

# Preaching Through The Bible

## Michael Eaton

### Genesis

## Part 26

## Common Grace, Special Grace (4:20-26)

### Further developments in common grace

#### 4. Various technologies

God did not exterminate the world. He gave plenty of time and plenty of room for them to develop and do what they could to improve their lives. He showed mercy on them and allowed them to try to get honour for themselves, as they sought to make themselves a name. <sup>¶1</sup>

<sup>¶1</sup> see 4:17

#### 5. Art

**5. Artistic developments commence.** We have here the beginning of the making of musical instruments. Jubal played two musical instruments and many followed him. <sup>¶1</sup> At the same time metal-work began in the story of the human race. <sup>¶2</sup>

<sup>¶1</sup> 4:21

<sup>¶2</sup> 4:22

#### • God keeps life going

This is all part of what is sometimes called God's 'common grace'. God keeps life going. He shows kindness to all men whether they are saved or not, allowing various beneficial developments to take place. It keeps the world going. God does not want it to perish prematurely. Society continues.

#### • Degradation

Yet Genesis 4 is also the story of increasing degradation. Look at the way in which music and culture are used. <sup>¶1</sup> Lamech writes a piece of poetry, but what an ugly piece of poetry it is! It is a song. One can easily see the way its lines are parallel and poetical.

'Adah and Zilliah, listen to my voice  
You wives of Lamech, give heed to my speech'

#### • God keeps life going

Lamech is singing this song. But what is he singing about? It is about polygamy ('you wives of Lamech'), about murder ('I have slain a man'), about revenge ('If Cain is avenged... Lamech is avenged seventy-seven times'). This is how men and women use their 'culture'. God allows family-life and music and technology, but how does man use God's blessings? There is great kindness on God's side, yet men and women misuse everything God gives to them.

#### • The misuse of music

Lamech seems to want to be a greater murderer than his ancestor Cain. <sup>¶1</sup> It is a song about murder and violence, a 'sword-song'. God allows the makers of musical instruments to arise, but they misuse their very culture to promote violence.

<sup>¶1</sup> 4:24

#### • Deeper degradation

Music is wonderful. Think of the music of David and his beautiful psalms, and the poetry of the prophets. Yet music can be used for wicked purposes also. The ungodly are more inventive than the godly. Their inventiveness often comes because they are dissatisfied and in their restlessness they seek for something new. The human is falling into deeper savagery, and increased degradation. Lamech kills someone and delights in it. There are now no regrets about the punishment of sin (contrast 4:13). The human race left to itself declines.

#### Seth's Line

Genesis 4:25–5:32 now introduces us to the line of Seth. There was special grace as well as common grace. The man Adam had another

### • Special grace

son <sup>¶1</sup> and there was another section of the human race that was not as ungodly as the line of Cain. Not every descendant of Seth was saved, but most of the believers were in this line. Seth had a descendant called Enosh <sup>¶2</sup> and it was at the time of Enosh that public worship of Yahweh began. God was keeping his ‘church’ alive. There were from time to time people who trusted in Him and in His promise that salvation would come and that ‘the snake’ would be crushed.

<sup>¶1</sup> 4:25

### • A replacement for Abel

The line of Cain began to come together in cities, and it led to murder, polygamy, violence. But people in the line of Enosh also came together, not for murder, but for worship. There will always be the ‘seed of the woman’. Seth was a replacement for Abel. God’s line of believers cannot be exterminated. Abel may be killed but Seth replaces him. God will raise up others.

<sup>¶2</sup> 4:26

## Prayer

### i. Fervent

The great mark of the people of God is prayer. Here is the first description of corporate prayer in the Bible. Three aspects of prayer are notable.

(i) It is to be fervent. People call out, cry out. It is not some quiet respectable ‘saying a prayer’ but an energetic calling out to God.

(ii) It is corporate. People help each other when they come together to pray. Private prayer is alright, of course, but we can get into wandering ways and neglectful ways. Praying with others helps private praying just as private praying helps praying with others.

### iii Lays hold of God

(iii) Prayer lays hold of God’s character. They were calling on ‘the name of Yahweh’, appealing to the way He has revealed Himself. In prayer we lay hold of God’s goodness, His mercy, His compassion. This is what it means to call on His ‘name’. They called on the name of ‘Yahweh’ (sometimes spelt as ‘Jehovah’ or ‘the LORD’). It is God’s special name. It means ‘HE IS’, and is the name which would be especially explained later, in the days of Moses. It is associated with God as Saviour and Redeemer. Men and women at this time began to call upon the name of their Saviour-God. And it was not only groups who prayed like this. The story also tells us of individuals who walked with God and who found grace in God’s eyes. <sup>¶1</sup> Man has sinned terribly and disastrously but the kingdom of God goes on. God is still on the throne and He has His people who trust Him and live for Him.

<sup>¶1</sup> 5:24;  
5:32; 6:8

### • People who trust God and live for Him



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Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible* (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



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