

98-04-12a

This is Resurrection Sunday, and it is customary to reflect at this time on the work of Jesus Christ as the greatest manifestation of God's grace toward us. This might not be the first passage that springs to mind in terms of what we celebrate on this day, but I think you'll see, both in connection with the significance of this day and our study this morning in Genesis, that this is a wonderful passage expressing the grace of God. Psalm 103, it's labeled in the New King James, a psalm of unmixed praise, a psalm of David.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies, who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The Lord executes righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.

He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the children of Israel. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive, nor will he keep his anger forever.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear him, for he knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass.

As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to such as keep his covenant, and to those who remember his commandments to do them.

The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. Bless the Lord, you his angels, who excel in strength, who do his word, heeding the voice of his word. Bless the Lord, all you his hosts, you ministers of his, who do his pleasure.

Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul. As you can see, even in Old Testament times, even in the days of David, there was great understanding of God's power over sin, God's power over death, God's power to turn cursing to blessing, to work his will in human history.

And that, of course, finds its ultimate expression in the work of Christ on the cross. Not only his death that takes away our penalty for sin, that redeems us, that propitiates the

Father, that accomplishes all of the works necessary to make relationship with God possible, and make a productive life before God possible, both now and in the ages to come. He, as it says in verse 10, has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities.

It's a wonderful thing to reflect on and remember, especially at this season of the year, that our relationship with God, our future with God, does not depend on who and what we are. It rests on the merit of our Savior, Jesus Christ. There are times when we have a myopic view of life, our circumstances, our failures, our sins, our corrupt nature seems to express itself and come to the front of our consciousness.

And that's the time to remember that God is not looking at us, he's looking at the Lord Jesus Christ. And in him we have righteousness and peace and sanctification. And this is a truth that has been known throughout the ages.

David understood this. David writes this psalm. David who murdered Uriah.

David who committed adultery with Bathsheba. David who numbered the people and incurred God's wrath. An episode to which we will be returning again this morning.

And yet it is David who knows that he can be purged and cleansed. David who stands before God blameless because of the anticipation of God's work through Christ. This chapter and the one following also have some significant language and some significant concepts, believe it or not, related to our study in Genesis.

And if you'll turn back now to Genesis chapter 6, we're actually right at the end of chapter 5. We will move forward this morning in our study of the first of the books of Moses. You will remember last time that we traced the lineage of Cain and then compared the descendants of Cain to the descendants of Seth. And if you remember our chart that compared these two lines, we covered a great deal of this last time in terms of the meaning of these names and the close correspondence that many of them have to their counterpart between the line of Seth and the line of Cain.

And there is a theme or a trend, a thread that runs through these generations on one side and on the other. On the Cainite side, as we have seen, you have Enoch, the dedicator of cities, who dedicates the city not to God, but to his son. He names it after the name of his son, Erad.

Erad, in turn, gives birth to a son called Mehuiael, blotted out by God. And his son Methushael, the man of Sheol, the man of what goes down, followed by Lamech, whose name means oppression, and he is an oppressor. He is also the man of two things.

He has two wives, each of whom have two children. He kills two men. And he believes that if Cain is cursed, then his curse is squared.

It's 77-fold instead of 7-fold. And we saw that very similar names occur after the first three generations following Adam. Adam, although he is the father of Cain, is not listed in the Cainite genealogy as he is in the Sethite genealogy.

So Adam is categorized on the Seth side. You have Adam, Seth, and then Enoch and Kenan. And we didn't say too much about Enoch and Kenan last time because we focused on these names below the line.

Mahalalel, the praiser of God. Yared, the one who descends, or the descendant, if you will. Enoch, again, dedication, but this Enoch is the man who walks with God.

His life is dedicated to God. It's not dedicated to his efforts, not dedicated to his son. Then you have Methuselah, the man of the missile, the man of ascent, the man of what goes up, rather than the man of what goes down, to Sheol, to the pit.

Followed by Lamech, and we know that Lamech means oppression, but this Lamech is the father of Noah. And when he looks at oppression, he looks to God for hope. And he says when Noah is born, perhaps this will be the one who will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands because of the ground which the Lord has cursed.

He is not an oppressor. He is the one who looks for relief from oppression. So the contrast is clear, but I wanted to finish our look at these two lines because we haven't said much about Enoch and Kenan up here, and we haven't said a whole lot about Yabal, Ubal, and Tubal, or Tubal Cain.

And we have sort of an inversion here. We've seen that there's a chiastic or a crossways pattern here in many cases. You had Baha'u'llah and Enoch in opposite places from their counterparts, Enoch and Muhia'el in the Cainite line, and it causes us to draw sort of an X. The chiasm or the X-type structure is a favorite device in both the Old Testament and in the New.

The Semitic cultures and the Greek culture were very fond of this because much of what was communicated was done verbally, and this was a memory aid, and it also, rather than having a perfectly corresponding list, gives you something in your mind. It's much easier to remember something that's symmetrical but has some uniqueness to it than it is to remember a perfect symmetry. So these were designed as a memory and communication aid, and it also, whenever you have a chiastic structure, draws attention to that which is at the center of that chiasm.

We saw this when we studied the account of the fall, and right at the center of that set of scenes that play out in the garden, you have Eve partaking of the fruit and Adam joining her. It's right at the very center of that structure. And similarly here, we have the larger chiasm.

If you look not only at these names we considered last time, but also you have these

three men who are the immediate descendants of Adam, Seth, Enosh, and Kenan. Seth, of course, means to place. There's a verb in Hebrew which means to put or to place.

Seth is a noun form of that. He is the replacement. He is the substitute, and this is what Eve says when he is born.

She says in 425 of Genesis, God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed. And once again, especially on this day, we are reminded of the theme of death and resurrection that is found throughout the scriptures. We saw this when we studied Leviticus 14 and the ritual of cleansing for the healed leper, where two birds were brought outside the city to the place where this former leper resided.

The priest would bring them out. He killed one and broke apart its chest and spilled the blood into a bowl of fresh or living water and then used that blood as a part of the ritual and dipped hyssop into that blood-water mixture, sprinkled it on the living bird, and set that bird free. And those two identical birds are a picture of death and resurrection.

They represent a single person. Death and yet life. And that living bird that is set free is associated permanently with the one that died.

In the same way, Seth and Abel represent a single person. You have Abel, who is faithful to God, who, because of offering a faithful sacrifice to God, dies and yet lives. Seth takes the place.

He is the substitute for Abel. And he is the line through which the seed of the woman is perpetuated. So, Seth means replacement.

His son, Enosh, is a very interesting name because, like Adam, it is a generic word for man. But it is the word that is used often in contexts where man is seen in his weakness or in his lack of power. Man caught in circumstances.

Man in need of aid. And so, Enosh is a recognition of need. It's a recognition that man doesn't have everything that he needs to sustain himself.

It's not like the line of Cain, which finds itself to be self-sufficient. And then you have Kenan, which may say Canaan in your English Bible. And his name means possession.

That which is possessed. It's not what is built. It's not what is manufactured.

What is accomplished that counts. It's what is possessed. And when you look at these three men, Seth, Enosh, and Kenan, and their counterpart in the chiasmic structure, which would be the last three individuals in the Canaanite line, and then you have Yabal, Yubal, and Tubal, all three of their names are related to the Hebrew verb yobel, which means to produce.

Production. And of course, the description of their lives bear this out. They are the ones

who learn how to herd cattle and sheep and flocks and so forth as an industry.

Abel was a keeper of sheep, but they turned this into an industry and into a means of self-sustenance. You have Yubal and Tubal-Cain. Tubal-Cain is the metalworker and the manufacturer of things out of iron and bronze.

And we talked about this when we first saw their names, that this was probably iron. It's supposed that it was iron from meteors because ironworking was unknown until down near the time of the Exodus and the time of David. You remember that the Philistines had a monopoly on ironworking because Israel was still in the late Bronze Age.

They could work bronze, but they didn't know how to smelt and how to work with iron. And this is the reason that only Saul and Jonathan had iron swords and the whole army of Israel later on. But what this neglects is that there was a lot of knowledge before the flood that perished in the flood, and apparently Tubal-Cain figured out how to work with iron or iron ore and how to smelt it.

We have no idea how advanced that civilization may have become, but I doubt that it was meteoric iron. Among other reasons, if there was a canopy around the earth, a meteor would have had a tough time getting through. So you have these men who are associated with production.

Man's efforts, man's provision for man's own needs. And throughout that line, you have an independent streak, an independent mode of thought corresponding to this. And then if you draw your other leg of the ax here, you go from Cain to Noah.

Cain is the fugitive and the vagabond. He has a promise and a covenant from God, doesn't he? God places a mark on him to preserve him from the avenger, to preserve him from someone coming after him and avenging the murder of Abel. Noah also receives a covenant from God, also is preserved by God.

But look at the contrast between the preservation of Cain and the preservation of Noah. Through the preservation of Noah, the line of the woman, the seed of the woman is produced. Noah is going to have three sons and is going to have Shem as his descendant in the spiritual sense, through whom the Shemites or Semites will come, which will be Israel.

And in this structure, we find that there's a reason for the genealogies to be here. And we have not even scratched the surface of all of the meaning that is there. Some of it is because we have so much difficulty interpreting the meaning of these words.

They're very ancient. In many cases, these names are the origin of the meaning of a word in Hebrew, rather than the other way around. How do you do the etymology or the history of a word that got invented in the early generations? Etymologists go crazy trying to figure out where did this word come from? Well, they made it up.

It is the archetype. It's the origin. And in many cases, the meaning, such as Abel, Evel in Hebrew, means that which is effervescent, something that's very temporary.

And it's an essence that rapidly disappears, sort of like a vapor. And where did they get that idea? Well, they looked at Abel and said, this is what this is like. It's like Abel.

He was here a short time, and then he's gone. So, for that reason, in our distance from the early Hebrew, we have to wrestle in some cases with these, but it does yield to study. I want to also mention, before we move forward, that Enoch, who walked with God and on whom we dwelt at some length last time in terms of what walk, walk with God, walk before God, walking in truth means, Enoch is in the seventh generation.

If you count down, Adam is generation number one. Seth, two. Enosh, three.

Kenan, four. Mahalalel, five. Yared, six.

And Enoch is in the seventh generation. And if we think, well, that's just coincidence, you can go over to Jude 6, where Jude points out, Enoch, seventh from Adam, says, it is significant that he's in the seventh generation because it is in the seventh generation that he walks with God and he goes to be with God and remains with God. In what generation or in what millennium of human history will we go to be with God and walk with God? It's in the seventh millennium.

It's in the 7,000 year period. Seven is the day on which God rests. Seven is the day of peace.

It is the day when Israel was to pause and reflect on the work of God and to ensure that they did not forget God. And it's so unfortunate that it became a religious ritual rather than a day of return and a day of nourishing of relationship with God. But Enoch is in that seventh generation, and that itself is also significant.

There are many other things I could say about some of these. I've been working on the ages and so on, and we will return to this when we get to the flood and the duration of the flood. So if you still have questions about the sexagesimal system for counting time, where you have a 360-day year and 12 30-day months, your patience will be rewarded when we look at the flood.

But what I would like to do now is move forward because in Genesis 5, verse 30, after he begot Noah, Lamech lived 595 years and had sons and daughters. All the days of Lamech were 777 years, and he died. And Noah was 500 years old, and Noah begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

I would not think that he begot them all in the same year, since there was apparently only one Mrs. Noah. But for the purposes of scripture, we're only given one age, and that's the age of 500. Now if your recall is very good, you may remember how old Noah

was when the flood began.

Do you remember? He's 600 years old when the flood begins. Noah is exactly 600 years old when the flood begins. He's exactly 500 years old here when he begets Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Apparently his firstborn is born in his 500th year. Then we have an interruption. You could take the next three chapters and remove them and find that in the beginning of chapter 9, God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, and so forth.

The story could continue without a break by leaving out chapter 6, chapter 7, and chapter 8. Of course, we would wonder what happened to everybody. But in many cases, people have said, well, this is the result of editing. They have this theory of the Yahwist and the Elohist and the priestly redactor and so forth.

It is right around this time in Genesis where it's very difficult to find good commentary because people begin to say, well, this is a patchwork and here's one of the obvious scenes right here at the beginning of chapter 6 because this has been inserted between 5.32 and 9.1. We're going to see as we go through this section that it is an integral part of the narrative. It has threads and ties structurally to the rest of the narrative. If there were any shadow of doubt in our minds, which there's probably not, this is all a book authored by Moses who, if there was any editor, he is it.

I think he worked with earlier sources. We've talked about that before. But it's important that here, after noting that Noah has been born and has had his three sons, that now there is a shift in emphasis and we're going to see conditions.

We've heard all through chapter 5 that these descendants lived, had sons and daughters, and died. Well, what became of the sons and daughters? What sort of civilization developed? We heard a little bit about the Cainite line and the industries and efforts that they engaged in. What exactly happened? And we don't have any idea what happened with the daughters.

Well, we're about to get some additional information. Chapter 6, verse 1. Now, it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth and daughters were born to them. Now, daughters have first appeared back in chapter 4 and chapter 5. And you remember that Lamech had a daughter.

The sister of Tubal-Cain in 422 was Naamah. It's the first reference that we have to other than male offspring. Then in chapter 5 and verse 3 and 4, Adam lived 130 years, begot a son in his own likeness, after his image named him Seth.

After he begot Seth, the days of Adam were 800 years, and he had sons and daughters. Looking at Cain, one of the most common questions. I've heard this in movies, I've read

it in books, I've heard it in idle conversation.

People say, oh, you know, I really had to throw over any idea that Genesis was literal when I started reading about Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel. Where did Cain get his wife? It's got to be a fabrication because Cain apparently goes out and gets married and has children and there's nobody to marry. Well, all you have to do is read Genesis 5, verse 4. Adam and Eve had sons and daughters.

And in these early days, there is a proliferation of male and female offspring, all of whom apparently are free to intermarry. And they do. So that's where Cain got his wife.

One of these common supposed cruxes of biblical contradiction or biblical problems. And it is no problem, except that people have difficulty in our generation with marriage between siblings. But even down to the time of Abraham, Sarah is Abraham's half-sister.

And right in the godly line, blessed by God, through you all the nations of the earth will be blessed. And he married his half-sister. So in earlier days, in patriarchal times, this was not an issue.

It couldn't be. So here we find that when men began to multiply on the face of the earth. And again, there are so many word plays and internal pieces of structure here when you read this in Hebrew.

The word for man here, when it says when men began, this is ha-adam. It's Adam with the article. When men began to multiply on the face of the earth.

Earth here is ha-adamah. Man came from the dust of the ground. Adam came from adamah.

And so here you have man, ha-adam, multiplying on the face of ha-adamah. On the face of the earth. On the face of the dust from which he's formed.

He's proliferating on the surface of the ground. Daughters were born to them. Now when did this start taking place? Well, very early on.

Apparently shortly after the birth of Seth, Adam and Eve began to have daughters as well as sons. This had to occur in time for Cain and for Seth to take wives. And immediately you had a proliferation of both genders.

So very early on, because it says that it came to pass. And there is a Hebrew word here that means when. And it applies, if you look at this grammatically, and I could go into gory detail, which I won't.

But you have two clauses here in chapter 6 verse 1. It came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth. And when daughters were born to them. The came to pass phrase applies when both of those conditions were true.

Men began to multiply and daughters were born to them. Female human beings began to proliferate on the earth. Man is multiplying, obviously you have to have women to do that.

And when women started to become numerous, this is when verse 2 takes place. It came about that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were beautiful. That they were good.

And they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. Virtually every word in this verse has been the subject of endless speculation and study and debate. Who are the sons of God? Who are the daughters of men? What does it mean to take wives? Is there some forcible act taking place here? What does it mean that they took wives of all whom they chose? We begin by recognizing that in the Pentateuch, in the books of Moses, we have no use of the phrase sons of God to refer to human beings.

And to sort of assume our conclusion to save time, we will begin by stating that the sons of God are not men. They are angelic creation. We're going to look at some scriptures this morning that will bear that out.

And we're going to find a very interesting relationship in scripture between verse 2 and verse 3 and the vocabulary that we find there. The sons of God saw the daughters of men. Now, if they're seeing the daughters of men, where are they? If they are angels, and we're assuming for the sake of argument that they are, are they, like Paul says in Corinthians, that women have authority on their heads for the sake of the angels? The angels are up in heaven looking down on them and seeing that they're beautiful.

This does not follow because you can't live in the heavenly realms and take a wife or have relations with a human woman. So, if these are in fact angels, and that would be a first-class condition if and it's true, these angels have to be on the earth coexisting in some physical fashion with the daughters of men. And they have to have a human-type body or a reasonable facsimile thereof that is capable of human functions including reproduction.

Well, right away this starts to sound strange. It is a common element in mythology. If you've ever studied Greek mythology, Roman mythology, Mesopotamian mythology, all of the ancient cultures had myths and legends about cohabitation between God or gods and men.

They've got the TV show on Hercules now. Where did Hercules come from? Well, he's the son of Zeus who is a god and a human mother. And part of the tension in the series, if you could imagine such a thing, is that he's trying to figure out if he's divine enough to be immortal or if the mortal part of him is such that he can die.

Well, he's not around now, so I assume they got the answer to that question. But this is a

common theme. You have the myth of Leda and the swan where Zeus comes down in the form of a swan and overpowers physically this woman Leda and there's offspring from that.

In all the ancient myths, you have these. Well, here's a question for you. These myths are very ancient.

They go back into the murky, distant fog of antiquity. Is it possible that these myths are not just imaginary stories but that they are the remnants or the vestiges of more accurate truth that has been distorted in pagan cultures? God has been subtracted and other things have been added. But in some ways, there are remnants.

Most of the ancient and even modern cultures have a flood myth or a flood story of some sort. The names are changed and the details are changed. But worldwide, it's a well-documented fact that almost every culture that has left any sort of written record and even aboriginal cultures that they've gone and found in the jungle have a flood story.

Well, why is that? Well, there's probably a common flood experience back in everybody's history. Similarly, it is very interesting, if you have the time, to examine pagan mythology and see that there are common threads such as intermarriage between humans and gods or godlike beings resulting in offspring that have extraordinary strength or extraordinary abilities like Hercules. And so when people see that same thing occurring in the Bible or someone makes a case for it occurring in the Bible, they immediately say, well, that can't be it.

We don't have anything at all in common with the pagan myths and that's actually backward. Pagan myths may, in fact, have some vestigial elements of truth from what actually happened, which is recorded in the Bible. And that is, in fact, what we have here.

You say, well, don't we have Matthew? I believe it's Matthew 22, 20, where Jesus says, the angels in heaven neither marry nor are given in marriage. Well, where are the angels again that neither marry nor are given in marriage? They're in heaven. If there were angels that married or gave in marriage, they're not in heaven.

They must be somewhere else. And we have here the sons of God. And this word for taking wives is accurately translated, even in the King James.

It is not they came down and raped, they came down and infiltrated, they came down and overcame or seduced. This is the normal verb in Hebrew for taking a wife. And it implies all of the traditional elements of taking a wife, which includes, by the way, consent of the father.

This is the standard verb. It's the standard procedure for taking a wife. What was required in any Semitic culture to marry someone's daughter? Consent of the father.

There is an exchange. There is a contract. There is a trade and an agreement between the prospective groom, and sometimes the groom's family, and the father of the bride.

He says, you can marry my daughter if. Remember Laban and Jacob and the contract for seven years' work, and then he gets Leah and then he works seven more years and gets Rachel, winds up working another seven years beyond that before he finally leaves. This is a contractual arrangement.

Jacob could not just go in there and run off with Rachel, which was his desire. The consent of the father is required. What does this tell us about these marriages? Man is complicit.

Man is culpable. This is not an invasion or an infiltration against the will of man, where these angels came in and were perhaps trying to contaminate the gene pool or something. This is not an attack.

I've heard this as a theory, that this was a satanic attempt to corrupt the gene pool so that Christ could not come and be fully human or some such thing. We know two things. We know, first of all, that it was possible to maintain a pure line because of what we're about to read about Noah.

He's perfect in his generations. He doesn't have any of this intermarriage in his background. Secondly, these marriages are not with angels from Satan.

The satanic forces, the demons, whatever you want to call them, would not be referred to as sons of God. The sons of God, if you look at Job chapter 1 and 2 and so forth, are distinguished from demons. God is not going to be claiming the fallen angels as his sons any more than he claims unbelievers as sons of God.

We know that men are created in the image of God, but the term son of God or child of God is never applied to an unbeliever, and son of God is never applied to the fallen angels, which stands to reason. So we're left with this somewhat perplexing situation where apparently unfallen angels, sons of God, see the daughters of men, that they are *Tov*. And once again, you have a combination of verbs here that harps back to an earlier part of Genesis.

They said, well, this is an inserted thing. If you look back at Genesis chapter 3, verse 6, what happened when Eve was considering the act of taking the fruit? When the woman saw that the tree was *Tov*, good or beautiful, that it was pleasant to the eyes, desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit. She saw it was good and she took.

She was unfallen when she performed those acts or was in the midst of falling when she performed those acts. And you have a very similar pattern here in Genesis chapter 6, verse 2. The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were *Tov*, that they were good, that they were lovely, beautiful. And they took.

Same sequence of events. They took wives for themselves. This was done in a proper way.

There was propriety and it was probably justified on this basis. Well, it's not like we're just coming in and seizing and raping, pillaging and plundering here. We're doing things in the proper fashion.

We've received the consent of the Father and so on. Well, what is the situation where, apparently, unfallen angels, sons of God, are able to engage in a domestic life with human ladies? We're going to pause and take our break. And when we come back, we will see from Scripture what this circumstance was and how it turned out.

Let's pause and take our break.