

GENESIS 4-11 IN LATER REVELATION

The flood is proof that God can and will judge the earth (Matt 24:37-41; 2 Pet 2-3).

The Canaanites served the descendants of Shem (Judg 1:28).

Babel/Babylon is the center and symbol of opposition to God (Isa 13, 47; Rev 16-18).

The confusion of languages and dispersal of peoples will be reversed in the future (Zeph 3:9-11). Tongues at Pentecost was a foretaste (Acts 2:6-21).

See also Matt 23:35; Luke 3:36-38; Acts 15:29; Rom 6:12; 1 Cor 11:7; 1 Tim 4:3; Heb 11:4-7; James 5:4; 1 Pet 3:20; 1 Jn 3:12; Jude 11.

GOING FURTHER

How do these chapters prepare us for God's call of Abraham?

What do these chapters teach about (a) the sinfulness of man, (b) the judgment of God; (c) God's purpose for man?

How do these chapters relate to Jesus' return?

PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT STUDY

Read Genesis 12-22. Pay careful attention to: (1) anything God says; (2) anything related to seed/offspring; (3) the promises and covenants that God makes with Abraham.

Note how Abraham repeatedly interferes with God's work, placing the promise in jeopardy at some points.

SOURCES CITED

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Marcus Dods, *The Book of Genesis*, 1902.
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Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 1998.

GENESIS 4-11: THE SPREAD OF SIN AND A SEED OF HOPE

PREPARATION FOR THIS STUDY

Read Genesis 4-11. Given that God begins something new with the promises to Abraham in 12:1-3, what is the point of Gen 4-11? Why is it here? How does it prepare us for 12:1-3?

How is the conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent apparent in these chapters?

Study Gen 9:24-27. What is this all about? What does it mean "may he live in the tents of Shem" (v27)?

NOTES

Genesis 4 – This chapter shows the spread of sin through the line of Cain, first through the murder of a brother and then his descendant boasting over killing a lad for a mere wound. Yet there is hope: Eve has "another seed," one who, unlike Cain, may crush the serpent.

Genesis 5 – This chapter shows Noah's relationship to Adam (through Seth, not Cain). The constant refrain is the effect of sin: "and he died." Yet there is hope: Enoch walked with God and God took him away.

Genesis 6-8 – The world is so full of man's wickedness that it needs a complete cleansing. Yet there is hope: God saves a righteous man, his family, and creatures to start afresh.

"The tiny spark has grown into a raging inferno" (Dempster 2003: 67).

"Although the earth has been recreated, the same is not true of human nature, for, as God comments, 'every inclination of his (man's) heart is evil from childhood' (8:21)" (Alexander 2002: 134).

"The Flood has not been forgotten by almost any people under heaven, but its moral result is nil" (Dods 1902: 66-67).

Genesis 9 – God is always faithful, but man is not. God promises never to destroy the earth by flood, but Noah abuses God’s gift of the vine and his son dishonors him. Yet there is hope: The Lord is the God of Shem, and Shem will rule over Canaan.

“Of significance is the fact that this is the first occasion in Genesis when a human being pronounces a blessing or a curse; preciously it was always God who blessed or cursed. Yet, in cursing Canaan and blessing Shem and Japheth, Noah’s words obviously carry divine authority. For the first time we meet something which is repeated later in Genesis: those within the chosen line of ‘seed’ are divinely empowered to bless or curse others” (Alexander 2002: 119).

“Noah...determined that the attributes of their descendants were embodied in his sons’ personalities” (Ross 1998: 210).

Genesis 10-11 – Noah’s family is fruitful, but mankind refuses to spread out across the earth, instead choosing to defy God and make a name for themselves (not God, and apart from God). God scatters and confuses them to stop them. Yet there is hope: God will bless the world through Abraham.

“The primeval history reaches its fruitless climax as man, conscious of new abilities, prepares to glorify and fortify himself by collective effort. The elements of the story are timelessly characteristic of the spirit of the world. The project is typically grandiose; men describe it excitedly to one another as if it were the ultimate achievement—very much as modern man glories in his space projects” (Kidner 1967: 109).

“Humanity is thus ‘exiled’ by the LORD and hindered from establishing a community that might challenge his authority over the earth” (Alexander 2002: 136).

“It is the will of God...to employ nationalism in the reduction of sin” (Stigers in Ross 1998: 234).

Genesis 1–6	Genesis 7–12
Creation (Gen 1-2)	Re-creation (Gen 7-8)
Adam sins with the fruit (Gen 3:6)	Noah sins with the vine (Gen 9:20)
In the midst of a curse, God provides hope (Gen 3:15)	In the midst of a curse, God provides hope (Gen 9:26)
God commands Adam to be fruitful (Gen 1:28)	God commands Noah to be fruitful (Gen 9:1)
God forbids one tree (Gen 2:17)	God forbids eating blood (Gen 9:4)
The population of the earth increases (Gen 4-5)	The population of the earth increases (Gen 10)
God judges man’s wickedness with the flood (Gen 6)	God judges man’s wickedness at Babel (Gen 11)
God preserves a righteous family (Gen 6)	God prepares a righteous family (Gen 12)

HOPE IN GENESIS 4-11

God shows grace even to one who murders his brother by protecting him (Gen 4:15).

God provides another seed for Adam and Eve after Abel’s death (Gen 4:25).

God walks with Enoch and takes him away, pointing to the possibility of temporal and eternal fellowship with God (Gen 5:24).

God shows grace to Noah and saves him, his family, and the created animals (Gen 6:8ff).

God promises not to curse the ground again, even though he knows man is wicked (Gen 8:21).

God promises to remember his covenant with all living creatures not to use the waters to destroy all life (Gen 9:15-16).

Noah blesses the God of Shem, pointing to the faith of his son and the continuation of the woman’s seed who would not submit to the serpent (Gen 9:26).