

But what about...? Questions about Genesis

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[0 : 0 0] Father, we come before you at this time. We want to be honest before you. We know that you see our heart, and you know what really goes on in our minds. You know what our courage level is, and what our shame and fear levels are. And so, Father, we come to you. We ask that you help us to be honest before you. And, Father, we ask that you would gently but deeply pour out your Holy Spirit upon us. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us, that we might read your word with humble, obedient, intelligent, searching, curious hearts, unafraid and unashamed. And this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. I was at a meeting yesterday morning, and I had to leave at around quarter after 10, and I told them that I had to leave. This was a Christian meeting.

I told them I had to leave because I had to prepare a sermon on angels having sex with human beings. And I could see the whole room sort of erupt, like, what? And I made my exit with that line.

So I don't know if you, so I have no idea what the discussion ensued afterwards. I don't know if many of you sort of noticed that when Anya was reading, but it talks about sons of God, probably angels, finding human women desirable and sexually knowing them and making them pregnant.

So here's what's going on today, folks. There's no, because of a variety of things, there's no sort of sermon title. But if, well, when you go in the, if you want to go online on Monday to get the notes or Tuesday or whenever it goes up, it's called, but what about dot, dot, dot. Over the last few weeks, we've been going through the first 11 chapters of Genesis. And there's been several times where I've sort of done something like there's a bit of a time out here. We're not going to discuss this question this week. We're going to sort of gather up a group of questions and, and just questions about the text. And we're going to try to look at them sort of all at one time.

So for instance, some of you might've wondered when we were doing the end. So if we're going through the first 11 chapters of Genesis, that talks about creation, seven days, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, polygamy, the flood, the tower of Babel. Those are all in the first 11 chapters of Genesis. It's a very, very important part of the Bible. So some of you might've wondered in when we were did Genesis 4, 14, which is, you know, Cain kills his brother Abel and then God says that there's going to be a, he has to be a wanderer on the earth. And Cain is worried that people are going to kill him. And people might say, well, at one moment, if there's only Adam, Eve and Cain and Abel, who is Cain worried is going to kill him? And some of you might wonder why three verses afterwards, it says that Cain marries somebody and you go, what? And then he makes a city for people to live in and you go, what? And then you come to chapter five and it tells you that Adam lived 930 years. And it gives a list of 10 people and nine of them, it gives you their ages. And they're all in the 900s or the high 800s, including Methuselah at 969 years old. What?

[3 : 19] And because it goes like Adam had this son and then this son, and then this son, Orthodox, ultra Orthodox Jews use that text to calculate when the earth began, when it was created. Is that the right way to read the Bible? And now today we have this really weird text that seems to talk about angels having sex with women. And that's on top of the text then, just before the text, which Anya then read, which is the beginning of the story of the flood. So did a flood really happen? Was it a universal flood that killed all things? We're going to look at those things.

It's a bit of a different type of sermon, but we're going to look at those things. I want to tell you what my goal is. Could you put up the scripture text? Did you type up the scripture text? So here's my goal in this sermon. This is my, here we go. This is a Bible text. It's from 2 Timothy 2.15.

And Paul is writing it to Timothy. Those of you who know anything about the, maybe you might, some of you might know that Paul wrote 2 Timothy while he was in jail. And he knows this time he's going to die.

And he's correct. Sometime after he wrote that, he was martyred under Nero. He was killed by Nero. And the Emperor Nero. And so Paul, 2 Timothy is a very precious letter. It's his final words of instruction to a pastor looking after churches. And in that, he said, do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. It's a very, very precious verse. And that's in some ways what my goal is.

And so here's the first thing. It's going to, I'm going to sound like it's, it's coming a bit of an odd way with this text, but I would just want to be a bit humble and transparent before you. Not that I am, I'm not trying to be humble and transparent other weeks. But one of the great problems I had after I became a Christian and for a long time in my Christian life was a certain type of Bible teacher.

[5 : 31] And they just seemed to, you know, when they talked about the book of Revelation, they just seemed to be able to pick out all these facts that were going on in the world. And I felt I could never talk about anything like the book of Revelation because I was too stupid to know all of that stuff.

And I heard a whole pile of people and talk about things like in these first 11 chapters of Genesis, and they seemed to snatch biology and geology out of their hat to try to make it look like the Bible is saying this and saying that. And I'll be honest, I would read those things. And part of it, I was, well, part of it, I just felt like I'm too stupid to know all that stuff. How on earth could I ever talk about the Bible if I don't have all that other knowledge? And then the other thing would often be that I'd often think that they were maybe wrong. Occasionally, I would then learn something in school or something else that showed that it was wrong. And that makes it sort of really funny. And it's almost as if, you know, between there, apparently just having all these answers, and then they give them sort of false answers that end up, it undermines the Bible. And it almost made me afraid to just read some of these parts of the Bible and just learn from them. I was either too stupid, or I was just worried that I didn't have, that I'd say stuff that was just wrong. So here's the first thing. This is all about these questions. I'm not avoiding the questions. But here's the first thing. If you go about the first point, Andrew, be very helpful. An infallible Bible does not mean

I will know everything. Why is this really important? Some of the answers to these questions, part of the answer is this. I don't know.

I don't know. Don't lose your faith over that. You don't lose your faith over that. And see, this is a bit of the danger of people who can be way overconfident with systems and supposedly, apparently tying together geology and this and this and this and this. Is that sometimes, and by the way, in an infallible Bible, you see, I'm talking about for those of us who believe that miracles happen and that God speaks to us through his word. It's not just a collection of symbols. It's not a collection of myths. It's not human beings trying to reach God with their own best thoughts. It's not just Christian symbols, which are the Christian symbols and pagans have their symbols and Hindus have their symbols. No, for those of us who believe that for a variety of reasons, that the words that God had preserved, written and preserved, were ultimately the words that he wanted here so that when we hear this, we are hearing God speak, it is very easy for us to quickly go from that to somehow or another think that we have to have all the answers. And that's not what it means to believe that God is the ultimate author of the Bible.

Sometimes, to questions, we have to say, I don't know. You know, it's actually a sign of the fall. Those of you who were here a few weeks ago, you might remember that, and I keep sort of talking about this in different ways, the very, very primal problem for human beings is that they desire to be like God. And sometimes all religion does is give religious veneer and justification to our attempt to be like God. But the Bible wants to keep telling us every time we read it, George, you're not God. Institution, you're not God.

[9 : 10] You're not God. There's only one God. Only one God who knows everything. We human beings don't. Second thing, an infallible Bible does not mean I will be an infallible interpreter.

It means I should become a humble interpreter. That's really what it should mean. It should mean, you know what, I read the Bible to learn. I read the Bible to learn.

And if I'm not willing to read the Bible to learn, I was just sharing with Don a little bit before the service. It helped keep us a little bit late because we were talking about baptism and all that stuff. And I'm writing a series. I know it's really tiresome. Part six on baptism. It might reach as high as 10 or 12. And I'm now actually think I made a mistake doing it, but now I just can't stop it in the middle. It's one of those really awkward things. I'm going to have to finish the bleepity bleepity bleep thing, even if it takes 12 weeks and nobody can remember what all the other parts are.

But here's the thing. You know, if somebody shows me a better way to understand it, I shouldn't be upset. I shouldn't be anxious. I shouldn't get defensive. I should say, thank you.

Thank you for helping me to understand the Bible better because I'm a fallen, fallible, finite human being. And, you know, the problem is always in my mind, not in the Bible. And I just, if people can help me get more light, and that's the way it should really be for all of us, you see, because what does the Bible say? Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. But some of you might say, okay, George, now, you know, you said those questions, and I hope you're not just going to spend all your time circling around them without giving us at least some, I hope your whole answer is, I don't know.

[11 : 11] That would be really disappointing, George. And it's not going to be just, I don't know, by the way. But that would be really disappointing, George, because, you know, the more you know about science, and the more we know about philosophy, and the more we know about the different branches of science, the more it looks like the Bible is just completely and utterly ridiculous. Well, here's the third thing, to try to ratchet down some of the tension and some of the fear we have about reading the first 11 chapters of Genesis, if you could put up the next observation. The human problem is not that we know too much. It's not, that's not the problem. The human problem is that we know too little, and forget that we know too little. That's the human problem.

I'm going to talk about it again in a couple of minutes. But one of the things, the big claims, if you go back and listen to the first couple of sermons, especially the first one where I talk about creation and evolution in the Bible and science, one of the things I say, and I would continue to maintain that, in fact, I'm going to give you an illustration in a couple of minutes, is that it's harder to believe in naturalistic evolution today than it was 165 years ago. Why?

Because we know more about the chemical reality that has to exist for life before there can even be anything to do with natural selection, the chemical things that have to happen and the interstellar things that have to happen. And 165 years, they didn't know that. They just didn't know it.

Well, they didn't know that they knew too little. You know, and it might very well be that, you know, there's a whole range of things in the Bible that were a bit hard to believe. There's, for a long time, there was a whole pile of people who thought that parts of the Bible were wrong because it talked about people groups that they didn't exist, and then archaeology found that people group.

There's time and time and time again that it's, it's not the problem when we're trying to put together genesis and science and knowledge that we know so much about everything that how on earth can we fit it together. No, no, the human problem is we actually know too little. We know too little, and we forget that we know too little. That's the human problem. It's the human problem.

[13 : 25] And, and so it's not, as I'm going to try to show you, that that science has shown that these things are completely and utterly foolish. I'm in fact going to say that, that maintain that Genesis 1 to 11 is the wisest set of answers to the fundamental problems that we can come about.

Actually, I'll show you right now. I was talking to my son, my oldest son, about this series, and my oldest son has a degree in biology from University of Ottawa, and I asked him, I said, you know, did you do the degree, he just was over visiting just recently, and I, I asked him, did you know, doing that biology degree, that'd make it harder for you to believe the Bible, like, like, did it weaken your faith?

And he, you know, what he told me, he said, he said, obviously some of the classes, they really hammered it, you know, but let me tell you, when I took my class in cell biology, by the end of cell biology, I believed, I had no doubts that evolution couldn't be true, that everything just happened by chance and natural selection. When I studied DNA, by the time I finished my course on, on that, I, and, and understood that, there's, he, he gave me an, an illustration. And so this comes from my son, Tosh, who learned it from somebody else, who learned it from somebody else, who learned it from somebody else. And he said, basically what, maybe this won't work for you, maybe it will.

And those of you listening to it online, I've just held up a foam board that has poorly written, because I'm a terrible printer, this message wrote itself. Not entirely a perfect analogy, but it's largely like that. You see, because at a chemical level, the DNA is a message.

And my son, Tosh, said, it's really, you know, nobody believes this, right? I mean, obviously, you know, you can, those of you who know my printing know that I wrote that, right? That it's written by, you know, messages don't write themselves. He said, here's the thing I understood about, after I took the course in DNA, is that not only does that chemical basis, which is ultimately a message, which helps to program and build cells and life forms, not only did that have to happen by chance. He said, it'd be exactly as if a CD with a message happened as a result of an explosion or a series of processes. But he said, that's only half the problem, because there has to be something to read it. So he said, they're really telling me that I have to believe that a CD could happen by chance, and a CD player could happen by chance, and that the CD would go in the CD player. He said, how can I believe that that happened just by chance, all before natural selection? We'll leave that up here for you to ponder it. I'm sure some of you will have a better way to make an analogy about it. Why am I saying that? If you could put the next point, and I'm still getting to these questions, by the way,

[16:28] I really am. I hope you're finding this helpful. The choice before me is, am I willing to suffer for the gospel, or will I be ashamed of the gospel? Now, why am I saying that? I'm saying that because I know from talking to people in coffee shops that if they start to suspect that I have some doubts about naturalistic account of evolution, they believe that I'm stupid. In fact, I've been told that.

I'm told not only that I'm stupid with a low IQ, they'll ask me if I've lived my life under a rock, if I've ever attended any type of university, do I know anything at all?

So am I willing to actually let something like that slip? Am I willing to be thought a fool for Christ? That's the heart problem with interpreting these texts.

You see, here's the other side of this diagram, and just very, very briefly, there's two circles if you can't see it, and the circle on the left says this Bible teaching stuff. Oh, there you go, a better one up there. This is old school, right? And the other one is what Canada teaches, and I, in mind, I just, it's only because I'm a terrible drawer. I'm not making any comment about how big the intersection is, but basically, one way to understand the Bible and how it relates to the world is always this. There's what the Bible teaches. We're trying to hear and learn and understand, by the way, because we're humble interpreters, and we don't begin to believe that we know we understand everything, and the Bible keeps teaching us. There's something that Canada teaches on the same types of things, and whatever, you take out that country, you could put Kenya, you could put China, you could put South Korea, you could put North Korea, and the inner section will always be a big or a small section here, and here's always the discipleship question, you see, because it's very easy for us, and this is what happens when we get embarrassed about the first 11 chapters of Genesis. Why are we embarrassed about the first 11 chapters of Genesis? It's because this part, what Canada teaches, says the first 11 chapters of Genesis are nonsense or evil.

I was sharing with somebody in a coffee shop that part of the text I was looking at this week has the word covenant, and he literally flew into a rage at me and said, the idea of chosen people is the worst idea in the history of humanity. It has caused more violence and hardship than any other idea.

[19:15] And stormed away. I have great times in coffee shops sometimes. And, you know, and so, but, you know, some of us might just have a sense that if we bring up certain ideas like that, that's how people are going to react. So what happens in our discipleship?

We only talk about this. We only talk about, you know, so it's like those of us involved in social justice ministries, it's easy to talk about something like sex trafficking, because everybody and their dogs opposed to sex trafficking, right? It's easy to talk about slavery, because in Canada, everybody and their dog is opposed to slavery. It's very hard to take Genesis 1 and 2 seriously and talk about trans issues or same-sex marriage or abortion. Why? Because that goes outside of here.

This side of it has one view, and this side has a different view. And so I guess the thing about this is there's a bit of a gut check when we read the Bible, and I want to just tell you I'm not embarrassed about the Bible. I'm not ashamed. I pray about it all the time. One of the things I pray about as I'm preparing my sermons is I pray that, and this is one of the things you can pray about for me as well, I pray that I will understand and hear the objections and the reactions of Canadians if they were to hear this text and they were to be honest with me, like my friend was honest with me when he flew into a rage.

He was being honest with me. He wasn't being polite, but he was being honest. And there's lots to be said for honesty, isn't there? And you know, in this particular time, because I have a long-standing relationship with this particular person, at some point in time after he cools down, we'll probably talk about it. But, you know, there's this, I pray that God will both help me to hear the different questions that people would have about the Bible, and then I also pray that God would make me unashamed of the Bible, and unashamed of the gospel, and unashamed of Jesus, because many of us are ashamed and afraid of the Bible, because it will mean that we have to say and believe things which a lot of Canadians or our friends or smart people or people that we respect will look down their nose at us.

Remember I said my main point of this whole sermon is to say, to be able to have, do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. So, what about some of these questions? I'm going to start to give you some insights about some of them as well, like who did Cain marry? Did Noah live, did Adam live 930 years? Was there a universal flood?

[22 : 15] Here's the final little bit of background before I give you some of my answers. If you could put the next point up, when discussing worldviews, there is no perfect answer, but there can be a best answer.

So, that's a bit of a general truth, but what I want you to understand is this. So, we're going to look at the very, like, let's look at these first three questions. Who was Cain afraid would kill him? Who did Cain marry? Who lived in Cain City? Now, the first part of it is, I don't know for sure.

Why do I not know for sure? Aren't you supposed to know for sure? No, no, I'm not, I don't have to know for sure because, just because I'm a Christian doesn't mean I know everything. I'm not saying that to dodge it. I'm just saying, in fact, if you read, like, very faithful commentaries, you read, for instance, Derek Kidner's commentary, very, very faithful academic, and he can get, he gives you three or four or five different possible answers to that particular question. I'm not going to summarize them all. It's not a seminary class, but here's the thing. Every system of thought has to deal with a version of this question, whether we realize it or not be, you know why every system of thought has to deal with it? Because we're all here in the room, because human beings exist. So it's not all of a sudden as if, George, the answer you just get, you're going to give me in a second about Cain and Abel, I don't know if it's a very strong answer, and I might say, well, yeah, you know, maybe it isn't a very strong answer, but you know what? If you look at all the other answers, all of a sudden my answer might look like the strongest, because you see, in a sense, Buddhism has to account for the fact that people exist.

Hinduism has to account for the fact that people exist. Native spirituality has to account for how people exist. Pagan, different pagan systems have to account for how people exist. Atheism has to account for how people exist. You know, in a sense, in evolutionary theory, see, here's one of the things which is really interesting about the Bible, is that the Bible gives this powerful story that, as carrying, telling you a whole pile of interesting things about the nature of evil, and the nature of good, and human connectedness, and if you want to go back and listen to my sermon on Genesis 4, you'll hear the different things that come out of that particular text. But evolutionary theory also has, you see, okay, here's the answer is Cain probably married a sister, or a cousin.

The text doesn't say that Adam and Eve only had two children. The text, in fact, in five, says that they had many children. And in fact, there's nothing in the genealogy that says that the two children are the first and second.

[25 : 03] It's the ones that are significant for a variety of theological reasons, but not necessarily first and second, but significant. That's actually what the genealogy says. And you see, actually, if the atheistic account, which is naturalistic evolution, they also actually have to have something almost identical, but it's never spelled out as clearly as the Bible.

But the difference is that you have these early humanoid forms that obviously then had to intermarry, but they had to be weaker humanoid forms, far more prone to disease, and far more prone to bad water, and all that type of stuff, in a more hostile environment, without antibiotics, and all of that stuff, but we just don't think about it.

But the biblical viewpoint is that, in fact, God has created human beings. He created them to fill the earth, to be fruitful and multiply. And that may be something to do with the ages, and I'm going to say in a moment, it could be that the ages are literal, it could be that it's symbolic.

It's not clear from the text. Why am I saying that? Not because I'm worried about C over here. I'm not worried about C. I'm just actually trying to read the text very clearly, and if you read the text at the level of the Hebrew, it's not actually clear.

It could be symbolic. It's probably meant to be literal, but it could be something symbolic about it in terms of the ages. But the whole picture is something very different. It's as if the biblical picture is that Adam and Eve are made perfect, that they're the very beginning of the human race, that God not only made them as the beginning of the human race, but they were designed to be fruitful.

[26 : 55] They were designed by God himself without any sin to multiply. And that maybe there is something then about these ages. Maybe there is something about life before the flood.

And so there's just things within it, like it's as if you look at a river, and I don't know, if you had a river that begins, and it's a big, big, strong river, but as it's going inland into a desert, it gets weaker and weaker and weaker, and more and more consumed, because it's a desert, and the moisture's just going out.

But at the very beginning, it's a powerful flow. And that's the picture of what happens in the biblical thing. At the very beginning, there's this onrush of life.

And you know what? If you look at it, some of you are disappointed in my answer, but you know what? It's actually a pretty plausible answer. And if you now go back, and you read Buddhist and Hindu mythology, and pagan mythology, and you consider the whole problems of atheism having to believe this, you know what?

The Bible looks like a pretty good answer. You know, especially if Adam and Eve lived so long, and they had so many children, there are people around.

[28 : 07] And it's possible they have cities. Here's the other thing I want to say. If you could put up the next point. This is sort of like the big thing.

If you don't get anything else out of the sermon, other than that, my point is to do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

Here's what I want you to really get. As we are gripped by the gospel, God forms unashamed and unafraid readers who read the Bible with humility, faith, obedience, curiosity, intelligence, intelligence, and imagination.

Because there's all sorts of other things going on here in the text in terms of our imagination. And, you know, the reasons ultimately I'm a Christian, fundamentally they have to do with Jesus, but more than Jesus and his resurrection, it's the, it's the wisdom of the Bible, it's the witness of the Holy Spirit, it's, it's, it's the many arguments for the existence of God, it's the problem of the alternatives.

I, the longer I read, I mean, one of the interesting things about this particular fellow who, who blew up at me at the coffee shop, he and I had a conversation once about, about this, and, and, um, he actually acknowledged this.

[29 : 28] I, I told him that I read more non-Christian stuff in one week than he's read in two or three decades. Sorry, I read more non-Christian stuff in one week than he reads Christian stuff in several decades.

I know I'm saying that because there's something special about me. It's not that there's something special about me. But, you know, it's, it's not that I've lived under a rock, or that there's wise Christians who live under a rock, but you, the more you can study these things, the more confident and assured my son taking biology at university made him more firmly believe in the doctrine of creation, not less.

And so I just want to really encourage you not to be afraid of the Bible. Here's a couple of other things about these particular texts. If you go to Genesis chapter five, and you see all of these, you know, they live so long and they live so long and they live so long.

One of the reasons you can't calculate the age of the earth is that if you, not just because I'm trying to get around a problem here, but if you look at how the Bible uses genealogies, okay, not because I'm afraid of something, but actually just read it.

See, that's always what you have to do. You just have to read it. Like, when it talks about everything dying or something like that, well, do they mean everything or do they mean the way we mean everything sometimes?

[30 : 52] Like, you know how sometimes it might, let's say afterwards, after the senators lost to Pittsburgh Penguins, I know I am touching a wound, but especially after the game where they lost seven nothing, you know, if the headline said, Penguins slaughter senators, well, we all know they didn't literally kill them, leave them in a bloody heap in the ice, right?

So, it doesn't mean that language is simple, but how do you figure that stuff out? Well, you don't, you don't just sort of try to pick an answer which won't offend Canadians, but you just try to understand the whole text, and what does the text say?

And so, one of the things about genealogies, if you read genealogies, is genealogies are never written like, like when you go to ancestry.com to figure out your ancestral tree.

That's not how the Bible uses genealogies. They use genealogies to connect significance, and they're very, and the Hebrew allows skipping who knows how many generations.

It's just how they're written. It's how the Hebrew is written. It's how you find out by just actually studying it. So, it might very well have been that Adam lived a certain length of time, and then who knows, maybe it was that, or we'll not use that, let's say Seth lived 105 years, he fathered Enosh, but it might very well, but the whole word in the original Hebrew and all means that, it could be there's all sorts of generations, but the next one like Seth, that's significant like Seth, he comes at a certain time.

[32 : 25] So, you can't actually use the genealogies to capture the age of the earth. Now, I've noticed the time, the last thing is about the flood, and about those odd sons of God and the daughters of man.

So, turn in your Bibles to Genesis 6, and here's how the text goes. When man began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive, and they took as their wives any they chose.

Then the Lord said, my spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh, his days shall be 120 years. The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward.

When the sons of God came into the daughters of man, and they bore children to them, these were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown. Now, if all we knew in the Bible was that, you'd have to sort of think that there was something like angels, and they had sex.

But, that's not the only part of the Bible, and there's a specific context, which we have to keep reading, and it goes like this. The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

[33 : 42] Now, just notice the powerful language there. This is describing the world before the flood, that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens.

For I am sorry that I have made them, but Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. You know, what exactly does the text about Nephilim mean? I don't know. I don't know.

You go and you read the commentaries by Bruce Watkey or Derek Kidner, they can give you a variety of things that it might possibly mean. Probably what it means is this. It's something really like a horror novel.

It's like a horror movie. It's describing a world that has almost completely given itself over to evil, and we'll see in a moment, has given itself over to violence.

[34 : 49] And in the latter part of chapter 6, the Hebrew word for violence doesn't just mean physical violence. It means emotional violence, intellectual violence, relational violence, social violence, like violence in its most comprehensive, holistic sense of direct, willful hurting to destroy, to diminish.

It means it in the most comprehensive way. And so whatever's going on here, and it's not entirely clear, it's something which is evil. So it's not referring to angels, it's referring to demons, which we learn about throughout the rest of the Bible.

And probably what it's, you know in the Gospels, those of you are familiar with the Gadarene demoniac, and if you go back and read the stories about the Gadarene demoniac, one of the things it says about the Gadarene demoniac is that they tried to put chains on him, but he would fly into these rages of strength and break his chains, and nobody could bind him.

Imagine, what the text is probably talking about is demonic possession, like the Gadarene demoniac. And it's really just like the types of horror movies that some people like to watch.

It's describing a world of demon-controlled individuals who capture women and keep them like a harem and keep them in slavery and subjection and make them pregnant.

[36 : 22] It's describing what we see in horror movies. And the Bible is saying that that is the world that developed before the flood.

And so, and we'll talk a little bit about this in upcoming weeks. if you, one of the things which is really interesting if you read academic commentaries that are faithful about the book of Genesis and you look at chapter 6, 7, 8, and 9, is that in chapter 6, 7, 8, and 9 as it talks about the flood, the significant parts in Genesis chapter 1 and 2 which talk about the creation of all things are revisited in a different form.

If you could put up the next point, please. With the flood, God first reverses then recreates his creation.

I'm very conscious of my time. One of the problems that we have when we read the flood stories is we focus on the naturalistic bits. But if you look at the flood story, you need to focus on the supernatural bits, on what God does.

God brings the animals. The ark is built. There's no rudder. There's nothing to keep it upright. It could float, but it would be like a cork.

[37 : 49] It has a hole on the top. The whole point of the ark story is that God brings the animals. God shuts them in. God keeps them safe. When it talks about the flood waters coming, it doesn't try to describe it in any type of naturalistic way whatsoever.

It uses a very, very odd phrase that the celestial waters come on earth. If you go back and you look at the beginning of the book of Genesis, Genesis chapter 1, verse 1, which talks about God creating all things out of nothing.

In the very next verse, it says how the waters are over the entire earth and there's chaos and the Holy Spirit hovers over the waters. And what we see in the flood, what you're seeing described in the flood is as if God presses the reset button on creation.

And he reverses the creation as part of his judgment. And then he recreates creation. And I think an honest way of reading the Bible, and Christians can differ on this, is just as God creates all things out of nothing, it's hard when you're reading Genesis 6, 7, 8, and 9 to know what parts are specifically naturalistic.

But everything in the text is focusing on, it's as if God reverses the created order and judgment and then he recreates. There's like a new second day, there's like a new third day, there's like a new fifth day, there's a new sixth day, there's a new seventh day, and there's a new Genesis 2 and the institution of the family.

[39 : 24] And it's as if he makes all of these things new. It's as if he's reset it. And as he resets it, as a recreation, there's this completely new reality where the ages are going to be different.

The relationship between human and animals is going to be different. And the Bible doesn't tell us about the full things that existed before the flood. It's not something we need to know.

But what you're seeing in Genesis 6, 7, and 8, and 9 is really, the best analogy would be to press a reset button. And God, in his judgment, presses a reset button.

And because he's seen the problems, just think about it for a second. Like, look what this is telling us in a very, very powerful way.

What is it that many, many, many people believe? Many, many people believe that if people could just live longer, they'd figure things out and become better. Haven't they heard about vampire movies?

[40 : 22] Like, just imagine if Hitler lived longer. Like, I'd just be honest. If I lived longer, would I become wiser and kinder?

I don't know. Would I be more filled with pride? Maybe I would be. And what is it, you know, what is it that's often common in a whole pile of thoughts?

What is it, don't many people just say, you know, there's a problem there's too many people. It's a theme of lots of books, lots of movies, lots of poetic stuff. And what if it, we just got the very, very, very best people?

And that's one of the things in this story, that Noah is one of the very, very, very best people in a world filled of violence. Noah is exceptional, completely and utterly different. And what we say is, why don't we just try to get rid of all of these bad people and we just try to get creation back to its pristine form and we take the very, very best people and we start again.

And Genesis is going to say, we tried that as well. God tried, that happened before. Because there's, God changes the created order.

- [41 : 28] He recreates things and then most of the Bible is discussing how it's recreated. But what we see in the book of Genesis as we look ahead is that what we need is not a recreation. What we need is not pressing the reset button. what we need is new creation. All of these stories are humbling us to stop looking in false directions in terms of elites and in terms of getting nature more pristine or just getting rid of the bad people.
- It's a common political problem. Oh, you know, if in America only they could get rid of all those people who voted for Clinton. In America, if we could only get rid of all those people who voted for Trump, it's a common, common, common problem.
- And this text is telling us very powerfully that the problem is in the command center of human beings. it's not in the other. It's in me.
- It's not in the system. It's in me. If you could put up the final point. When I receive the gospel, God makes me a new creation who yearns for the day when Jesus comes again and makes all things new.
- [42 : 53] You see, that's the thing that the Bible is pushing us to. It's constantly humbling our pride, our arrogance. It's humbling our desire to be God that makes other people other, that makes us think that somehow or another we're special, that, you know, that, you know, we have the smarter system.
- You know, the Bible, when I say that the Bible is infallible and it humbles us, it's a profound statement that it's not saying that Jewish and Christian people were smarter people or better poets or better writers.
- it's saying nothing like that at all. It's saying God speaks, not us. And in the gospel, we're telling, it's one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.
- It's not telling people that somehow I have better rituals, I have better hymns, I have better prayers, I have, it's not that I have any of these things. I've been given them as a gift by what God has done.
- And so this whole text is showing us that pressing reset isn't enough. Sin has to be dealt with and God deals with sin in his son's death upon the cross.
- [44 : 02] And when God, we receive the gospel, God himself, I was just sharing this with somebody in a coffee shop just yesterday. I say, and this isn't just ideas that when you put your faith and trust in God, in Christ, God comes in.
- the Holy Spirit comes in. And as a pure gift of grace, you are made a new creation that will one day fit when God makes all things new.
- It's not just words and ideas. The gospel is a power and God himself in the person of the Holy Spirit and ultimately the whole Trinity comes and lives within.
- We need a new creation, always gripped by the gospel, mindful of the fact that we're not there yet and that there's still sin that we have to repent of, but it's all ultimately been dealt with by Jesus.
- It's a new creation that we need, not a reset. Please stand. Let's bow our heads in prayer.
- [45 : 24] Father, you know the different things that we're afraid of and embarrassed. You know the things I'm afraid of and embarrassed about, Father, and things I'd be way too embarrassed to share to this congregation. Father, thank you that you know every single one of us perfectly.
- Thank you that you know what really goes on in the command centers of our lives. Thank you that you know both what is so strong and glorious and beautiful about us and you know the things about us that are rotten.

Thank you, Father, that you know those things about us that are courageous and thank you, Father, you know those things about us that are terribly afraid and terribly embarrassed. And thank you, Father, that you know us so perfectly and knowing us perfectly.

You do not turn your eyes away from us in shame and embarrassment. You do not mock us. You do not make fun of us. You do not turn your eyes away in disgust.

But knowing us so completely and perfectly and deeply, yet you love us and desire us to be your child by adoption and grace when we put our faith and trust in your Son, Jesus Christ.

[46 : 32] So, Father, we ask that you would make us disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the Gospel. And as we are gripped by the Gospel, that we, Father, will read your Word, that we will deal with our shame and our fear in light of your Gospel and being gripped by it, that we might live unashamed, unafraid, free lives and generous lives that bring you glory.

And this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.