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A S I T U N F O L D S T H R O U G H O U T S C R I P T U R E

[Previously published as *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*]

45:10 ^a Dt 21:13
45:11 ^b Ps 95:6
c Isa 54:5
45:12 ^d Ps 22:29;
Isa 49:23
45:13 ^e Isa 61:10
45:14 ^f SS 1:4
45:17 ^g Mal 1:11
h Ps 138:4
46:1 ⁱ Ps 9:9; 14:6
j Dt 4:7
46:2 ^k Ps 23:4; ^l Ps 82:5
m Ps 18:7
46:3 ⁿ Ps 93:3
46:4 ^o Ps 48:1, 8;
Isa 60:14
46:5 ^p Isa 12:6;
Eze 43:7 ^q Ps 37:40
46:6 ^r Ps 2:1 ^s Ps 68:32
t Mic 1:4
46:7 ^u 2Ch 13:12
v Ps 9:9
46:8 ^w Ps 66:5
x Isa 61:4

- ¹⁰ Listen, daughter, and pay careful attention:
Forget your people^a and your father's house.
¹¹ Let the king be enthralled by your beauty;
honor^b him, for he is your lord.^c
¹² The city of Tyre will come with a gift,^d
people of wealth will seek your favor.
¹³ All glorious^e is the princess within her chamber;
her gown is interwoven with gold.
¹⁴ In embroidered garments she is led to the king;^f
her virgin companions follow her—
those brought to be with her.
¹⁵ Led in with joy and gladness,
they enter the palace of the king.
¹⁶ Your sons will take the place of your fathers;
you will make them princes throughout the land.
¹⁷ I will perpetuate your memory through all generations;^g
therefore the nations will praise you^h for ever and ever.

Psalm 46^b

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah.
According to *alamoth*.^c A song.

- ¹ God is our refugeⁱ and strength,
an ever-present^j help in trouble.
² Therefore we will not fear,^k though the earth give way^l
and the mountains fall^m into the heart of the sea,
³ though its waters roarⁿ and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.^d
⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city
of God,^o
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
⁵ God is within her,^p she will not fall;
God will help^q her at break of day.
⁶ Nations^r are in uproar, kingdoms^s fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.^t
⁷ The LORD Almighty is with us;^u
the God of Jacob is our fortress.^v
⁸ Come and see what the LORD has done,^w
the desolations^x he has brought on the earth.

^a Or A Tyrian robe is among the gifts. ^b In Hebrew texts 46:1-11 is numbered 46:2-12. ^c Title: Probably a musical term.
^d The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verses 7 and 11.

20,000 verse- by-verse study notes

45:10–12 you, daughter of Tyre. May suggest that the bride is a foreigner.

45:16 Your sons will be princes. With his bride, the king will possibly have sons to carry on his legacy, and they will represent him as princes throughout the land.

45:17 your memory. The psalmist, who has claimed special skills as a writer (v. 1), comes full circle to assure the king that he will help to guarantee his memory in perpetuity. **nations.** The nations who rebelled against the Lord and his anointed (Ps 2) would now praise the king forever. The worldwide vision of Ps 67 is also reflected here.

Ps 46 God Is Our Refuge and Strength. This psalm responds to the laments of Ps 42–44 by affirming that God is Israel's refuge, strength, and fortress, sovereign over nature and nations. It also responds to Ps 45 by refocusing attention on God rather than the king. It inspired Martin Luther's hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." It is the first of what are

sometimes called the "psalms of Zion" (Pss 48; 76; 84; 87; 122; 132). Four of the seven are psalms of the sons of Korah (Pss 46; 48; 84; 87). On the importance of Zion, see notes on 2:6; 9:11.

The psalm begins by affirming God as his people's refuge and strength over all of creation (vv. 1–3) and then highlights the importance of Zion, the "city of God" (v. 4), as the so-called capital of God's earthly kingdom (vv. 4–6). The refrain (vv. 7, 11) brackets the final affirmations that God is also over all the nations (vv. 8–10).

46:1 refuge. The theme of refuge sounded at the beginning of the Psalter (see note on 2:12) is prominent in this psalm (vv. 1, 7, 11).

46:3 waters roar and foam. See note on 93:3.

46:4 a river. There is no river in Jerusalem, so the reference here is symbolic: such a river would sustain Jerusalem (in contrast to the raging waters of v. 3). Ezek 47:1–12 and Rev 22:1–2 also speak of a river of life flowing from Jerusalem. **city of God.** Mount Zion

(Jerusalem), the place God chose to place his name (Deut 12:5–7), the earthly "capital" of God's kingdom (see notes on 2:6; 9:11). **holy place.** See note on 84:1. **Most High.** See note on 7:8.

46:6 God's power is on display: with even a simple raised voice, nations are rebuked, the earth melts. This is reminiscent of the power of God's word in creation in Gen 1 ("And God said").

46:7 The LORD. Only the second time that Book II of the Psalter (Pss 42–72) uses God's personal name (the first is in 42:8). See note on 8:1 for the significance of this name. **Almighty.** See note on 24:10, referring to all of the heavenly forces, whether simply to the sun, moon, and stars or to angelic forces. The term highlights the Lord's omnipotence over all things. **the God of Jacob is our fortress.** The refrain, repeated in v. 11, affirms the theme of refuge as well as the Lord's presence with his people (see note on 18:1–2). **Jacob.** See note on 135:4.

15:5 ^aMk 14:61
15:9 ^bver 2
15:11 ^cAc 3:14
15:15 ^dIsa 53:6
15:16 ^eJn 18:28, 33;
19:9
15:18 ^fver 2
15:20 ^gHeb 13:12
15:21 ^hMt 27:32
ⁱRo 16:13 | Mt 27:32;
Lk 23:26

"You have said so," Jesus replied.
³The chief priests accused him of many things. ⁴So again Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of."
⁵But Jesus still made no reply,^a and Pilate was amazed.
⁶Now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people wanted.^b A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had been in the uprising. ⁷The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what they wanted.
⁸"Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked them.
⁹For Pilate knew that the chief priests had hated Jesus.
¹⁰But they shouted, "Not this man, but Barabbas."
¹¹Pilate said to them, "Well, then, what do you want me to do with this man?"
¹²"What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?"
¹³"Crucify him!" they shouted.
¹⁴"Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate.
But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"
¹⁵Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He then handed him over to be crucified.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

15:16-20pp — Mt 27:27-31

¹⁶The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace^c (that is, the Praetorium), the whole company of soldiers. ¹⁷They put a purple robe on him, then they twisted crowns of thorns and set it on him. ¹⁸And they began to call out to him, "Hail to the king of the Jews!" ¹⁹Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on their knees, they paid homage to him. ²⁰And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out^d to crucify him.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

15:22-32pp — Mt 27:33-44; Lk 23:33-43; Jn 19:17-24

²¹A certain man from Cyrene,^e Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus,^f was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross.^g ²²They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull"). ²³Then they

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blasphemy into a sufficiently political form to ensure Roman involvement. Since the Messiah was Israel's king (v. 2), this was not difficult, and the heightened tension at Passover and the apparently recently failed insurrection (v. 7) only heightened Roman concerns. Pilate, the Roman prefect of the minor province of Judea and under the supervision of the legate of the imperial province of Syria (see photo, p. 1758).

15:2 You have said so. Less direct than Jesus' response to the high priest (14:62), probably because what Pilate assumes and what Jesus means by the title are very different.

15:3 many things. A range of related accusations in order to give the impression of an overwhelming case.

15:5 still made no reply. See note on 14:61. Pilate was amazed. At the contrast between the intensity of Jesus' accusers and Jesus' refusal to defend himself, especially when facing crucifixion.

15:6 release a prisoner. Amnesty to display Roman nobility to the crowds. The crowd's demands will increasingly determine the outcome of the proceedings.

15:7 Barabbas. Apparently a popular hero of a local resistance group who was arrested in a recent disturbance.

15:10 self-interest. Lies behind the long-standing clash over authority (cf. 1:22; 2:10; 3:22; 11:28), particularly given Jesus' popularity with the people.

15:13 Crucify. See notes on v. 24; 8:34. As "king of the Jews" (vv. 12, 18) and therefore a rival to Roman authority, a guilty verdict can have only one outcome.

15:14-15 It is important for Mark that a more

"neutral" Roman official considers Jesus to be innocent of the charges. But having initiated the custom, Pilate cannot risk inflaming the crowd by ignoring the wishes of the people (v. 6), even if they are manipulated by their leaders (v. 11). All three parties—Pilate, the people, and the Jewish leaders—are complicit in Jesus' death.

15:15 flogged. A brutal torture using whips of leather thongs often tipped with pieces of bone or metal. It severely weakened the prisoner, sometimes proving fatal. **crucified.** See notes on v. 24; 8:34.

15:16-20 The Soldiers Mock Jesus. The Jewish verdict was followed by violent mockery of the "prophet" (14:65); now the Roman sentence is followed by a violent mockery of the "king."

15:16 soldiers. Not Roman legionnaires but non-Jewish auxiliaries from neighboring regions. palace. Of Herod; Pilate's home while in Jerusalem. Praetorium. In this case, barracks.

15:17-18 purple robe . . . crown . . . "Hail . . ." A parody of imperial garb and salutation ("Ave, Caesar!"). The violent elements complete Jesus' final prediction of his suffering at Gentile hands (10:34), recalling the sufferings of Isaiah's servant (Isa 50:6; cf. 8:34; 14:65). In a few short hours a Roman centurion will address Jesus in a very different manner (v. 39).

15:21-47 The New Passover Sacrifice. In relatively short order, Jesus' predictions concerning his coming death are fulfilled, but ironically each stage already hints toward a very different outcome. Far transcending the conspiracies of the nations against God's beloved Son (cf. 1:11; 9:7; Ps 2:17), Jesus' death is God's long-awaited new exodus redemption (see note on

14:24) whereby he finally breaks the power of sin and death that holds humanity in bondage. If, in fact, Jesus dies on Passover eve (see note on 14:12), then, as John implies (John 1:29,36; 19:14) and Paul declares (1 Cor 5:7), Jesus is indeed our new Passover lamb.

15:21-32 The Crucifixion of Jesus. Mark's account of the crucifixion passes over Jesus' suffering in silence. Mark focuses instead on the truths expressed ironically in the abuse, Jesus' one statement from the cross, the divine signs that testify to what is really going on, and the first human confession of Jesus' divine Sonship.

15:21 Cyrene. An important city in Libya, North Africa, with a large Jewish population. father of Alexander and Rufus. Mentioned only by Mark. Since men are traditionally known by their fathers, Simon's identification by his sons possibly suggests that they are known to Mark's Roman audience (cf. Rom 16:13). This implies that they and perhaps their father had become followers of Jesus as a result of this experience. forced. Occupying forces could compel ordinary citizens to carry their baggage (cf. Matt 5:41). carry the cross. The condemned normally carried the crossbar, which often weighed 30-40 pounds (13-18 kilograms), to the site of crucifixion. Jesus, weakened by flogging, was incapable of completing (cf. John 19:17) the relatively short journey, some 328 yards (300 meters), to just outside the city walls, so Simon was pressed into service.

15:22 Golgotha. Or "skull"; might reflect its being the site of many executions. The NT nowhere describes it as a hill.

15:23 wine mixed with myrrh. Probably

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Roman emperor Caligula, AD 37–41.
Kim Walton, taken at the National Archaeological Museum of Athens

every deed prompted by faith.¹² We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you,¹³ and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁴

The Man of Lawlessness

2 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him,¹ we ask you, sisters, ²not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by word or mouth or by letter³—as the day of the Lord⁴ has already come. ³Do not let anyone lead you astray in any way, for that day will not come until the man of lawlessness⁵ is revealed, the one who opposes God and will exalt himself above everything that is called God⁶ or is worshipped, and will sit in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.⁷

⁸Don't you remember that when I was with you in Thessalonica, I told you these things? ⁹And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time.

⁷For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. ⁸And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth⁹ and destroy by the splendor of his coming. ⁹The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders¹⁰ that serve the lie,¹¹ and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing.¹²

¹² Or God and Lord, Jesus Christ

¹³ Some manuscripts sin

their every good desire and deed. God will thus ensure that “the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him.” The Thessalonian believers are again (see note on 2 Thess 1:10) comforted with the promise that their faith will be vindicated by being present in the end-time glorification of Christ (“in you”), and they will also themselves be glorified (“and you in him”).

21–17 Comfort Concerning the Day of the Lord. The first major topic of the letter concerns a false claim about the day of the Lord that caused the Thessalonian church to become greatly alarmed. Paul’s purpose is not to predict the future but to pastor his readers by giving them a word of comfort about this end-time event.

21–2 Crisis: Fear Over the Claim That “The Day of the Lord Has Already Come.” Someone has falsely claimed that the day of the Lord has already come, thereby causing the young church to fear that they might not avoid the wrath of God connected with the day of judgment.

21 our being gathered to him. The immediate reference is to the comforting concept of how all believers, both deceased and living, will be gathered to Jesus at his return (1 Thess 4:16–17; 5:10). But this idea goes back to the OT hope in the gathering of the scattered exiles to their own land on the day of the Lord (e.g., Ps 106:47; Isa 11:10–12; 27:13; 43:4–7; Jer 31:8; Joel 3:1–2).

22 alarmed. Jesus issued the identical command (Mark 13:7). Paul is not merely satisfying his readers’ curiosity about the end times but providing desperately needed pastoral comfort to a church frightened about the day of the Lord and unsure about their salvation on that day—a fear that also lies behind 1 Thess 5:1–11 (see notes there). **prophecy . . . word of mouth . . . letter.** Paul seemingly suspects that the source of the false claim about the day of the Lord was the first member of the triad: a prophecy (see second note on v. 15), has already come. Asserting that the day is actually pres-

ent, not that it is imminent (as in the KJV: “is at hand”). The Thessalonians may have viewed the day of the Lord as consisting of several events of which Christ’s coming was just one part. Although the claim is false, the Thessalonian church—already apprehensive about the day of the Lord (1 Thess 5:1–11)—became alarmed. Fear is often irrational and contagious.

23–12 Correction: Events That Must Precede the Day of the Lord. Paul corrects the false claim by reminding the Thessalonians that the day of the Lord will not take place until certain clearly defined events take place first.

23 Two events must precede the day of the Lord: (1) the rebellion. It is not Christians who rebel against God (Paul expects his readers to persevere in the faith to the end; see vv. 13–14; 1:3–4, 10–12; 1 Thess 1:3, 6; 2:14; 3:6–8; 5:4, 9) but the rest of humanity. This rebellion will be primarily religious in nature, but any rebellion against God will naturally also involve a revolt against the general laws and morals of society. (2) the man of lawlessness is revealed. He is not Satan, as v. 9 makes clear, but is typically identified with the antichrist (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7). This figure’s description in vv. 3b–4 has striking similarities to OT texts (Isa 14:12–14; Ezek 28:2; Dan 6:7) and events from the Second Temple period (Antiochus IV desecrating the Jerusalem temple in 167 BC, Roman general Pompey entering the Jerusalem temple in 63 BC, and Roman emperor Caligula seeking to set up a statue of himself in the Jerusalem temple in AD 40). Paul employs a familiar theme to portray the supreme evil character of the coming lawless one.

24 God’s temple. Almost certainly the historic temple of Jerusalem (see Matt 24:15 and note), not the heavenly temple or the church. But Paul likely uses this sanctuary metaphorically by picking up the well-known theme of desecration by foreign kings. If so, this says more about the character of the man of lawlessness than where he will appear.

25 I used to tell. This verb highlights the repeated nature of the action: Paul delivered several sermons about events connected with the day of the Lord during his visit to Thessalonica.

26–7 what. Neuter (i.e., the thing). secret power of lawlessness. A rebellion against God and his will that is hidden and unobservable to unbelievers but revealed by God to believers and so readily known to them. **already at work.** Distinct from a future rebellion that will precede the day of the Lord (v. 3), the one. Masculine. This complicates the already difficult task of identifying the “restrainer.” See “Who Is the Restrainer?” p. 2163.

28 overthrow with the breath of his mouth. Paul interrupts the description of the lawless one to describe this evil figure’s ultimate demise by Jesus, thereby comforting his readers. This imagery from Isa 11:4 emphasizes not the ease with which the returning Christ will “destroy” (the Greek conveys the stronger act of destruction rather than a mere overthrow) the man of lawlessness but the power of his breath as a potent and fearful weapon of war.

29 coming. Greek *parousia*, the same word used of Christ’s coming. Satan enables the man of lawlessness to perform counterfeit signs and wonders (Matt 24:24).

30–12 Paul shifts from describing the lawless one to his deceived followers “who are perishing” (v. 10). This message of their judgment ultimately comforts the Thessalonian church since it vindicates their faith and demonstrates that God is just (v. 15–10). **they refused to love the truth . . . have not believed the truth.** The blame for their destructive end rests on themselves because they rejected the truth of the gospel message that Paul preached. **For this reason.** God’s action does not cause people to reject the truth but is a consequence of their previous rejection. **God sends them.** Paul elsewhere similarly speaks of God giving sinners over to their own sin (Rom 1:24, 26, 28; 11:8; 2 Tim 4:4). The apostle’s

1:11¹ 1Th 1:3
1:12¹ Php 2:9–11
2:1¹ Mk 13:27;
1Th 4:15–17
2:2² 2Th 3:17¹ 1Co 1:8

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PHILIPPIANS

AUTHOR

Paul claims to be the author of this letter (1:1), and there has been no serious dispute about this claim.

ADDRESSEES

Paul first visited the Roman colony of Philippi on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:12) in the early 50s. The first converts were Lydia and her household (Acts 16:14–15), the jailer and his household (Acts 16:33–34), and others (Acts 16:40). The letter also names Epaphroditus (2:25) and Euodia and Syntyche (4:2). There were probably many more, though it is impossible to know how many.

DATE AND PLACE OF COMPOSITION

We do not know for certain when or where Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians. Conclusions depend largely upon which imprisonment 1:13 refers to and upon what “palace guard” (1:13) and “Caesar’s household” (4:22) mean. Paul might have been in prison in Ephesus about AD 55, though this is not based on strong evidence; he certainly was in prison in Caesarea about AD 57–59 (Acts 24:22–27) and in prison in Rome about AD 60–62 (Acts 28:15–31). The reference to “Caesar’s household” does not rule out Caesarea, but Rome is more likely. Paul, therefore, probably wrote Philippians from Rome about AD 60–62, while Nero was emperor, and so the church was about ten years old when he composed this letter.



In the book of Philippians, Paul speaks of “being poured out like a drink offering.” See 2:17 and note.

Greek civilization, red-figure pottery, Kylix by Douris depicting youth near an altar/De Agostini Picture Library/G. Nimatallah/Bridgeman Images

OCCASION AND PURPOSE

One of Paul’s main impulses for writing is to acknowledge the gifts from the Philippians (4:10–19). He also urges two individuals to be reconciled to one another, and he encourages the Philippians to remain faithful to the Lord (4:1–3). He reassures them about his circumstances and his plans to send Timothy in the future (chs. 1–2), and he warns of false teachers (ch. 3). Paul has the opportunity to write, which might not otherwise have arisen, because he is sending Epaphroditus back to Philippi (2:25).

THEOLOGY AND THEMES

Theologically, the most significant passage is the so-called hymn of Christ (2:5–11). Whether a hymn or not, it is one of the most exalted statements about Christ in the NT. With John 1:1–18, it sets out Christ’s divinity and preexistence: John 1 adds the detail that Christ is cocreator with the Father; Phil 2 has a point not mentioned in John 1; namely, that Christ is to be worshipped (2:10–11). Phil 2 also sets out, in remarkably dense form, that this supremely divine person descends to a humiliating death on the cross for our salvation.

Phil 2:6–11 is thus a brief account of the gospel, a theme prominent in other parts of Philippians (the

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SIN

Kevin DeYoung

Sin is another name for that hideous rebellion, that God-defiance, that wretched opposition to the Creator that crouches at the door of every fallen human heart. Sin is both a condition, inherited from Adam (Rom 5:12–21), and an action—manifesting itself in thought, word, and deed—that when full-grown gives birth to death (Jas 1:15). In simplest terms, sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4). It means we have broken God’s commands and have fallen short of his glory (Rom 3:23). But sin goes deeper than merely missing the mark. Sin is idolatry (Col 3:5; 1 John 5:21). It is worshipping false gods, whether these deities are overt and physical or more subtle and internal. Sin can also be considered adultery, a spiritual whoring after other lovers and other sources of satisfaction and meaning (Ezek 16:15–42). Sin is pollution (Jas 1:27). Sin is pervasive (Rom 3:9–20). And sin is *the* problem in the universe. The redemptive story of the Bible does not make sense without it.

SIN INFILTRATES THE GARDEN

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth—the land, the sky, the sea; the birds, the fish, the animals; the sun, the moon, the stars; a man and a woman. He created all this, and it was “very good” (Gen 1:31).

And sometime later everything good started to come undone.

We know very little about the first sin, except that it manifested itself in an angelic rebellion. Jude 6 explains that some angels “did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these [the Lord] has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.” 1 Tim 3:6 suggests that the fall of the devil was the result of pride (see Ezek 28:11–19 for another possible allusion). However it happened, Satan (“the adversary”) fell. It’s important to note that sin originated in the world of spirits, not in the world of human beings. Moreover, it is critical to see that these spirits did not sin by some external power or temptation, but in and by themselves. The devil’s sin came out of the devil’s own self-twisted arrogance and deception (John 8:44).

While the angelic rebellion is merely hinted at in Scripture, human rebellion is put front and center. Tempted by a speaking serpent—a slithering embodiment of Satan (Rev 12:9)—Eve partakes of the forbidden fruit, with Adam joining in at her side (Gen 3:6). Immediately, they both realize their nakedness and experience shame in God’s presence for the first time (Gen 3:7). As a result of Adam’s failure to pass the test of the probationary tree, God curses the woman, the man, the serpent, and the ground. The NT later uses this episode to unpack the doctrine of original sin. Because of Adam’s transgression, the entire

human race has inherited both guilt and condemnation (Rom 5:12–21). As our federal head, Adam’s sin has been imputed to us, and we bear the consequences as those who have participated in his rebellion. Consequently, we are all born in transgression (Ps 51:5; Eph 2:1–3).

After Adam, and Eve, the rest of the human race is supposed to be, especially the patriarchs and prophets of Adam.

SIN CONTINUES TO SPREAD

At the end of Gen 3, the Lord God banishes Eve from the garden and bars them from the tree of life again. Although there is already the promise of an offspring-mediator who will crush the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15), the mood of the biblical narrative gets worse before it gets better. Sin continues to spread not merely by imitation but also as an expression of humankind’s innate rebellion against God. So Gen 4 introduces us to the first murderer (Cain) and the first polygamist (Lamech). By the time we get to Gen 6, the wickedness of the human race has become so great “that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time” (Gen 6:5). God wipes out the earth with a flood and reboots a kind of Creation 2.0.

But sin is just as widespread in the new postflood world. Noah gets drunk, leading his son Ham to sin by seeing his father’s nakedness (Gen 9:20–27). As Noah’s descendants multiply, so does their wickedness, culminating in plans for a self-congratulatory and self-aggrandizing tower of Babel (Gen 11:4).

Even after God calls Abram to be a great nation and the divine conduit of blessing to the nations, wickedness persists. God blesses the patriarchs and their families, but it is despite their perfidy, not because of their perfection. Abraham and Isaac lie about their wives; Sarah laughs at God’s promise; Lot’s wife turns into a pillar of salt; Jacob shows himself to be a conniving manipulator (and his mother, Rachel, is not much better). Laban is a cheat; Joseph is boastful; his brothers are jealous enslavers; Simeon and Levi slaughter the Shechemites; Reuben sleeps with his father’s concubine; Judah sleeps with his daughter-in-law. And this is the good side of the family tree! Sin is clearly the problem, and human beings are clearly not the solution.

The implicit assumption—if not the explicit teaching—on every page of the Bible is that the whole world is caught in the grip of sin, both Jews and Gentiles (Rom 3:9); those under the law and those without the law (Rom 2:12–15); the nations that worship the God of Israel and the nations that don’t (Amos 1–2). Most fundamentally and most foundationally, what’s wrong with the world is that God’s

28 theologically rich articles by authors such as Tim Keller and Kevin DeYoung

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