing a complete waste of time. And on top of that, the only time that God did actually speak to him, was here, to tell him off. Cain had had enough. He was finished with God altogether.

Cain was only one generation down from Adam. Today, we're now three or four generations removed from a generation that at least went to church, and had heard about the things of God. Today, when people think of "church," the only thing they think about is the outward ritual, and it means nothing to them. How many of the younger generation today know about anything about true religion? About God? About the Bible? About Jesus Christ? There's a tremendous need today to wake people up to spiritual things, to introduce the Bible to them, to tell them of Jesus Christ and how He can change them completely and permanently, from the inside.

Genesis 4:8

[8] And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

Cain didn't heed the Lord's warning. He gave in to his sinful nature. Sin had the final dominion over him, and he killed his brother.

Genesis 4:9

[9] And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

Did Cain really think that killing his brother would solve all his problems, and that God wouldn't know what he'd done? Yet so many people in the world today behave in exactly the same way. They openly commit sin and carry on doing it, and think that by behaving that way, they've defeated God in some way. But one day:

Matthew 12:36

every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Genesis 4:10

[10] And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

God knew exactly what Cain had done. We can't hide anything from God. And this time Cain does get punished.

After the flood, God brought in the death penalty for murder:

Genesis 9:6

Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

But this was before the flood, and God, still in His mercy, doesn't punish Cain by death, which is what He deserved, but by something else:

Genesis 4:11,12

[11] And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; [12] When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

Cain was given a curse that stopped him from making his living. There was already a curse on the ground from Adam's sin, and now it was made even worse for Cain. Wherever and whenever Cain tried to plant anything in future, God made sure the ground wouldn't produce. He'd lost his livelihood and was destined to be a fugitive and a vagabond, a wanderer, for the rest of his life.

Genesis 4:13

[13] And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

Actually, the punishment was so merciful in that he hadn't been killed, yet Cain continued to complain to God. He'd been so attached to his work in this world, that when it was taken away from him, he couldn't cope any more. It's a God-given thing to earn a living, and we should do our work well. But if our work ever becomes so important to us that we can't live without it, we're giving it too high a priority.

We ought to have far more concern for our spiritual welfare than our earthly one. We're only here for a short time. Getting ready for eternity, making ourselves right with God, is far more important than a few years of prosperity here. But Cain doesn't recognise that, and carries on complaining:

Genesis 4:14

[14] Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

He complains to God that he'll be killed. Well, he should have thought of that before he killed Abel. He did something to someone else, and then complains when he realises that same thing could happen to himself.

Matthew 7:12

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Genesis 4:15

[15] And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

So, to answer Cain, God put a mark on him to deter anyone from killing him. Another act of grace. We don't quite know what this mark was exactly, but wherever he went, people would see the mark and would know that if ever they killed him, sevenfold vengeance would be taken out upon them.

The World

Genesis 4:16

[16] And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

And what did Cain do? Did he cry to God for mercy? Did he ask for forgiveness? God would still have been merciful to him even then, if he'd done so. But no. He walked away. We're told that he "***went out from the presence of the LORD.***" Where was "*the presence of the LORD?*" It was where the sacrifices were, where the worship of God was practised by Adam and Eve. Cain made a conscious decision to leave his family, said goodbye to their religion, and went, with his wife, as far away as he could from any mention of God, to the land of Nod.

Cain was the firstborn son of Adam and Eve. He would have received the birthright, and all its privileges. But he turned his back on everything and walked away, to live his own life, his own way, as far as possible from God. That was his own choice, but the saddest thing of all is that by moving so far away, not one of his future descendants would ever get to know about God. His children would be born many miles away from any mention of the Lord. None of Cain's descendants ever believed, and eventually they all perished in the flood, and Cain's line died out completely.

And here we see the beginning of the development of two completely separate groups of people. Cain and his descendants in the land of Nod, typifying the "world," and Adam and Eve and their other descendants back at home, typifying the "church."

So, firstly, in verses 17-24, we've got a description of what happened to Cain and his family in Nod:

Genesis 4:17

[17] And Cain knew his wife

Cain had a wife. Where did she come from? She could only have been Adam and Eve's daughter or possibly Abel's daughter (but that's unlikely). There was nobody else around.

It's not until the Law came in Moses' day, 2,500 years later, that we're now forbidden to marry our immediate relatives. Even Abraham married his half-sister, which would have been disallowed had Moses' law been in place then. In those early days, it was perfectly

lawful to marry close relatives. Otherwise there was no other means of being fruitful and multiplying. That's another thing that maybe puts people off taking the early chapters of Genesis seriously.

and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.

Not being able to work on the land, Cain built a city instead. Without God, without religion, what do men do? Get together. Form communities. Support each other. Encourage each other that everything's all right, there's no God, and they're all in control of their own destiny. Men are doing this today. Cofi Anan used to be the Secretary General of the United Nations. He once said, "When we all get together, we are the ultimate power." What arrogance!

And the city was named after Enoch, who was Cain's firstborn son. Men try to build a name for themselves. They name cities, buildings, businesses after themselves. Trying to make themselves remembered long after they're gone. That's not the Christian way. We shouldn't exalt self. The Christian way is the way of self-abasement. The only One who should be exalted in our lives is God.

Genesis 4:18

[18] And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.

Five generations pass. And look what happens after only a few generations, when men walk away from God:

Genesis 4:19

[19] And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

Way back before Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit, God had said:

Genesis 2:24

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

But the men of the city of Enoch, after five generations of living there, decided to change the rules. They made their own rules, their own morality. They redefined marriage. The further generations get away from any godly influence in their lives, this sort of thing will happen.

And then Lamech's children are mentioned, and they became the founding fathers of three particular occupations:

Genesis 4:20

[20] And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle.

Jabal's family, the sixth generation from Cain, became nomadic herdsman. What's the point of keeping cattle? We've come across this question before. What's the point of Abel keeping sheep? In Abel's case they were for sacrifice. But this is a totally godless society. They wouldn't have been used for sacrifice. Now they've shaken off God's prohibitions, I can't help thinking that, against God's original order, they'd started eating meat. It tasted good, so they ate it. We have here the beginnings of restaurant culture, fine dining and gourmet cuisine.

Genesis 4:21

[21] And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.

So, what's wrong with music? Surely, that's harmless, isn't it? Well, the trouble with a good tune is that you can't get it out of your head. When we need to concentrate on other things, the melody keeps going round and round in our heads and stops us thinking straight. Music gets in the way of clear thinking. Here we have the beginnings of the arts and culture. And today, we see people filling their lives going from one concert or piece of entertainment to the next. To them that's all there is to life. It takes over everything else.

Genesis 4:22

[22] And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah.

Here we have the beginnings of technology. So, what's wrong with metalworking? In the beginning, Adam was given the task of tending the garden:

Genesis 2:15

And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

Did God give him tools to do that? No. The food just grew out of the ground. He could do everything he needed with just his bare hands. But after he had eaten the forbidden fruit, we now have thorns and thistles, and work has become toilsome. So man had to develop tools to help him.

Genesis 3:19

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

So tools, technology, are not evil in themselves, but they only exist because of sin. So next time we use a tool or a piece of technology, whether a knife, or a mobile phone, or a motor car, it's there to remind us of the fact that we are now fallen creatures. We can't do things in our own strength any more. We have to develop machines to help us.

But, you may say, hasn't technology improved society? Well, not necessarily. It is so easy to just get into a car and travel miles to get to what we consider to be a "good" church, at the expense of neglecting all the other, nearer ones. The result is that "good" churches get centralised. So, does the motor car really perform a useful function here? No! Churches are closing down thanks to the motor car. People with motor cars are now free

to leave the community where God has placed them to travel miles away just to meet up a couple of times a week with people they never see for the rest of the time. That is not the right way of doing "church." Our duty is to meet the true believers *in our area*, not miles away. And the motor car has essentially stopped us from doing that. Technology is forcing us to do things differently from how we ought to be doing them.

So, we have fine dining, the arts, culture and technology. What do we call this? This is the beginning of a highly sophisticated society. This is what we call a highly developed civilisation. Just like we have today. But where is God in all this? The answer is, nowhere.

Now, none of these would actually have been regarded as particularly evil occupations. It doesn't say they were opening betting shops or brothels. They probably were, but there was still something in their consciences that made them think it good to have at least a veneer of morality in their society. They learned practical skills and taught them to their children. They filled their lives with knowledge of how to do things in this world. That's not wrong as such. But they kept themselves busy, busy, busy about all these things, to stop themselves thinking about eternal things, to forget God as best they could. But where are they now? What did it all achieve? All forgotten. All swept away in the flood.

Genesis 4:23,24

[23] And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. [24] If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

Not content with having two wives, Lamech also became a murderer. He killed someone, and boasted about it to his wives, mocking God's judgment on Cain. Now, that's interesting. That society had tried its best, for five generations, to get away from God, to block God out of their memories completely. But God still had a witness among them. The mark that He'd put on Cain. It's impossible to get away from God altogether.

That whole generation was eventually destroyed in the flood.

The Church

Now, in contrast to Cain, the last two verses of chapter 4 and, indeed, the whole of the rest of the Bible, is the history of what happened to the rest of his family:

Genesis 4:25

[25] And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.

The birthright goes through the male line. As Adam and Eve had lost both Cain and Abel, they would have been longing for another male heir. We're told in chapter 5, that Adam and Eve had Seth when Adam was 130 years old. So, apart from Cain and Abel, year after year, Adam and Eve must have just been producing daughters. Finally, Seth is born. And it's through his line that eventually our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ would be born many generations later.

Genesis 4:26

[26] And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

Seth's firstborn was Enos, and we've got a very interesting phrase here: ***"Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord."*** This implies that, up to this point, nobody had been doing that. But they had had the sacrifices. When Cain had left them, it was said he *"went out from the presence of the Lord."* What does it mean that only in the days of Enos, *"then began men to call upon the name of the LORD"*?

From chapter 5, we see that Adam had Seth when he was 130 years old and Seth had Enos when he was 105 years old. So for at least 235 years, we're told here that, although they had *"the presence of the Lord"* in the animal sacrifices and the outward worship of God, nobody, apart from Adam, Eve and Abel (before he was killed), had truly *"called on the name of the Lord"* in their hearts. Only in Enos's day did people begin to do so.

God had revealed to Adam and Eve what true religion was all about. He'd forgiven them their sin, by shewing them the need for a blood sacrifice as an atonement to take their sin away. And they also knew that these animal sacrifices were only a picture of the one true sacrifice that God was going to send in the far distant future, through a Saviour, who really would take away sin. So they understood that true religion is spiritual, it's invisible, we can't see it. Their hearts had been truly changed by the Lord to understand all of this.

And that was the incentive for them to continue the outward worship of God throughout all that time. It bore fruit. Their son Abel became a true believer. We know this because his sacrifice was accepted by God. But his life in this world was abruptly terminated by his elder brother. After Abel's death, Adam and Eve kept the outward worship going, because that was the outward manifestation of *"the presence of the Lord."* Many of their daughters would have stayed and worshipped with them. Maybe others left, like Cain, we don't know. Those who stayed were the outward, visible "church" of the day. And they were very welcome to be part of that community. But none of them had *"called upon the name of the LORD."*

"Church" is where we can say *"the presence of the Lord"* is. It's good to go to "church," that's where God is worshipped outwardly.

But that's not enough. Each one of us needs to know God personally for ourselves. We need individually to call on His name. To repent of our sins. To acknowledge our sinful nature before Him, and ask Him, cry to Him, to change us from these wretched beings that we are, and to make us new creatures in Christ. We need to put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood sacrifice was the one sacrifice that truly atones for sin. Only then can we have our hearts changed, live lives pleasing to God, and in the end, be saved to eternal life.

Romans 10:13

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

For 235 years, nobody had done that. After Abel's death, Adam and Eve were desperately trying to teach their children about true religion through the sacrifices, and

failing. They kept the outward sacrifices going because that was the witness. That was God's ordained way of presenting the truth in those days. Only in the days of Enos, did some people finally begin to understand, and begin to realise their need of a Saviour, and call on the Lord for themselves.

So, what have we learned so far? We live in a world split into two. Some leave the outward worship of God, the "church," altogether, to go into the "world," just like Cain. The rest are happy to stay inside a "church," where the outward worship of God continues, just like those who stayed with Adam and Eve.

But within the "church" itself are also two groups: The vast majority will be members of the "church" in name only, outwardly, but they will never have been changed inwardly in their hearts by the Lord. Only a few amongst them will call upon God for themselves, and be truly, spiritually, changed within. And it is only this latter group who are God's true chosen people and are the ones who will be saved to eternal life:

Matthew 22:14

For many are called, but few are chosen.

This whole concept of a wider body of people with only a few true believers amongst them, is the way God has ordained the "church" to be in all its various manifestations throughout history.

Just to give an example, Those who were led out of slavery and into the promised land by Moses and Joshua, were the "*church in the wilderness*" (Acts 7:38), where the "*presence of the LORD*" was. But a vast majority were never true believers. Only a remnant were:

1 Corinthians 10:1-5

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

This is the pattern that we will always find in the "church." And that's what we have today. Many more people baptised into the "church" in name only, than actually know the Lord for themselves in their hearts.

And the solemn thing is that all those who are in the "church," with all its privileges, but who never call on the Lord to be changed inwardly, will, in the final judgment, be punished more severely than those who were in the "world," because they've rebelled against greater light:

Luke 10:13-15

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.

Luke 12:47,48

And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

The rest of the Bible isn't bothered with the history of the "world," as we know it, and as we saw it manifested in the land of Nod. Such civilisations are utterly irrelevant. None of the people in Nod knew God and never wanted to, even though they always had the witness of Cain's mark in their midst, leaving them without excuse for their sinful behaviour.

The rest of the Bible concerns only the history of this wider "church," first manifested as being with Adam and Eve, then later as the nation of Israel, and finally as the "Christian" church.

The Genealogies

God had allowed Adam and Eve, and through them the whole world, to fall into a desperately depraved, slavery to sin. But He had only allowed this to happen because He already had a perfect plan of salvation from this mess arranged in His mind. His plan was to come into the world Himself, as a man, live a perfect life, die at the hands of wicked men and thereby make atonement for the sins of a people that He would choose for Himself. This people would always be a minority in the "church" at any one time, but the total number throughout time would end up being a number that no man can number. That's it. That was God's plan all along, namely, to give His people a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He never had any intention of saving anybody else. Why should He? He does nothing wrong in this, He just leaves them to their just deserts, like Cain. But all those who call on Him in truth, He will save from the consequences of their sins:

John 1:12,13

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 3:36

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

The rest of Scripture gives us the history and details of how God's plan of salvation came to pass.

God's eternal plan to come into the world Himself as a man, was always going to be achieved from within the outward, visible "church." He was not going to come from the "world" via Cain, for example. And that's the importance of having an outward, visible "church" continuing throughout history. That's why it was so important for Adam and Eve to carry on the outward worship for such a long time, even though they were the only two true believers in the world for many years. A later manifestation of this outward, visible

“church” was in the form of the nation of Israel, and it was from within this nation that our Saviour, Jesus Christ, was eventually born.

Throughout the Bible there are genealogies. These are important. Firstly, they simply prove that the people mentioned in Scripture were real people, not just made up characters as though in a novel. But, more importantly, there is one genealogy that is supreme above all the others. That of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself.

We have two complete genealogies of our Lord Jesus Christ given to us in the New Testament, one in Matthew chapter 1, via the kings of Judah and going back as far as Abraham, and one in Luke chapter 3, via another son of David, Nathan, and going back all the way to Adam. We must be aware that all the names mentioned in these genealogies are simply members of the outward, visible “church.” These are not necessarily a list of true believers. Many of them were wicked individuals. They are listed simply to shew Christ’s heritage. The promise was that He would come from within the visible “church” in the line of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and King David. These genealogies prove this.

In the early history we are considering here, we also have genealogies of the early part of this line, the part from Adam to Abraham. These can be found in Genesis chapters 5, 10 and 11. And here we are also given very precise details of everyone’s age when their first son was born, and how long they lived. This gives us a very accurate, detailed chronology of the whole period. From these details, a table can be produced (see below).

In this table we particularly notice a couple of things:

– The year of the flood can be accurately ascertained as the year 1596 after the creation of the world. This was also the year that Methuselah died, whose name meant “After he dies, judgment.” Noah was 600 years old when the flood came:

Genesis 7:6

And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.

– The building of Babel occurred in the lifetime of Peleg, whose name meant “Division”:

Genesis 10:25

*And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was **Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided**; and his brother’s name was Joktan.*

This was between the years 1697 and 1936 since the creation of the world.

So Babel was built at some point between 100 and 340 years after the flood. I suggest that this was fairly earlier on in this time window, simply because the last 48 years of Peleg’s life coincided with Abraham’s early life, and the world had been well divided by that point.

NAME	Age at date of first son	Years lived after birth of first son	Age at death		Year since creation of birth of first son	Year since creation of death	Notes
Adam	130	800	930		130	930	Genesis 5:3-5
Seth	105	807	912		235	1042	Genesis 5:6-8
Enos	90	815	905		325	1140	Genesis 5:9-11
Cainan	70	840	910		395	1235	Genesis 5:12-14
Mahalaleel	65	830	895		460	1290	Genesis 5:15-17
Jared	162	800	962		562	1422	Genesis 5:18-20
Enoch	65	300	365		627	927	Genesis 5:21-24
Methuselah	187	782	969		814	1596	Genesis 5:25-27. His name means 'After he dies, judgment.' He died in the year of the flood.
Lamech	182	595	777		996	1591	Genesis 5:28-31
Noah	502	448	950		1498	1946	Genesis 5:32. Noah was 600 years old when the flood came, Genesis 7:6. Shem was born 98 years before the flood, Genesis 11:10.
FLOOD						1596	Genesis 6-9
Shem	100	500	600		1598	2098	Genesis 11:10,11
Arphaxad	35	403	438		1633	2036	Genesis 11:12,13
Salah	30	403	433		1663	2066	Genesis 11:14,15
Eber	34	430	464		1697	2127	Genesis 11:16,17
TOWER OF BABEL							Genesis 11:1-9
Peleg	30	209	239		1727	1936	Genesis 11:18,19. His name means 'Division,' and the world was divided in his lifetime, Genesis 10:25.
Reu	32	207	239		1759	1966	Genesis 11:20,21
Serug	30	200	230		1789	1989	Genesis 11:22,23
Nahor	29	119	148		1818	1937	Genesis 11:24,25
Terah	70	135	205		1888	2023	Genesis 11:26,32
Abram							

Man's Just Deserts

A major portion of the account of this early history that God has given us, is taken up, in Genesis chapters 6 to 9, with a description of a worldwide flood, in which all but one family of eight people were wiped out. The fact that this account takes up such a large proportion of these first eleven chapters of the Bible, is very significant. There must be a reason for this. There is a fundamental, foundational truth being displayed here. That is that, one day, at the end of time, every one of us is going to be judged by God for what we have done in the body:

Acts 17:31

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Early on in history, after only 1,596 years, God sent this worldwide flood to warn us that:

2 Peter 3:6,7

Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

We need to ask ourselves, why would God be so cruel to such a vast majority of His creatures? They all get judged and are swept away for ever. Is that fair? And the answer is, yes, it is perfectly fair. In fact what is “unfair” is that God saved anybody.

Because of our sinful nature, we all deserve eternal, conscious torment in body and soul in hell fire forever. One person being saved from that is a mercy. God saves a number that no man can number from such a fate. How gracious He is!

Ever since Adam and Eve ate that forbidden fruit, the depth of depravity that exists in the heart of man, needed to be pointed out to us. We don't understand fully how vile we really are. We're too proud in our hearts to acknowledge the seriousness of our sins, and what they really deserve. We need to find out, and be honest before God, while we are in this world, otherwise we will not be able to escape God's righteous judgment in eternity.

We are clearly informed beforehand, as to why God sent a judgment on the earth:

Genesis 6:5-7

[5] And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. [6] And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. [7] And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

And after the flood, man was no different:

Genesis 8:21

....for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth....

And this includes us today. We need to see the total depravity of our own hearts too. Only then can we cry to God for mercy to save us.

God only saved one man and his family from the flood. And it wasn't because he was any better than the rest. His salvation was all by grace:

Genesis 6:8

[8] But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

So, if we are saved by the Lord after calling on Him for mercy, we ought to know that it too would be all of grace, and certainly not what we deserve in any way.

As a result of the flood, many aspects of the world changed. And these changes became permanent, and will be with us until the end of time. We have come across some of these already:

– Firstly, we now have seasons, rather than the world being a constant, comfortable temperature:

Genesis 8:22

While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

I suggest that at this point the earth tilted on its axis. That would produce seasons. Some parts of the world would now be too cold, others too hot. We would still have day and night, but now with variations in length. The tilt in the axis would bring weather patterns. I suggest too that earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanoes began at this time too. All of this being in the Lord's providence and under His control, of course, That's the major change that happened after the flood. So when we see any of these phenomena, it ought always to remind us of Noah's flood, and by extension, the final judgment to come.

Not only did these natural phenomena begin to exist, but after the flood, God made a few changes in His dealings with men:

– They were still called to “*be fruitful and multiply*”:

Genesis 9:1

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

Genesis 9:7

And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

– And they still had dominion over the creatures, who would now fear man:

Genesis 9:2

And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.

– They were now allowed to eat meat, but not the blood:

Genesis 9:3,4

Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

– God ordained the death penalty for murder:

Genesis 9:5,6

And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

– And God promised that never again would He flood the whole earth in this way. Which implies that it was a worldwide flood, because localised floods still occur as a result of the new shifting weather patterns:

Genesis 9:11

And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

And this is the world we all inhabit today.

And, just as in Cain's day, people will want to try to change God's ordained ways. Some will think we shouldn't eat meat. Some will think we shouldn't kill murderers. But this is the way God has ordained it should be. Any changes that we try to make to God's ordained way of doing things will always complicate matters and cause more problems to deal with than we need.

Man's Continued Pride

Before the flood, people lived hundreds of years before they died. After the flood, they only lived for around 200 years or so. Lifespans were reducing rapidly. This means that the building of Babel, at some time early in the life of Peleg, around 100-200 years after the flood, came well within the lifetimes of Noah and all his sons.

Men soon forgot the warning God had clearly given them by the flood. Men had not changed:

Genesis 11:1,2

[1] And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. [2] And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

Noah's ark had come to rest in the land of Ararat. Here, we are told that "*the whole earth was of one language,*" and that "*they journeyed from the east.*" So, it seems that Noah and all his descendants were originally all together as one group. On a map, Shinar, or Babylon, is directly south of Ararat. But here we're told that they had come from the east to arrive there, so they must have come by a roundabout route.

Genesis 11:3,4

[3] And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. [4] And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

Upon arrival in the plain of Shinar, these men decided to *“build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name.”* They wanted to build a city for themselves, with a tower to reach up to God. To defy God. To make themselves a name.

We often speak of this as the “Tower of Babel,” but they were really building a city to make a name for themselves. What does this remind us of? Cain, and his son Enoch:

Genesis 4:17

And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.

They were doing exactly what Cain and his descendants did in the land of Nod. Man hadn't changed, even after the flood which was still of so recent memory.

We're told that they feared being *“scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”* They were fearing being scattered. So, maybe some incidents of being scattered had already taken place, and they wanted to stop any more scattering from happening. I can't imagine for a minute that Noah, Shem and Japheth, who were still all alive, would have had anything to do with this rebellion. I suggest that the original group had headed south east away from Ararat, but after a while, the party started to disagree with one another (as men do) and the group started splitting up. This main group eventually headed west, and this explains why it is said that they *“journeyed from the east”* to settle in Shinar.

This is very similar to what happened with Cain. He decided to leave his parents and the rest of his family, and their religion, and set off with his wife for the land of Nod. What is different in this case here, is that, rather than just two people leaving the visible “church,” it was the vast majority, the bulk of humanity in that day, who left Noah and his family behind, where the visible “church” would have been. These men who went to Shinar cast aside any thought of worshipping God or making animal sacrifices. They had given up on God altogether. They hated God, after all, within recent history, He'd just wiped nearly everybody from off the face of the earth. Who wants to worship a God like that! They had finished with God, and wanted to put themselves in His place by making a name for themselves. So, just like Cain and Enoch, they started to build a city.

God came down to have a look at what they were doing:

Genesis 11:5,6

[5] And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. [6] And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

God was not pleased with them exalting themselves in this manner. So He gave them a punishment. And just as He treated Cain, He was merciful to them. He didn't destroy them, which is what they deserved, but he stopped them from their plan of making a name for themselves by confusing their languages:

Genesis 11:7-9

[7] Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. [8] So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. [9] Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

This stopped them from understanding one another, so they couldn't continue to build the city any more, and it forced them to scatter, rather than stick together. The one thing they had been trying to avoid.

So today, when we see our world with so many countries and nations, all with different customs, religions, and languages (and indeed the resulting wars that entail as a result), we should always be reminded of this city of Babel that men were trying to build. We must realise that all of this confusion is in God's plan to stop man from exalting himself.

Ever since this event, to the present day, man still tries his hardest to make a name for himself. And it never works in the end, because God is in control. This attempt to build a city in Babel, is just another warning about the one fundamental problem with man in his fallen state. He wants to put himself on the throne, instead of God.

In the Bible, Babel later became Babylon, and throughout history, this has always been a type of the enemy of Christ and His people, indeed even a type of Satan himself:

Isaiah 14:4,12-15

That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!... How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

And we need to apply this to ourselves. We need to hate our sin and pride of heart, and get away from ever trying to exalt self and think we are so important, when we are not:

Galatians 6:3

For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

We have a Saviour in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He can save us from our sins. All we need to do is acknowledge our need of Him, and cry to Him:

Luke 18:13

God be merciful to me a sinner.

As long as we don't think we need a Saviour to save us from the wretched condition we are in as self-centred, sinful creatures, then we will go the way of Cain, and the men of Babel, and receive our just punishment at the end of time.

Conclusion

Here we have a brief overview of the early history of the world. We have it recorded today, given to us by God, in eleven brief chapters at the very beginning of His revelation to us, the Holy Scriptures.

Fundamental principles that we need to know:

- God created the world, and is in full control of it.
- Evil has entered the world, and we are now such vile creatures by nature.
- Mankind is separated into two groups: the “world” and the “church.”
- The “church” teaches salvation from this condition through blood sacrifice.
- The majority of those in the “church” are not God’s people, but His people in name only.
- Only those who have been changed internally, in the heart, are the true people of God.
- One day, there will be a final judgment.
- Most men of this world will continue on in their arrogance, laughing at God, hating Him. And they will go into hell fire for ever in the end.

Let us make sure we are not amongst them.

John 3:18

He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.