

98-05-15a

Let's begin our time in the Word of God this evening by going to the Lord in prayer, asking his blessing on us as we fellowship together. Father, we thank you as always for your faithfulness and the expressions of your grace toward us. We thank you for our Savior, Jesus Christ, who has made it possible for us to stand before you blameless and to not only be rescued from condemnation but to have a positive role in your plan, to have a hope that we seize hold of by faith.

We pray tonight as we study your Word that God the Holy Spirit will enlighten us and will lead us into all truth and that as a result we will be thoroughly equipped for every good work. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

We're going to resume and conclude tonight our digression or excursus into really two related subjects that have come up in connection with our studies in Genesis chapter 6. We saw there the rather unusual situation of God detailing angels to supervise the human race and to communicate not only truth about God and about worship of God but also practical information and to administrate, to judge, to settle disputes, to give policy and direction to the early human civilization. Those angels unfortunately fell. It is a separate fall.

They are in a separate category from the angels who followed Satan. And their fate is different. Their judgment is different.

Apparently their situation is different enough that as we saw last week in Peter's first epistle, Jesus after his resurrection went and preached to those spirits in prison. And we looked at the related situation. During that time when these angels were on the earth, they intermarried with men.

Genesis 6 tells us that God looked down and saw the wickedness of man and it was great. He declared it to be an evil generation. He saw that the wickedness of man, this is Genesis 6.5, the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

We know academically that evil begins in the heart. Before someone commits a murder or deals drugs or does some other criminal evil thing, it began with bitterness, self-indulgence, self-centeredness, anger, a sense of injustice in the heart where someone justifies some immoral, indecent or illegal action. Feeling like, well, I'm going to get back at the people who have held me down or I didn't get a fair shake, I don't have the opportunities, I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth.

And some people are just disregarding of authority. They don't like the fact that there's authority and that there are rules. They find it a personal insult that someone would tell them what to do and what not to do.

And they feel free to just go out and do whatever they want to do. And if anybody gets in their way, they feel wronged. How dare you get in my way when I'm out pursuing what I want? And so evil and wickedness, even in its overt forms, begin in the heart.

And we know that. But there's something that is important in God's declaration in Genesis 6, 5 and 6. When God sees these things, he says in verse 6, it says that the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth and he was grieved in his heart. So the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.

We've reviewed some passages that talk about God's judgment on generations, God's judgment on cities. The judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah was not only the eradication of an evil set of towns, but it stands as an example. It is recorded in the Bible.

And long after the smoke has cleared and the brimstone has ceased to burn in those cities, everybody, even people who don't know anything about the Bible, when you say Sodom and Gomorrah, they have some idea that it was a wicked place and something very, very bad happened to it and it was destroyed. It seems like that's almost a universal knowledge. And it's an example.

It reflects God's standing attitude toward evil and toward disregard of himself. And when it reaches a certain level, God destroys it. This is one of the first and greatest examples of that principle.

Human society, not only through the intermarriage and exploitation of the angels' presence here, but also through the wickedness of their thoughts of the heart, became corrupt enough that God was willing to undo his acts of creation. And when we go through, as we will study on Sunday mornings, the details of the flood and what happens after the flood, we will see the parallels to Creation Week, what is undone and what is redone after the flood. Judgment by water is the definition of the flood.

Well, where do you start out in Genesis 1-2? The earth is without form and void, darkness is on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God hovers over the face of the waters. You have a water-covered planet with no life. What are you going to have after the flood? A water-covered planet with no life except what's in the ark, what has been saved by grace.

And there are many interesting parallels that will develop. But the point here is that this was a judgment. Why is the judgment of the flood preserved for us? What are we supposed to remember out of it? We can say, well, yes, there was a flood, yes, there was a Sodom and Gomorrah.

What is the nature of the warning? Is it, well, don't be a really bad murdering, thieving, raping, pillaging, plundering type of person? Does it just mean be moral or does it mean

more than that? So we began looking last time at what it means when it says that this is an evil generation. What is the definition, what are the characteristics of an evil generation? And we began by looking at 1 Peter 3, where he refers back to Genesis 6. And he talks about the fact that Christ, in verse 19 of 1 Peter 3, Christ also went and preached to the spirits in prison in the power of the Spirit. These spirits were formerly disobedient when once the divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is eight souls, were saved through water.

Then he goes on to compare that to baptism. And we saw by scanning through the entire book of 1 Peter that what God is analyzing, what God is using as a measuring stick are the thoughts and intents of the heart. The power of God comes into the life of the believer through the word of God and the Spirit of God.

And what does the word of God do in the hands of the Spirit? It is a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart. It enables us to be approved workmen who do not need to be ashamed. It divides to the very quick, the very center of our being, dividing us under the soul and the spirit and the joints and the marrow.

It transforms us by the renewing of our mind. That is where everything takes place. Our problem is the same problem that ancient man had.

Ancient man did not choose, by and large, to dwell on the invisible. It is a lot easier to concentrate on what is visible. It is a lot easier to sit and stare at your TV set than it is to sit in a quiet room and meditate on spiritual truth.

It is easier to deal with the concrete than the non-concrete. You see a behavior on the part of some other person. It is easier to react to that behavior.

This person was short with me. This person was impatient with me. This person did me wrong in some way.

Rather than stopping and thinking about, well, what might be going on to cause this? We tend to look at someone and react to what they do against us. But what does the Bible say? Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you.

Pray for those who spitefully use you. How can you do that? Well, you are never going to do it by dwelling on their actions. You are never going to do it by thinking about the injustice of how badly you were wronged.

You are going to do it by thinking further back. Get out of the world of the concrete and think in spiritual terms. What is the matter with this person that they are that unhappy that the only way they can get attention or the only way that they can get pleasure or the only way that they can get whatever it is that they are seeking is to wrong other people? And when you look behind what was done to you and think about what is wrong with the person that has done that, what is their need, what do they lack, where is the

gap in their relationship with God or their function in the plan of God or wherever it may be, that's when we begin to get back to what God is looking at.

God is looking at the thoughts and intents of the heart. He didn't keep a list of the laws that were broken, did he? Remember in Romans where it says that sin is not calculated where there is no law? It says that sin was not imputed from Adam to Moses. It wasn't calculated.

God didn't sit and add it up and say here is another infraction, here is another wrong that was done to me, here is another rule that was broken, here is another physical act that was done that I disapprove of. God was looking at the heart and he found the deficit in the heart. When we look at people around us, when we are praying for people around us, we need to do the same thing.

It is so easy for us to pray for circumstances. Oh God, this person is in a bad circumstance, please fix it. Oh God, this person is placed under pressure, please remove the pressure.

God is trying to get us out of the low-level thinking that deals only with visible reality and look at deeper truth. In that regard, let's think about an evil generation. When we think of an evil generation, we think of well, it must be like in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

The Germans, that was an evil generation. They were murdering and thieving and sending people to gas chambers and trying to go out and conquer the world with the Nazi flag fluttering over their heads. That would be an evil generation.

Well, stop and think. What engendered that world outlook? What engendered that attitude toward people who weren't blonde and blue-eyed and so forth? There was a lot of Christianity. There were a lot of German Christians who were fervent supporters of everything that was going on in Germany in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Germany was the heartland for biblical scholarship in the last century, in the first half of this century, and there's still an important... You cannot get a doctorate of theology without learning German. You have to learn scholarly French and scholarly German. Why? Because many of the most important works of theology are written in German, by Germans, and a lot of them were written before World War II.

So how could this great hotbed of theological thinking turn into what you see in World War II? That's what we are exploring. What is an evil generation? Is it the outgrowth, the actions that take place, the crimes that are committed in the overt world? Or is it something else? There was a generation that preceded the generation that marched out into Poland and so forth in World War II. What were they thinking? What were the thoughts and intents of their heart that would lead them to approve and march in rank and file to go out and do these horrible things? That's where the evil starts, and that's

where we want to identify it and cope with it, because we fight the same battle in our own soul.

If evil is going to manifest itself in our life, by the time we start finding ourselves doing evil things, saying bad things, performing bad actions, we're way down at the reaction phase. The problem has started much earlier. The problem starts in the heart.

It starts where God is looking, where the thoughts of the heart were only evil all the time. So if we can identify what the nature of that is, it's going to be a lot easier to cope with. It's going to be a lot easier for us to fulfill our calling to be holy in the midst of our generation and also to fulfill commands like the one I mentioned earlier.

How do you love your enemies? How do you love an evil person? How do you pray for someone who is spitefully using you? What could be more evil than someone abusing us personally? That ranks way up on the evil meter in most of our minds. Well, this understanding from the Word of God should help us in those areas. Turn with me to 2 Peter 2. The two books of Peter give us a great insight into these things.

Peter lived in the midst of the generation that crucified the Lord Jesus Christ. He was a Jew living in Israel during the time of Christ. And what a contrast.

You have the Son of God incarnate walking your streets, visiting your villages, healing your sick and so forth. And at the same time, you have such a pervasive evil in society that the people who are the keepers of truth, the custodians of the law of God, can't recognize the Son of God when He's standing right in their midst. They decide that He's a blasphemer and they execute Him.

Did they think that they were wrong or did they think that they were serving God? Well, Paul the Apostle thought he was serving God when he held the coats while they stoned Stephen. So it's possible for us to think we're right and to think that we're champions of the good and in fact be participating and be a member of the evil generation. Look at 2 Peter 2. He is talking about the Old Testament days when prophets spoke and brought messages to the people of God.

But there were also false prophets among the people in those days as well as true prophets. You know, it's an interesting thing. In our Old Testament, we don't have the books of the false prophets, do we? We don't have the book of Micaiah or the book of some other false prophet, the book of Simon the sorcerer or something we could have in here, a little false prophet book.

We only have the good prophets, Isaiah and Ezekiel and so forth. So we tend to think, well, if there was ever a prophet in Israel, he was a great guy, taught the truth of God, got sought into or martyred or something and that was it. But Peter says, remember, there were false prophets among the people in those days.

There were guys who came up and talked a great fight, used the name of God and led the people down the path of compromise, led the people into syncretism where they would mix their pure Israelite religion from God with the religion of the surrounding nations. And they would say, well, yes, we're worshipping God, but we'll incorporate these other things and this will help it, this will flesh it out and make it complete. You know, it's a great religion at its core, but it can use some help.

We'll add to it and make it even better. And it sounds kind of comical when I say it now, but it made sense to them and it makes sense to people today. This is happening all around us.

Have you seen it? Have you looked around and seen the way that Christianity is being added to, is being fleshed out and is being completed with concepts that are not in the Word of God? There's an awful lot going on and a lot of it is treated like truth. Well, this is a characteristic of an evil generation. This is what Peter is describing.

There were false prophets then among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you. Peter says, there will be false teachers. The thing about a false teacher is he doesn't have a big shingle hanging out that says, false teacher, swinging in the breeze.

People just look at him and say, there's a teacher, there's a Christian, there's a man of God. He's published 12 books. He's got a radio ministry.

He's got a tape resource ministry. He's on the radio and says, write in for these free resources and for your gift of X number of dollars, we'll send you these free resources. And there's lots of scripture in there and there's lots of wonderful concepts for helping the hurting and ministering to your needs and making you feel better and so forth.

Is it possible that some of these are false? It's not only possible, it is provable that some of these things that fly the flag of Christianity and that act in the name of God, these people that Jesus is going to have to speak to in the last days, Lord, Lord, in your name, we did all these things and it's happening around us. People think, well, if they're quoting scripture and using the name of God, it must be okay. Sometimes they quote a lot of scripture.

This is one of the most deceptive things. You can have somebody that just rattles off scripture like Jack Van Impey. I mean, every third word is a scripture quotation.

And they can bowl people over with the seeming biblicity of their position. Quoting a lot of scripture doesn't make it right. Using the name of God doesn't make it right.

Claiming to be a Christian, wrapping yourself in the Christian flag and scattering Bibles hither and yon, ministering to the sick and flaky round about us and doing a lot of overt ministry doesn't mean it's right and doesn't mean that it's even close to right. In some cases, it's evil. But we don't have many who have the courage to stand up and say, You

see this really wonderful looking thing over here that's shining light all over the world? It's evil.

It's Satan disguised as an angel of light. Well, how do we develop the discernment to identify those things? How do we discern between good and evil? That's what Peter is talking about. That's what Paul talks about.

That's what the author of Hebrews talks about at the end of chapter 5. Those who are mature have their senses exercised to discern good and evil. It comes by paying close attention to what the Word of God says. Well, what does the Word of God say about evil generations? Look what Peter says here.

You can study the Old Testament and find that there were false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you who will secretly, who will without being detected, without any alert, without any alarm sounding, they will bring in destructive heresies. It's not just a heresy, it's a destructive heresy. What does it destroy? People? Houses? Property? What do you think a destructive heresy would destroy? A little pop quiz here.

What can a destructive heresy destroy? Well, what are the things that count in God's eyes? What is the genuine fruit? Fruit of the Spirit. It's been called divine good. The genuine opportunities to make decisions and think thoughts and perform actions that are pleasing in God's sight and that reflect His glory.

The things that come naturally through the power of the Spirit and the Word of God when we abide in the vine of John 15. Abide in me and ye will bear much fruit, Jesus said. He doesn't say work hard and you will bear much fruit.

He doesn't say find out where my Father is at work and go join Him in His work and you will bear much fruit. What does He say? Abide in me. How do you abide in Christ? What does abide mean? It's a resting state, isn't it? It is a state of confidence.

It's a state of trust. It's a state of faith, hope, and love. It is something invisible.

It's something on the inside. But they bring in destructive heresies. What are these heresies going to do? They're going to take away the opportunity to bear that fruit.

They're going to distract. They're going to deflect. They're going to redirect believers into avenues that seem great but don't produce genuine fruit.

If it's destructive, it's something that forms a channel that siphons people away from the truth of God, the rest of God that the author of Hebrews talks about in the first few chapters there, chapter 3 and chapter 4. He says, be afraid lest that rest that remains to the people of God be there and you fall short of it. He says, beware lest you fall short of rest. He doesn't say, beware lest you fall short of work.

Beware lest you fall short of doing enough ministry. He says, beware lest you miss the rest, because the rest is abiding in Christ. And it just goes against our nature.

We think, well, I've got to be doing something. And unconsciously we think we're sort of earning our keep. We're justifying our place in the royal family and in the body of Christ if we're active and if we're making an impact.

And if we can demonstrate, if we can say, well, look over here. A difference was made because I was here. And it's a part of our human nature.

If somebody does a favor for you, somebody does something really nice, you think, well, I've got to reciprocate. God has done wonderful things for us and we have this desire to reciprocate. That's fine, but we want to know how to reciprocate.

You don't reciprocate to someone in a way that is inappropriate or that's awkward or that they don't like. You know, someone, you're sick and they bring you a meal or whatever, and then as a result you come over and bring them a little cage of rats and turn them loose in their house, a little destructive heresy. But a lot of people who have a genuine gratitude to God for their salvation and so forth never bother to find out what God likes and what God doesn't like.

They don't know the difference between good and evil, between a good generation and an evil generation. And what they do to try to reciprocate, God winds up being evil. And it would have been better, Peter says, if they had never known the way of righteousness than to know it and then fall away from it, and their latter end is worse than the beginning.

Now they're a liability instead of an asset, where before they were saved they at least were not an issue. But now they're in the body of Christ and they're a liability. They're a lame joint.

Well, we don't want to be in that category. Destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them. Now, does this mean standing up and saying, Jesus is not the Lord, Jesus is not the Son of God.

You know how many pastors, how many denominations and churches today have adopted the idea put forth by the search for the historical Jesus? The movement that says, well, Jesus was a wonderful man who taught peace and love, but you've got to be careful about taking everything in the Bible at face value with reference to Christ. Some of this has kind of been put together by the church and it's been sort of blown out of proportion and so forth. And Jesus didn't intend some of the things that Paul and Peter and some of the others are purported to say.

A lot of them don't think that Peter or Paul really wrote the books that have their names on them and that these were done by later men. Maybe Timothy wrote Colossians or

some later author. This is in the church.

We're sort of isolated in a nice place where nobody ever speaks anything against the Bible, but in very broad, I could name you some denominations that would shock you. Some big denominations that start with M and B and are right out there with a steeple around your neighborhood corner that many of the Christians in that denomination don't believe in an inerrant Bible, don't believe in an infallible scriptural record, are willing to accept the evidence of science against the account of Genesis. And they say, well, you know, science says the earth is X million years old, so there's something wrong with Genesis.

I don't know exactly what, but I mean, science is true and Genesis is not. Well, as Paul says, let God be true and every man a liar. Whatever science may find is going to have to corroborate with scripture, not the other way around.

You have these gap theories, people trying to shoehorn in several million years between Genesis 1.1 and 1.2 because they're worried about science. They assume that science is accurate and therefore Genesis needs fixing. That is a destructive heresy.

Because as soon as you deteriorate people's confidence in the living and abiding Word of God, you have taken away the power to bear fruit. And it's a very subtle thing. But now people say, well, the Bible is a nice guide for faith and practice, but it's not infallible.

I can't just take every single promise in the Word of God to the bank. I can't trust God for a literal millennial reign of Christ and so forth. So these are the destructive heresies.

It can be a tiny change in a concept of scripture. It can be a tiny revision of what a passage says or what it means. You can take Jesus teaching tremendous truth about forgiveness to the disciples in the upper room by washing their feet and talking about the difference between salvation forgiveness, pictured in a bath, and daily life forgiveness, pictured in the washing of the feet.

And when Jesus says, as I have done for you, so you should do for one another, to distort that truth and get out literal bowls and literal water and go down to the church and take off your shoes and socks and wash each other's feet, seems like, and people say, isn't this a wonderful exercise in humility? Isn't this a wonderful act of service and so forth? It is an awkward, self-conscious, weird thing to do. And it's a distortion of scripture. It's a destructive heresy.

It is a failure to pay attention and understand the Word of God by being diligent and thinking about the invisible things. The Israelites were just as bad as the Israelites, who took the law literally and couldn't see the heart of God behind it, couldn't see the principles of truth and of doctrine behind it. They thought it was more important to only brush their gown twice instead of three times on the Sabbath so as not to work, or only

to travel X number hundred yards on the Sabbath day because that was the Sabbath day journey, keeping the letter of the law and losing its spirit.

That's a characteristic of the evil generation. This is what Peter is talking about. And you can wind up denying the Lord that bought you.

Now, are unbelievers bought by Christ? Think about your doctrine of redemption. Is redemption universal? What is the universal thing that Christ did on the cross? Multiple choice. Is it redemption, reconciliation, or propitiation? What is the universal thing that Christ did for all men on the cross? You've got a good verse to memorize in John.

And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. It doesn't say He is the redeemer for the whole world. He's not the whole world's redeemer, and He is not the whole world's reconciler.

Those things come at salvation. For propitiation, satisfaction of God's requirement that the penalty for sin be paid has been accomplished for all men. And a very simple conclusion follows from that.

Nobody goes to hell for sins. Sins have been paid for. Why do you go to the lake of fire? Not for sins.

But here, if Peter says that these men who undetected bring in these destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, what category are these men in? Unbeliever or believer? If they're bought by the blood of Christ, that's redemption. Redeemed from the slave market of sin. Purchased with the blood of Christ.

Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body. This is where your memory verses come in.

So, if these men have been bought, that tells us that these destroyers, these participants in the evil generation are believers. What a horrible thing to have to stand before Christ and wind up being an enemy of the cross. That's what these men are.

Denying the Lord who bought them and bringing on themselves swift destruction. This is destruction in this life. This is loss of reward and blessing and opportunity in the next life.

It is a bad thing to experience operational death. Many will follow their destructive ways. Can you think of any place in the Bible where it says you will have wonderful faithful teachers who will communicate the word of truth and many will follow after them? There will be great swarms and hordes of Christians following on the narrow road, going through the narrow gate.

Can you think of any passage where we get that encouragement? What are we told time and time again? There will be false teachers, they will bring in heresies, and many will

follow after them. In the last days there will be many. Read the latter part of some of Paul's epistles.

Peter says the same thing. Many will follow their destructive ways because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. It's another indication that these are believers.

The way of truth doesn't get blasphemed because of unbelievers, does it? The way of truth gets blasphemed because of people on television claiming to be Christians and then selling out. By covetousness they will exploit you. They want something.

And it's not always money, although that's a real common and easy to observe thing. Sometimes people covet influence. They covet their name on a book.

There has been such a rash of study Bibles and study aids and book series and commentary series. And the thing you see on there is the guy's name. And he's got a copyright.

And it can't be quoted without permission and that sort of thing. Totally ignoring what the Scripture says about not making merchandise of the Word of God. Scripture says don't make merchandise of the Word of God.

If God the Holy Spirit blesses you with insight in the Word of God, are you going to put it in a book and copyright it and make money off of it? What a terrible thing. It amazes me the copyright arguments that go on all through the Christian world. And you can or you can't quote this and you can or you can't copy that and you can or you can't make use of something, some insight that someone has gained in the Word of God as though we owned it and it now belongs to us.

It's covetousness. People want the credit for seeing something or putting something together. People want to take credit for what God put in His Word.

It's a terrible thing. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words. They're deceptive.

They don't seem evil. They don't seem bad. They seem like they're great.

For a long time their judgment has not been idle and their destruction does not slumber. You know that the lake of fire has already been lit. It exists right now.

It has been prepared for the devil and his angels. There's just nobody and nothing in it yet. Now I'm not saying that believers who commit these heresies are going to the lake of fire.

I'm saying that that is where destruction resides and in a sense your opportunities and your blessings and your rewards go into the lake of fire and your inheritance is the smoke of that fire of destruction. It is a symbol for the judgment of God. Believers do not

lose their salvation.

They don't go to the lake of fire. If God did not spare the angels who sinned, and this argument makes more sense now when we understand that he's talking about the Genesis 6 angels, right? Because God is sort of on their side. These are not the rebellious, in-your-eye-God-we're-going-with-Satan crowd of angels.

These are the good angels. These are the ones who came down and were trying to help mankind out and who were sort of seduced by the beauty of the daughters of men and who sort of got tripped up. You can look at them in a sympathetic light.

But God did not spare them, did he? They were his designated representatives on earth and they fell prey to their passions when they looked at the daughters of men and saw that they were lovely. But God did not spare them, but cast them down to Tartarus. This is the pit.

This is the chains of darkness in which those angels that did not keep their first estate reside, awaiting judgment. He delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved for judgment. Now, you can't be chained in the pit of darkness reserved for judgment and be up here possessing people and influencing people and talking with Jesus and doing all the things that demons do.

This is a separate category of angel. It goes on to say, God did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly. And then he goes on to mention Sodom and Gomorrah, delivering righteous lot.

Verse 9, The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and how to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment. Especially who? What is the worst evil that God is going to reserve for judgment? Those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and who despise authority. The authority of Scripture, the authority of God expressed in His plan, expressed in His word, His call on the lives of men, His call on the lives of believers.

Some people think that their authority is better than God's. Their plan is better than God's. Their priorities are greater than God's.

And that's despising authority. That is walking according to the flesh. Minding the things of the flesh.

Looking at the immediate. Looking at the effects instead of the cause. We're never going to advance in the plan of God simply looking at circumstances and not stopping to meditate on the whys and the spiritual issues that are at stake.

What does Paul say in Ephesians? Our warfare is not against flesh and blood. It's

principalities, powers, rulers. It is the invisible things against which we fight.

And it's fought at the invisible level. So these are characteristics of the evil generation. Look at chapter 3. What is going to happen in the evil generation of the last days? 2 Peter 3.3 Knowing this first, that scoffers will come in the last days walking according to 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 creation.

They willfully forget that by the word of God the heavens were of old and the earth standing out of water and in the water. Now this is a very odd thing, don't you think? If you thought about an evil generation, how would you describe them? Just off the top of your head. Oh, there will be darkness and thievery and murder and bloodshed and incest and homosexuality and bestiality.

Just think of the most horrible things. Terrible drunkenness and all kinds of adultery and lasciviousness. And all the things that Cecil B. DeMille talked about the Israelites at the base of the mountain there in the Ten Commandments.

What does God say? What does Peter say here characterizes an evil generation? They walk after their own desires. It doesn't say that those are some sort of terrible depraved desires, does it? It just says they're our own desires. We want security.

We want happiness. We want success. We want recognition.

We want our due. The things that we want without taking God into account. You can be a member of an evil generation.

You can be thinking evil thoughts and you're not doing some terrible forked-tongued, two-horned, red-skinned devil type of things. You can be wanting the best for your child and be evil in so doing because you're willing to run roughshod over the plan of God in what you think is best for your child. You may think it's best for your child not to discipline them.

You may think it's best for your child that they not ever suffer at the hands of another child. You'll go attack the parents and do all kinds of terrible things because you feel like they somehow... You go down and make a nuisance of yourself at the school or at the church or at the daycare or whatever it may be because you think you're looking out for your child and in your mind it's justified and it's good and it's holy and in reality it's evil. Because it doesn't take into account the plan of God.

And it's not centered. It isn't balanced. It's not objective.

It's subjective and it's based on our own personal desires. And we can think that these are noble desires. Unbelievers think that parental love is a wonderful thing in almost any case.

They make movies about people I killed to save my daughter and this kind of thing. And we have to look at the scriptures. We need to have our thinking grounded in the word of God and the plan of God and then we will know what is good and what is evil.

These people willfully forget a truth of scripture. They're not out cavorting and doing all these terrible things. The first problem is that they willfully forget that God made the earth with the earth standing in the water and out of the water.

And that that world then perished being flooded with water. They forget the lesson of the flood. They forget Genesis 6-9.

They forget it. You can't pursue your own desires without willfully forgetting the flood. What an odd thing to say.

But it's true. Because the flood is the symbol of God's attitude toward those who are self-willed. Those who are pursuing their plan instead of God's plan.

That's the essence of an evil generation. We're going to pause and take our break. When we come back we're going to look at a couple of other passages that talk about an evil generation.

And then we're going to move on and find out what it means to have an evil imagination. That ought to be interesting. Let's pause and take a break.