

PRAYERS & ENCOURAGEMENT

Those who are sick or need our prayers — Kaylee Dolan, J Hughes, Linda Reagan, Kay Woodruff, Jay Davis, Pat Espy

Continue to remember in your prayers those who are unable to attend worship services regularly: *Billie Sue Atkins, Freda Dunn, Romona Stokes, and Marjorie Barringer.*

Please pray for those who have forsaken the Lord that they may be reconciled to God.

READING THE OLD & NEW TESTAMENTS IN ONE YEAR

Monday - Deuteronomy 6-9; Luke 7

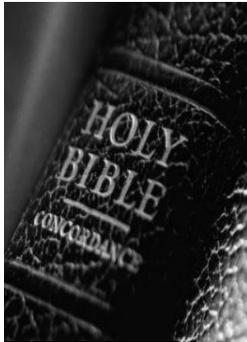
Tuesday - Deut 10-14; Psalm 5; Luke 8

Wednesday - Deut 15-18; Psalm 115; Luke 9

Thursday - Deut 19-22; Psalm 6; Luke 10

Friday - Deut 23-26; Luke 11

*Week #12
Mar. 19 – Mar. 23*



VISITORS - We would like to get to know you better, and ask that you stay a while after services. We encourage you to visit our website at <http://www.parkhillchurchofchrist.com> where you will find sermons, articles, and daily bible studies to encourage you in your daily walk with God.

QUESTIONS? *We Welcome the opportunity to study God's word with you any time.*

*All sermons are recorded on CD & DVD -
If you would like a copy, please ask one of the men.*

ELDERS

Carl Dolan.....479.414.1972 ~ Ron Roberts479.452.0347 ~ Randy Sexton.....479.763.4524
Joe Turner....479.459.6023.

DEACONS

Wayne Carson...479.648.1087 ~ Luke Dolan.....479.357.9547 ~ Joe Dugas479.629.4046 ~
David Meek.....479.459.0820

PREACHER

Bryan Loughmiller.....479.434.3939

March 18, 2018

THINK ON THESE THINGS

Welcome to the Park Hill Church of Christ

3536 GRINNELL AVENUE FORT SMITH, AR 72908 479.782.2415

It is our desire to worship God in spirit and in truth, and to glorify Him in all we do.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY MORNING

Bible Study.....9:30 am

Worship.....10:15 am

SUNDAY EVENING

Worship..... 5:00pm

WEDNESDAY EVENING

Bible Study.....7:00pm

A Tale of Two Families

A Tale of Two Families



“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...”
The familiar opening to the Dickens’ classic, *A Tale of Two Cities*, also provides a pretty accurate picture of the opening chapters of the Bible. Having been created by God, Adam and Eve are placed in the pristine environment of Eden where they enjoy a perfect relationship with God, themselves, and the world around them. It was “the best of times.” But all that changes when sin enters the scene in Genesis 3.

As the fourth chapter begins we are informed that though the original pair had forfeited eternal life, they continued to live physically. More than that, they give birth to another generation of humanity. Two sons are specifically mentioned, and as Cain and Abel bring their respective offerings to God, we catch a glimpse into each man’s heart. Abel’s offering is divinely accepted, while Cain’s is rejected. However, even then the Lord graciously gives Cain a second chance by placing a simple choice before him. He can either take control of sin or understand that sin would take control of him. His tragic decision becomes obvious when he takes the life of his brother. When confronted by the God who sees all and knows all, Cain demonstrates no reverence for God, no regret over the loss of innocent life, no sorrow for his sin, not even remorse regarding the

pain he had inflicted on his parents.

The punishment administered is that the same earth which had absorbed his brother's blood would now make Cain's efforts at survival even more difficult. He is also doomed to being a restless wanderer, yet when he responds with complaint God graciously extends mercy. Cain will be protected by way of a mark and is promised a seven-fold retribution on the one who would take his life.

While this is the part with which we're familiar, I want us to focus on the latter half of Genesis 4. Here we are told of two civilizations, two cultures, and two ancestral lines—and they start with a tale of two very different families. The writer begins by relating at least three things about the line of Cain.

First, there is a demonstrated **indifference to God** (Gen. 4:16-17). Cain had been given the opportunity for repentance and restoration; he could have chosen to confess his sin and surely found grace with God. But there is no desire for God in his heart, and thus he opts for a life apart from God. Resolute in his rebellion he *settles* in the land of Nod ("wandering"). Following the birth of a son he looks to put down roots. By means of his own industry and enterprise he looks to construct a comfortable and convenient place to live. Surely this was for the purpose of mitigating the effects of his punishment. But as the text continues we find that the beginning of urbanization brings, not a thirst for God, but only a greater distancing from Him.

We now see an **independence from God** (Gen. 4:18-22). In quick succession we are told of three generations of Cain's descendants before the writer focuses our attention on Lamech and the technological advances made by his three sons. Jabal becomes the original rancher (a picture of prosperity). Jubul is identified as the "father" of music (a picture of pleasure). Tubal-cain is described as a forger of implements, which would have included both tools that made labor easier and weapons used for protection and conquest (a picture of power). These significant advances certainly helped to make human existence more satisfying, more enjoyable, and more convenient. The rapid advancement shouldn't come as any surprise when we consider the lengthy lifespans of the antediluvian people, along with a congenial environment and an abundant earth. Imagine what Einstein, Edison, or Bill Gates could have accomplished had they lived 700-800 years.

Together these men made contributions that took human society to an entirely new level. But there was nothing eternal about them. While they may have brought some reprieve from the effects of the curse, while they may have distracted humanity from the consequences of fractured relationship with God, there was no salvation *from* sin

found here! These inventions did nothing to improve human goodness or undo human iniquity. When you read through these verses, take note that there is never a direct reference to God. In the things done by Cain and his family, they were done independent of Him. Cain's descendants took all of the good things God gave and used them, enjoyed them, and perhaps even wasted them—yet they never stopped to thank God for them. Such is the way of Cain!

Finally, we're told of their **insults toward God** (Gen. 4:19a, 23-24). In the face of significant cultural developments there were also tragic advances in the realm of human rebellion. Indifference has ripened into blatant insurrection. The first indication is reflected in Lamech's attack on the divine design for marriage. The second is demonstrated in his disdain for human life. In this way Lamech was much like his forefather—unrepentant and unapologetic. By way of the sophisticated language of poetry, Lamech wears his defiance as a badge of honor! Humanity isn't getting better, but only more violent, more irreligious, and more worldly.

But hope is found in the final two verses of the chapter (Gen. 4:25-26). Here we're told of a very different family. As another son is born to Adam and Eve in the form of Seth, we find a lineage that stands in stark contrast to the arrogant boasts of Lamech. We're told that Seth's descendants began to call upon the name of the Lord. As far as the world was concerned, Seth's offspring accomplished nothing. They brought no earth-shattering inventions, no revolutionary art forms, no new ways of advancing the family fortune. Yet, theirs was a much greater contribution as they *simply chose to live for God*.

The history of the world is built around this tale of two families: one secular and one sacred, one material and one spiritual, one in rebellion against God and one seeking the worship of God. Not only do these same two families remain in our own day, but all of us either belong to one or the other (1 John 3:10). One focused its attention on impressive achievements and material allurements, yet there is no lasting value to any of it. The other choose to focus its attention on things unseen and eternal—and therefore on things of much greater value. To which family do you belong? Because those are the only two choices we have.

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