

## Beacons of the Bible

### The Flood of Evil

By [Henry Law](#)

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"God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Genesis 6:5

A solemn scene here opens. Who can contemplate it, and shudder not? God appears looking down on earth's inhabitants. What sight meets His eye? It is wickedness--great wickedness. He sees evil--only evil--in every imagination of every thought of every heart.

Can it be so? Man who entered Eden's garden, the happy image of his God--who stepped upon earth's stage, decked in pure robes of innocence--whose early thoughts were only redolent of heaven--whose primal bias moved in the attraction of holiness--whose infant affections beat with the pulse of righteous love--whose dawn was the clear light of godliness--can man be now so changed!

How is the sparkling jewel tarnished! How is the bright gold dimmed! The crown has fallen from the head. The lovely robe is tattered. The features no more smile in beauty. The flower once fragrant is a weed. The holy nature is degenerate. Love hardens into enmity. Blasphemy pollutes the lips so lately tuned to praise. The subject holds the rebel's weapons. The child is an apostate alien. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Man--can he now be so changed!

Yes! Sin has come with its debasing power. Alas! what ruin it has wrought! How terrible are its properties! How frightful are its effects! How desolating is its step! How withering is its touch! The garden of Eden--the beauty of all beauties--bloomed before it. It passed the gate, and the misery of all miseries followed in its rear. Man, lovely as a ray of righteousness, stood before the fiend. He parleyed with it, and became this mass of evil.

Such the change. And sin effected it. Reader! think deeply, that it is a fearful thing to stray from God. Behold the dark abyss, into which transgression fell, and hate the erring path. Mark these wide ravages, and loathe the spoiler. Contemplate a world undone, and utterly detest the murdering monster.

But, perhaps, while you survey the record, some doubting thoughts arise. The inquiry may intrude, 'Is this description literally correct? Are not the colors too darkly laid? Is there no rhetorical excess?'

Let such misgivings be cast out. They hold the germ of skeptic blindness. Nothing here can be exaggerated. The speaker is eternal Truth. If *man* had framed the sentence, it might have been tinged by inability to judge or proneness to state incorrectly. But no created intellect here decides. God, the Holy Spirit, from His bright throne, makes the announcement. Heaven's voice sounds in the words, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." God's all-piercing eye cannot read wrongly. The Spirit's hand cannot pen error. Let then all heads bow low. Let every ear devoutly listen. Let every heart assent. Undoubted truth speaks here with open mouth.

Thus with sorrowing reverence we draw nearer to the fearful picture. In the foreground stands "WICKEDNESS." This is a frightful monster. It is antagonism to our God. It rears a counter-standard to His will. It tramples down His laws. It defies His authority. If possible, it would scale the skies, and hurl Him from His throne. Its aim is to convert heaven into hell.

Whose is this wickedness? The "wickedness of man." Man, and man alone of all, who breathe the vital air, claims wickedness as his own. "We know, that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now." Rom. 8:22. But the blame is not theirs. Theirs is the suffering. But man's wickedness let loose the plague. "Cursed is the ground." Thorns and thistles bristle on its soil. But the fault is not in it. Man is wicked--therefore his abode is this disorder. Creatures endure much anguish--hardship--suffering--death. But their disobedience roused not avenging wrath. Man is the culprit. His crime sinks earth into a slough of woe. The degradation is world-wide. The cause is wholly his. Wickedness is his sole property. Therefore, O man, see your exclusive criminality. Boast not of any excellency. Glory not of reason--faculties--power--mind--intellect--talent. Parade not your stores of acquired wisdom--your investigating knowledge--your elaborating skill. But rather blush, that your superiorities claim wickedness as their territory.

The picture next exhibits man's HEART. This is the home of the affections--the spring-head of desires--the cradle of each impulse. Here the character receives its form. This is the rudder of the life. This is the guide of daily life. As is the heart, such is the individual. Here schemes, and plans, and purposes are conceived. The heart is the mother of contrivance and device.

What is naturally transacted in this laboratory? The reply here meets us. "Every imagination"--every germ of idea--every incipient embryo of notion--every feeling, when it begins to move--every passion, when it stirs--every inclination, as it arises, is "only evil."

Frightful word--Evil. Here wickedness comes forth in another but not less frightful form. Evil. It is the offspring of the evil one. It bears the impress of the devil. It is foul, as he is foul. It is vile, as he is vile. It is accursed, as he is accursed.

"Only evil!" No ray of light mitigates the darkness. No spark alleviates the impure night. No righteous spot relieves the sinful monotony. No flower of goodness blooms in the noxious desert. Uniformity without one check rules. "Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart" rush out in one stream. No rill finds other vent. All flow in the one channel of evil--"only evil."

Turn not too quickly from this picture. It is not yet complete. The full hideousness is "only evil continually." What! is there no respite? Is evil never weary? Does no intermission break the tremendous sameness? Ah! no. There is no moment of a brighter dawn. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually." There is continually this miserable continuity. Thought chases thought with lightning-rapidity--but each is only evil without mitigation--without pause. Swiftly they rise and swiftly fly--but their wings are only evil--never flagging--never varying. Countless are these imaginations; but they all show one feature--evil continually. There is no better viewpoint.

Reader! the point is reached now for home-application. Draw back the curtain and mark the contents of your breast. Your own heart in its natural state is this flood of evil. Do you startle? Are you indignant at the charge? Is your first impulse stoutly to contradict? If so, it is a fatal sign. It proves decisively, that the imaginations of the thoughts of your heart are very evil.

*When the Father of lights gives saving grace, then instantly the foulness of the inner man is seen!* Then the illumined conscience testifies, "Behold, I am vile." When the revealing Spirit uplifts the heaven-lit torch, then new-born vision discerns the sin-sick ruin. You cannot see--no, you deny--the rule of sin within you. But may not the plague--although unfelt--exist? Night hides, but cannot nullify, the landscape. Lack of perception destroys not surrounding realities. Appeal to a regenerate man. The response most readily asserts, that no description can exaggerate the flood of evil, which once deluged his heart. Charge him as shaped in iniquity, he meekly sighs--"Alas! how true! But, blessed be God! through grace, I am a new man now." But your experience is unconscious of a change. Therefore you are unchanged. And if you are unchanged, you flounder yet in evil's flood. May then the Lord of life give light--give sight--to see your own ailment in the mirror of these words! "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually."

But you reject this sentence as depicting yourself. You half hope that it belongs to some bygone days. You confine it to some long-past period of especial evil. You abjure its general features. You question its application to man's whole family, in every age.

But say, is it not a life-likeness of our first parents, from the moment of their fall? Behold them sinless. God was their hearts' delight. Behold them guilty. What is their conduct? Shame overwhelms them. Therefore evil has torn off innocence. Trembling occupies their hearts. "They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." Genesis 3:8. They spring not joyous to the loved communion. They flee. They seek some covert. They shrink into concealment. Is it not evil to shun God? This is their desire. Thus the imagination of the thoughts of their hearts prove wickedness--great wickedness. They dream, that trees can hide them, from the all-probing eye. This folly is most evil! Evidence is clear, that evil now is the parent of their imaginations.

Adam, when called, speaks in reply. What are his words? Alas! we see no penitence--no humility--no cry for pardon. He avows his fear. Thus he betrays evil; for he allows that punishment is due. Adam's lips unwittingly attest that the imagination of his thoughts is now a flood of evil.

When God probes deeper, deeper evil rises to the surface. The blame is cast on others, no, on God Himself. "The woman, whom *You* gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree." While Eve is charged as bringing the temptation to his hand, God is implicated, as bringing a tempting partner to his side. Can evil exceed this?

Eve, also, is now a flood of evil. She screens herself behind the serpent's craft. "The serpent beguiled me, and I ate." The main sin is *another's*. I only yielded to seducing guile. Here then the broad fact stares us broadly in the face. Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart, from the first day of sin, was only evil. Each word--each act--the produce of each thought--was evil--only evil.

It is clear then, that evil gained universal sway in Adam's heart. Thus it poisoned the spring of future streams. It utterly corrupted the soil of human thought. Now the source being unclean, cleanness cannot issue from it. It follows, then, that man in every age must enter life with a heart evil--only evil continually. "As face answers to face in water, so answers the heart of man to man."

Think then no more, that this portrait delineated peculiar vileness. Such was the first sinner soiled by sin. Such are all born in sin's family.

Reader! it is then your very state, as a corrupt branch of a corrupted tree. It is your pollution, as descending from this tainted fount. Until grace works its wondrous change, wickedness--great wickedness--prevails. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually." Evil is the common flood.

But out of these materials God peoples heaven with a redeemed multitude, pure and glorious as Himself. Yes, through grace, there is relief large as the need. There is a remedy, mighty to heal the deepest depths of the disease. The sinner

is not forever buried in hopeless guilt. God, from all eternity foreseeing the fall and its tremendous woe, devised a reparation wide as the breach. This gracious work is entrusted to his beloved Son. Jesus consents to take the guilty place. He opens on the cross the fountain of all-cleansing blood. The flowing stream is efficacious to wash away all sin. Its virtue obliterates all stain of evil. Thus, though iniquities are more than all wide ocean's sands, and each of deepest dye, the atoning death can make them whiter than the purest snow. The blood of Jesus touches them, and they forever vanish. They recede far as the east is from the west. They sink from discovery, deep as the sea's unfathomable depths. The believer's wickedness doubtless has been very great. The imaginations of the thoughts of his natural heart have long been only evil. But not one speck of all this vileness can be found. The glorious merits of the dying Jesus have expiated all. Sin has done its worst to ruin; Jesus has done far more to save.

But Jesus meets the children of His love with more than cleansing blood. He clothes them also with His robe of righteousness. He, in their nature and their stead, obeyed to the utmost all the holy will of our most holy God. He places this obedience to their account, as if it were the garment wrought by our own hands. In this they stand at heaven's portals, and the gates fly open. Their plea avails. They are counted befitting inhabitants for the palace of the King of kings--fit partners for His very throne. Sin destroyed creature-righteousness. Jesus brings in a divine righteousness.

But the Gospel-mercy is richer yet. Nature's heart, is, as has been shown, a quarry of vile materials. It cannot be mended. These stones can frame no holy fabric. But grace works wonders. The Holy Spirit comes, and a new creation springs to life. He takes away the stony heart. He creates it gloriously clean. Thus old things pass away. Thus all things become new. The moral desert smiles fruitful and fragrant as Eden's garden. It rejoices and blossoms as the rose--Isa. 35:1. Instead of the thorn comes up the fir-tree--instead of the brier comes up the myrtle-tree--and it is to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off--Isa. 55:13.

The love of God is implanted. Delight in evil is rooted up. Conformity to the image of Jesus is inwrought. Holy communion and holy ways are now the sweet delight. Heaven is longed for, as the realm of perfect purity. The call to cross death's Jordan is welcomed, that sin may be forever left behind, and sinful sounds no longer vex, and sinful sights no longer pain, and sinful temptations no longer trouble. The soul longs for scenes, and company, and atmosphere, where all is love. The believer's wickedness has doubtless been very great--the imaginations of the thoughts of his natural heart have been very evil; but he is born again. Sin made man very vile. The Spirit enters, and a new fabric rises. Blessed be God for His sovereign work of grace! Blessed be God for Jesus and the Spirit!

Reader! this Beacon tells you what man is by nature--what you were by birth. Say, what is your present state?

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