



# This World Is A Mess

## Genesis 4-11

- 1. Death (chapters 4-5)**
- 2. Destruction (chapter 6-9)**
- 3. Disobedience (chapters 10-11)**

Periodically, I travel to foreign lands to train pastors with [Leadership Resources International](http://www.leadershipresourcesinternational.org) (LRI). The training is focused upon equipping and encouraging pastors to teach God's word with God's heart. There are three specific aspects to the LRI training: (1) demonstration, (2) dig, and (3) do sessions. A "demonstration" session is a model exposition for the trainees. A "dig" session is where specific Bible Study tools are presented. A "do" session is when the trainees have an opportunity to present how they would preach specific passages of Scripture, followed by a discussion of their approach. In the curriculum of the training, there is always a focus upon one particular book of the Bible. Out of this book flows the demonstration, dig, and do sessions.

I just returned from a training venue in India with LRI. During this training, we focused our attention upon the book of Genesis, particularly, the first eleven chapters of Genesis. In Genesis 1-11, we spent our three and a half days together training these pastors. The schedule of training is usually arranged such that there is an opening Demonstration and a closing Demonstration. Nate, another pastor who came from the States, opened with an exposition of Genesis 1:1-2:4. I was assigned the task of closing our training with an exposition of Genesis 4-11. For our time in the word this morning, I would like to preach what I presented to these men.

This text is a challenge. There are 219 verses, which would take nearly 30 minutes alone merely to read. Aside from the length of our passage this morning, the time that the text spans is also a challenge. It begins with Cain and Abel, and ends with a reference to Abraham. If you do a bit of calculating through the genealogies in chapters 5, 10, and 11, you will see that it covers at least 2,000 years of history. To put it in perspective, Genesis 1-11 covers as much time historically as all of the rest of the Bible! Abraham lived around 2,000 years before Christ came. Genesis 1-11 covers some 2,000 years of history.

As such, we only get a glimpse of history over these years. We only get a glimpse of the lives of Cain and Abel (chapter 4). We only get a glimpse of the life of Noah (chapters 6-9). We only get a glimpse of what took place in the land of Shinar, where they built a tower to reach to the heavens (chapter 11). The genealogies of chapters 5, 10, and 11 serve to give us a time reference regarding the dates of when these things all took place. Other than that, we know very little of what took place over the course of 2,000 years.

Now, the good news is this: God has told us everything that we need to know. And the main point of these 2,000 years of history is simple: This world is a mess. In Genesis, chapters 4-11, we will see death and destruction and disobedience. Death in chapters 4 and 5. Destruction in chapters 6 through 9. Disobedience in chapter 11. My message is entitled, "This World Is A Mess". And my three points are as follows, ...

- 1. Death (chapters 4-5)**
- 2. Destruction (chapter 6-9)**
- 3. Disobedience (chapters 10-11)**

And we have only ourselves to blame. As one man said, "What's wrong with the world today? I am."

God created Adam and Eve and placed them in a paradise. Through their own choices, they rebelled against their Creator. Eve took the fruit and ate. Adam also ate. As a result, they were driven out of the garden. Eve faced the pain of childbirth (Gen 3:16). Adam faced the toil of the land, by the sweat of his face, he would eat.

The Lord had said to Adam, "In the day that you eat from it, you will surely die." And that day, Adam began to die. This is my first point.

### 1. Death (chapters 4-5).

In chapter 4, verses 1 and 2, the first two sons enter the scene. Cain was the oldest (Gen 4:1). Able was younger (Gen 4:2). Abel was a shepherd (Gen 4:2). Cain was a tiller of the ground (Gen 4:2).

Genesis 4:3-4a

So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions.

Some how, in some way, Cain and Abel knew that they should give to the LORD. Perhaps Adam and Eve told them. Perhaps the LORD told them. Anyhow, they gave what they had. Being a shepherd, Abel brought "of the firstlings of his flock". Being a farmer, Cain also brought from the fruits of his labor. He brought some plants.

In 4:4b, we see how God viewed these offerings, ...

Genesis 4:4b

And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering;

Why is this so? In Hebrews 11:4, we read, "By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous." Abel was a righteous man who trusted in the LORD. He brought his offering to God by faith. And the LORD had regard for his offering. But, such was not the case with Cain.

Genesis 4:5a

but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard.

For some reason, God did not accept Cain's offering. Some will say that Cain's error was in his offering. "He brought plants, whereas Abel brought an animal." "God wants blood," they say. However, as the Scripture was later written, we see that God will accept an offering of grain (Leviticus 2). Furthermore, the Scriptures speak of how God is much more interested in the heart than in the offering. "For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings." (Hosea 6:6).

I would say that Cain's heart was the problem. Abel had faith (Hebrews 11:4). Cain had a hard heart. We see it in verse 5b, ...

Genesis 4:5b

so Cain became very angry, and his countenance fell.

If Cain's heart had been right before the LORD, he would have repented. He would have acknowledged his sin and confessed it to the LORD. But such was not the case. Cain became angry (4:5b). By God's mercy, we see the LORD giving Cain an opportunity to repent. He says, ...

Genesis 4:6-7

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

And the battle raged in Cain's heart. Sin was desiring to conquer Cain. God told Cain to defeat the sin. And who won the war? Sin. We read in chapter 4, verse 8, ...

Genesis 4:8

Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

What a sad verse. When Jesus spoke of the hard path that the disciples would face, He said, "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and will cause them to be put to death. You will be hated by all because of my name." (Matt 10:21, 22). And we read those verses in horror. Yet, this has always been the case, even as far back as the first two children. First John 3:12 says that Cain, "was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil and his brother's were righteous." Instead of submitting to the Lord and His ways, Cain rebelled against the LORD and His ways. He killed his brother.

To me, this is very surprising. Cain and Abel were one generation removed from paradise. They were one generation removed from a sinless world. And yet, only a few years later, Cain killed his brother. And what Cain began, Cain feared. He feared that, "Whoever finds me will kill me" (Gen 4:14b).

Such was the state of the world: "It was a mess." Adam and Eve lived in harmony in the garden. But now, Cain (and others) live in fear. The threat of murder is in the land. Death has come to the Earth.

What Abel experienced was the expectation of all. This is the point of chapter 5. In chapter 5, we have a genealogy from Adam (verse 3) to Noah (verse 32). Three words are repeated throughout the passage. "And he died". [11](#) The notable exception was Enoch (verse 24). He walked with God and escaped death. But everyone else died.

Death has been the reality since the fall. "This world is a mess." This brings me to my second point, ...

## 2. Destruction (chapters 6-9)

Chapters 6-9 tell the story of Noah and the flood, which was when God destroyed the whole world. Genesis 6:5 tells us the reason for this destruction.

Genesis 6:5

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Look closely and carefully at this verse. It tells us what God saw when He looked upon the Earth. He saw wickedness. He saw the breadth of wickedness upon the Earth and it was great. He saw the depth of wickedness upon the Earth and it was deep. "Every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

And then we read those sad words, ...

Genesis 6:6-7

The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them."

Twice in these two verses we read of how the LORD was sorry. What began as a sinless paradise had degenerated into a cesspool of wickedness. When the creation was completed in the garden, "God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good." (Gen 1:31). We can almost hear the LORD shout for joy. But now, things had changed. The LORD looked upon all that He had made, and behold, it was very bad. We can almost hear the LORD cry.

Only Noah was righteous.

Genesis 6:8-9

But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.

But, all the rest were wicked.

Genesis 6:11-12

Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.

There was only one thing for the LORD to do. He must destroy the creation. Like a potter whose vessel is spoiled in his hands, the LORD set His heart to make it into another vessel (Jer. 18:4).

Genesis 6:13-14

Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth. Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch.

And Noah built the ark. It took some time to build the ark. We read in 6:22 that it was massive -- 450 feet by 75 feet by 45 feet. This is like 500 train cars, nearly 5 miles long! It was certainly large enough to hold two of every sort of animal on the planet.

Then came the day when Noah entered the ark.

Genesis 7:13-16

On the very same day Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark, they and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, all sorts of birds. So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath of life. Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the Lord closed it behind him.

Picture the scene. Eight people and a boat-load of animals dry-docked on the land. And then the flood came.

We get rain here in Rockford. But nothing like this. For 40 days and 40 nights, the rain fell upon the Earth (Gen 7:17). Soon, the water lifted the ark off the ground. I can picture the mass of humanity heading for the hills as the water levels rose. But soon, it was futile.

Genesis 7:19-20

The water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered. The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered.

And millions of people were drowned. The world that God had created was utterly destroyed.

Have you ever been to a place where flooding has occurred? The devastation is horrific. A few years back, hurricane Katrina hit the southern

portion of our nation, and caused some massive flooding. With our church, I traveled down to help with some relief work. What I saw was devastating. In a matter of a few hours, the tidal surge had come over the land and destroyed the homes in the land. Boats from the ocean were sitting the yard. Cars were upside down. Fences were knocked over. Trash and debris was all around. In a word, it was a mess! I can hardly imagine what it was like in the time of Noah.

Genesis 7:21-24

All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind; of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died. Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark. The water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days.

The flood lasted 150 days. Everything was destroyed. And it's not like the flood changed a whole lot. People were just as sinful after the flood as they were before the flood. That includes those who were in the ark. We know this from Genesis 8:21, "The Lord smelled the soothing aroma; and the Lord said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done."

The only reason that we are still around is because of God's kindness. In chapter 9, we read of the covenant that God made with Noah.

Genesis 9:8-13

Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, "Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth." God said, "This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.

This covenant was the only thing that kept Noah alive. He too was a sinner.

Genesis 9:20-21

Then Noah began farming and planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent.

Even the most righteous in the land was a sinner. God's grace to Noah didn't come because of some merit in himself. It came because of God's mercy.

As a point of application, I would simply say that the prevalence of sin ought never to surprise us. We ought never to be surprised wherever we see sin rear its ugly head, even in the church. We are all sinners saved by grace. Noah was a sinner saved by grace and so are we.

Well, such was the world after the fall of Adam. It was filled with Death and Destruction. Finally, it faced, ...

### **3. Disobedience (chapter 11)**

At one point, the world was united.

Genesis 11:1

Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words.

People decided to build a tower of human achievement. It must have been great. God says so in verse 6, ...

Genesis 11:6

The Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them.

The builders had forgotten their Designer. The creators had forgotten their Creator. On several occasions, the LORD had instructed those on the planet to fill the earth (Genesis 1:28; 9:1, 7). And yet, those in Shinar were intent upon staying in one place. They were being disobedient to the LORD. So, the LORD came down and confused their language in order to scatter them.

Genesis 11:7-9

Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.

That's all we know of the world for 2,000 years. Death. Destruction. Disobedience.

At the end of Genesis 11, it all seems hopeless. You have ungodly people speaking many different languages, covering the world. They aren't seeking God. What's the point? This isn't how God created the world. This isn't how the world was intended to be. Even the creation knows this. We read in Romans, "For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now." (Romans 8:19-22). The world is a mess!

And then, the ray of hope comes with a man named Abram.

Genesis 12:1-3

Now the Lord said to Abram,

"Go forth from your country,  
And from your relatives  
And from your father's house,  
To the land which I will show you;  
And I will make you a great nation,  
And I will bless you,  
And make your name great;  
And so you shall be a blessing;  
And I will bless those who bless you,  
And the one who curses you I will curse.  
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

God hasn't given up on the world. God chose Abraham. God promised to bless him. And the rest of the Bible unfolds this story. From Abraham to Isaac to Jacob, Judah, David, Christ, and the world. "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'All the nations will be blessed in you.'" (Gal 3:8). This is the gospel. The blessings of Abraham have come to the Gentiles -- "in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (Gal 3:14).

If you are experiencing the blessings of God's grace today, it's only because God chose Abraham.

Know that when God chose Abraham, he had the whole world in mind. "And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Genesis 12:3b). All of the families of the world -- this includes us!

This promise is fulfilled in Revelation 5, "And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.'"

Apart from God's grace, our world would be a mess. But, praise be to God that He has chosen Abraham and brought us salvation through Jesus Christ. Believe in Him. He is the only way that the world will escape the mess that it is in.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on November 27, 2013 by Steve Brandon.  
For more information see [www.rvbc.cc](http://www.rvbc.cc).

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[1] Genesis 4:5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31