



Genesis – Chapter 4:1-26 Sin Spreads, But There is Hope! (Lesson #9)

1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD." 2 And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. 3 In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, 4 and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, 5 but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. 6 The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."

Vs 1 - This is the first use of a familiar **Biblical euphemism**, namely Adam “knew” Eve. It points to something that is **absolutely beautiful** when a husband and wife bond in this special event. It highlights **oneness** and **unity**.

The next major event we read about (again we do not know how long after their expulsion from the garden) is that Adam knew Eve and she conceived a bore a son and named him “Cain.”

The name literally means “**possession**” or “**gotten**.” We are also told why she chose this name for she said: *“I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.”*

We can imagine how exciting it was to bear their first child. Now the proclamation “**I have gotten**” is a little concerning and seems to focus on the wrong thing, but I do not want to read too much into it, only point it out.

We can imagine that they are wondering if **he is the one** who will “crush the head of the serpent.”

After all God had told the serpent:

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”” (Ge 3:15 ESV)

As he grew surely Eve wondered if he was the one who would fix what she and Adam had broken.

John said this of Cain:

“11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12 We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother’s righteous.” (1Jo 3:11-12 ESV)

Jude says this of Cain:

“9 But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.” 10 But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. 11 Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam’s error and perished in Korah’s rebellion.” (Jude 1:9-11 ESV)

But pretend you do not know and imagine the joy. For she had no idea, not yet anyway!

Vs 2 - Some believe **these are twins**, we cannot be sure. But it seems to me the “and again”, literally **again, also**, or **more**, indicates she later bore his brother.

Cain gets a brother, his name is Abel. His name means “**breath**” or “**vapor**.”

By the way the New Testament mentions Abel:

By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.” (Heb 11:4 ESV)

“34 ¶ Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, 35 so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.” (Mt 23:34-35 ESV)

Zechariah was a prophet, was Abel the first prophet?

Further as the boys grew, we are told that:

***Abel** was a small animal herder (likely sheep and goat)

* **Cain** worked the soil – like Adam, a chip off the old block you might say!

A **farmer** and a **rancher**, we can imagine Eve’s joy. Abel provides clothing, possibly milk and cheese, and maybe even animals for sacrifice. Did I spill the beans on that? Pretend you did not hear! Cain provides food.

Vs 3 - In the **process of time**, after some time, over the years, these two young men, being raised by parents, who although they had sinned, were teaching their children about God.

Also, we learn in Genesis 5:4:

“3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. 4 The days of Adam after he fathered Seth were 800 years; and he had other sons and daughters.” (Ge 5:3-4 ESV)

So likely as Cain and Abel grew up there were other brothers and sisters.

Notice, in the course of time they brought **offerings to God**. The Hebrew word is **מִנְחָה** (minchah). This is the first use of this Hebrew word in the Hebrew Bible. It is used over 210 times and a staple for the nation of Israel!

THOUGHT: Where did they get this idea? Two possibilities:

- 1) They decided it was a good idea.
- 2) God had commanded, likely Adam and Eve this was how He was to be approached.

Notice Cain: **brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground**. So, on the face, innocent enough, the farmer brought fruit from the ground, he brought, as an offering produce that he had raised with his own hands.

Vs 4 - Abel also brought an offering. He brought the **“firstborn”** of his flock.

We read of the nation of Israel:

“5 ¶ But you shall seek the place that the LORD your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there. There you shall go, 6 and there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, your vow offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock.” (De 12:5-6 ESV)

He brought the **firstborn of his flock** that he had killed as an offering, and their **“fat”** portions. Abel had not only killed a couple of animals, but he had also prepared them so that he could bring the “fat.”

The Hebrew word is **חֵלֶב** (cheleb). This is the first place this word is used, but it will become part of the prescription for how the nation of Israel approached God (Ex 23:18, 29:13, Lev 3:14, 3:16, 4:8, etc).

The next thing we read is: **the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering...** Yahweh had regard, respect, or He looked favorably upon Abel's offering. He accepted it. He received it as an offering.

By the way. Can you imagine the frustration. Satan thought he had two allies in Adam and Eve in his rebellion. Instead Adam and Eve appear to be serving God and teaching their children to serve God.

APPLICATION: If you sin, get up, repent, and get back to serving God.

Vs 5 - This is surprising, and we are not positive why, but... Cain's offering was not received.

Now we have a lot of questions. When were they told to make offerings, we do not know. What types of offerings were they told were acceptable? We do not know, we can only guess.

But at this point, we can imagine that it is possible that they had been commanded to bring animal sacrifices (picture of the promised Messaih) and Cain decided that God would surely appreciate the work of his hands.

But Yahweh, it appears, communicated to Cain, in a way he could understand. That the offering was not accepted.

APPLICATION: God has been very clear with us on the New Testament side of the equation, how we are to approach God. It is by faith and faith alone. No other approach will be accepted.

But... Cain grew very angry! This is the **first time** in the Hebrew Bible the word translated **angry**, which means **hot, furious, or raging** is used. **In the Hebrew or English, Cain grew very furious!**

His face fell, he countenance changed, you did not need to be omniscient to know that this guy was **mad!**

THOUGHT: The fact that God was **accepting with one type** of an offering and not accepting another type only **makes sense** if somewhere along the way God had clearly articulated how they were to worship.

But it could be that God was looking at the heart. **One was done in faith** the other was not and that could be the difference too. **But, it could be both!**

APPLICATION: What do you and I do when God's word or His Spirit (assuming we are listening, says NO)?

Vs 6-7 - Yahweh said to Cain. God communicated to Cain. Our loving God, seeing what is happening with Cain, **responds in mercy and grace.** He **responds in love**, one of His **core attributes.**

He asks: I picture a father asking an young boy in the midst of a temper tantrum.

It seems **two rhetorical questions** and a **statement.**

- 1) Why are you angry? We have no idea how angry!
- 2) Why are you sullen or pouty, why has your face fallen?

In spite of Cain's bitter and burning anger, Yahweh says: If you obey, what I have already told you to do, you will be **accepted**, you will be **forgiven.** I am a forgiving God and only desire you to do as I ask.

Sin wants to master you. You must master it. **Repent and I will accept you and your offering.**

Sin is crouching at the door. The Hebrew word is **חַטָּאָה** (chatta'ah) and this is the first time it is used.

Sin is here pictured like a lion, and it **desires you**, it **desires to rule over you.** Sin has **consequences** and if you **do not repent**, the consequences, **sin will lead you away from me.**

APPLICATION: It has been said that sin always takes you further than you want to go, cost you more than you want to pay, and keeps you longer than you want to stay. Nothing could be truer in this case.

Cain, you must rule over your sinful desire to do things your way, which is pride.

8 Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. 9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" 10 And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. 11 And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." 13 Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. 14 Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." 15 Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. 16 ¶ Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Vs 8a - We have no doubt they spoke all the time. But it seems that Moses is implying that Cain spoke to Abel about this issue. This should not surprise us, after all this is his brother.

But also, Jesus said that Abel was a prophet (Luk 11:49-51 and Mat 23:34-35).

We can almost imagine the discussion. I can almost picture furious Cain retelling the story and righteous Abel providing godly advice! **Then we read, tragically!**

Vs 8b - They were in the field together, maybe even while they were having this discussion and the angry young man was hearing godly wisdom from the righteous young man...

Cain rose up against his brother and killed him. **The first recorded murder in the scriptures!**

Cain would not follow God's command or Abel's advice and instead, rose up and killed Abel!

We see fulfilled exactly what God had said was going to happen:

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring..." (Ge 3:15a ESV)

Victor Hamilton said this: *"Rather than accept God's decision, he rejects the one God has accepted."*

Sin has indeed gotten hold of Cain through his jealousy and his anger. It has ruled him.

Vs 9 - Yahweh speaks directly to Cain and asks: *"Where is Abel your brother?"* Interesting, God did just what he did Adam and Eve. God goes looking for Cain.

Like Adam and Eve, we can imagine God is looking for confession, he is looking for repentance.

The response: *"I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?"* In spite of just killing his brother, his **heart is rock hard against God.**

The **answer shocks us**, for we are expecting repentance, we are expecting sorrow, we are expecting brokenness.

Equally, it is a lie, directly to one's creator. He **hates God** more than he **hated his brother** who he just killed, in cold blood, for absolutely no reason. In fact, it is his hatred for God that has led to his killing of Abel.

Sin desired to rule over Cain and its desire has been fulfilled!

Vs 10 - Of course, God knew the whole time what he had one. The **ESV translators** added a **question mark**. I suspect, it should be an **exclamation mark!**

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE! Your **brother's blood** is calling out to me from the ground.

Ever wonder what it was calling out? I cannot be sure, but I suspect it was calling out for justice.

"22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, 23 and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel." (Heb 12:22-24 ESV)

It seems that Abel's blood is calling out from the **ground for justice**.

Can I remind us: Jesus's blood calls for forgiveness.

And God had **every right** to **execute justice**, right on the spot! By the way this is the **first time blood is mentioned** in the Hebrew Bible.

Vs 11 - Before we read the curse, before we read the sentence for Cain's crime.

The sentence should be death! (Ex 21:12, Lev 24:17, Num 35:17-21)

Instead, you are cursed, from the ground! Cursed from the earth. The ground, the earth that opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood is demanding justice and declaring a curse, upon you.

APPLICATION: Have we discussed that sin has consequences?

Vs 12 - The earth will no longer, even in difficulty yield you its strength. **The farmer**, will **no longer find success** farming. More than that, you shall be a **fugitive** and a **wanderer** on the earth. You will be a **felon and a vagabond**.

It could be translated a **wondering fugitive**. No community, cursed to wander like a vagabond.

Mercy, in judgement has **extended his life** that **he might repent**.

This is how our God often reacts, patience, mercy, and love. But never forget another pillar of his character is justice. **Doesn't God's mercy often surprise you?**

Vs 13-14 - Cain speaks to Yahweh: "My punishment is greater than I can bear."

Notice, you have driven me from your face.

Although God had driven Adam and Eve out, you can sense that God was still very engaged with them and they were possibly going back to the entrance of the garden, where the tree of life was, and in front of the Cherubim, who were guarding the way to the tree of life, worshipping Yahweh.

You have made me a **fugitive** and a **wanderer** on the Earth, and if anyone runs across me, **they will kill me!**

It is interesting at least in passing that Cain's main concern has been and still remains on Cain. The one who killed his own brother is worrying that someone may kill him.

Vs 15 - Yahweh says NO! Then He decrees, if anyone kills Cain, his vengeance shall be seven fold!

A word of judgment comes with a word of protection.

He then puts an **unknown mark** or some type of sign on him so that people will not attack him. Maybe it is a **sign or mark to Cain that God will protect him**, we cannot be sure.

Although we do not know **what the mark was**, we do know that it **worked**.

Vs 16 - This is yet **another sad verse**, in a string of sad verses. Cain, goes away from the **presence of Yahweh** and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. This is the only place in the Bible this word is used. **It literally means to wander**.

Although one would guess that we are being told he went and settled down in the area that would take on the name of the curse God had pronounced on him "wander."

We now have two distinct people groups on planet earth.

Adam and Eve (and any unnamed children they have had up to now) who as best we can tell are dwelling in the presence of the Lord.

Cain and his wife who must leave the presence of Yahweh. They go and start a family, establish off-spring, and they did so "away from the presence of the Lord!"

Adam and Eve and those with them, offering sacrifices to Yahweh. Cain and his wife and the children to follow, disconnected from God.

Two lines are being established on the Earth, in fulfillment of what Yahweh had said. The seed of the woman (that follow Yahweh) and the seed of the serpent (that do not follow Yahweh).

***** A Discussion About the Preflood World and and the Expansion of People on the Earth *****

17 Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch. 18 To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech. 19 And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. 20 Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. 21 His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. 22 Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah. 23 Lamech said to his wives: "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. 24 If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold." 25 And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him." 26 To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.

Vs 17 - The only source for a wife for Cain would have been one of his sisters. We have no idea how many children Adam and Eve had.

So Cain had relationship with his wife, she got pregnant and she bore Enoch.

It appears the Cain then worked to build a city and named that city after his son Enoch.

Vs 18 - Here we are told of multiple boys that were born to Enoch, we would rightly assume there are multiple girls as well.

Why Moses chooses to capture Cain descendants, **We cannot be sure.** Other than to possibly highlight these two growing cultures, there two competing world views that are beginning to cover the globe.

But we must admit, through the disobedient line of Cain emerges some significant discoveries!

Vs 19 - Here, we are introduced to one of the sons of Methushael, a man named Lamech.

Lamech- His name means **powerful** or to **conqueror**.

We are told that he took two wives, one was Adah (ornament) and the other was Zillah (shade).

Here we see the sons of the serpent doing things their own way, and now marriage created in the garden, is perverted by the sons of Cain.

A member of this line, Lamech corrupts the marriage union and marries two women, the first example of polygamy in the Bible, one of the descendants of Cain.

Vs 20-21 - Here once again, not all of the children are discussed, but instead select ones who we will trace the lineage of the expansion of the sons of Cain.

Adah (wife of Lamech) bore Jabal (stream of water), he was the father of nomadic herdsmen.

We assume these were for clothing and for beasts of burden. His brother Jubal (Twins) (**stream**) he was the father of those who played music with instruments. In fact, it appears that he created both the string instrument (harp) and the wind instrument (flute).

As you consider “primitive man”, you should understand early man was anything but primitive. Instead early man was creative and intelligent.

So here we have our first person who takes an interest in music and apparently creating instruments to play music with.

Vs 22 - So we traced Adah’s two sons, we are now told about one of Zillah’s sons and his sister.

In this case a man named Tubal-cain (no doubt in part after his grandfather Cain) (it means will be **brought of Cain**). Tubul-Cain was a metalworker.

Again, consider what we are bring told, just eight generations from when God created Adam, and we are reading about a person who “forged” instruments of bronze and iron.

Again, early man, was anything but primitive. At this point it is clear that the descendants of Cain were **EXTREMELY** industrious and intelligent. **This would have been around 3900 BC!**

Here we are told about a single sister of Tubul-Cain, her name was **Naamah**, it means (loveliness). She is mentioned in passing and that is all we know.

Vs 23 - So Lamech has a conversation with his two wives, he says to his two wives: I killed a man for wounding me, in fact a young man who struck me. It appears this is a poem or a song.

This is the first place in the Hebrew Bible this word is used, but it is the word that generally means to lightly wound or to bruise.

It seems that what Lamech is saying is that a young man bruised him, and he killed him for it!

Here we see the anger and indifference to human life that was found in Cain, is also in his great, great, great grandson Lamech.

The ungodly lineage of Cain, moving further and further away from God, and those who follow God connected with Adam and Eve and their son Seth, who we will get to soon enough.

Vs 24 - He seems to be saying if God would revenge sevenfold for killing Cain, the revenge for killing him will be seventy-seven fold!

If Cain was somebody and revenge was declared, how much more me!

It is almost like his is bragging at just how heinous this naked act of violence was and taking God's name in jest in the whole event.

You should picture the pre-flood world (especially the seed of the serpent) much like the wild-wild west. Men doing **anything they wanted to do**, well at least anything that they had **the power to do**.

Vs 25 - As quickly as he had snapped to Cain, Moses now snaps back to Adam and Eve, back to those who are in the presence of Yahweh to pick the story back up.

Adam knew Eve again and she bore another son, this was following the death of Abel and the expulsion of Cain.

But here, Moses records that following the murder of Abel and the banishment of Cain, God provides hope another offspring in the boy Seth.

His name means **“compensation”** or **“substitution.”** It seems she saw him as the replacement for **Abel** and possibly even **Cain**.

Vs 26 - Here is tracking the lineage through a son, we are told about Enosh, who was born to Seth. His name means **“man”** or **“frailty.”**

At that time, when Seth was born, people began to call upon the name of the Lord. This has been understood three different ways:

- 1) During this time people began to corporately seek Yahweh**
- 2) People began to call themselves by the name of Yahweh**
- 3) People quit calling out on God, people turned from following God. Then men began to profane the name of the Lord.**

It seems to me the picture we should have two communities of men are rapidly growing on Earth. One following God, the other ignoring God.
