

The Line of Cain

4: 16-24

DIG: What does Cain living in a city say about his apparent sorrow over what he had done? What does naming some of his children godly names mean, if anything? What were the conditions that allowed Cain to marry his sister? When would those conditions change? Why?

REFLECT: How do you know when you have repented? When was the last time you had to use "tough love?" How did the person respond? If ADONAI is a loving God, why would he say: With such a man do not even eat? And: Expel the wicked man from among you (First Corinthians 5:11b, 13)? What if someone could continue sinning with no consequences? What is the LORD's purpose in dis-fellowshipping someone?

Here we have a picture of the antediluvian world, or the world before the Flood. It was the first great civilization that is all but forgotten by the world of modern science. The brief record here is the only reliable account we have of this first age. It leaves no doubt that the antediluvian world was substantially different than the one in which we live today. As already discussed in 1:6-8, much of the earth's waters were stored **above the expanse** in the form of a vast blanket of invisible water vapor, which produced a marvelous "greenhouse effect" over the earth's entire surface. This, in turn, produced a uniformly mild, warm climate everywhere all year long, with no wind and rainstorms. There were extensive land surfaces, covered with lush vegetation and an abundant animal life, all over the world.⁸⁶

The pleasant climate, possibly improved by hyperbaric pressures (a condition of much higher atmospheric pressure than we now have on the earth, caused by the weight of the vapor canopy) and the radiation-filtering effect of the canopy enabled the people then to live longer than people today. There were three reasons for this. First, the absence of mutation-producing radiations in the environment did contribute significantly to long life. Second, the human gene pool had not been polluted to any extent, and third, diseases had not been spread yet through the outworking of the curse.

After **Cain** departed from **the LORD**, he established a totally godless society. **So Cain went out from ADONAI's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden (4:16)**. Obviously, **Cain** cannot hide from **God**, but here we are talking about the localized presence of the Shechinah glory at **the east side of the garden of Eden (2:24)**. **Nod** means *the land of wandering*. It was the land of fugitives from **ADONAI**. **Cain** was to have no permanent home, going from place to place. It was **east of Eden** so he could distance himself from **God**.

Cain lay with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch (4:17a). Adam and Eve **had other sons and daughters (5:4)** during the 930 years of Adam's lifetime. And the same is true of each of the other antediluvian patriarchs listed in the genealogies of **Genesis 5**. The average life span of these patriarchs is 912 years. It can be shown that, based on very conservative assumptions as to family size, and so on, that there could easily have been many millions of people in the world long before **Cain's** death. So obviously, **Cain** married **his** sister or some other relative. No genetic harm could have resulted because it would have taken many generations before enough genetic mutations could have built-up in the human race to make such marriages of close relatives genetically harmful.⁸⁷ Therefore, this would have been allowable during this stage of human history because such a prohibition did not go into effect until the Torah was written by Moses at the foot of Mount Sinai.

Cain was then building a city. This was an act of defiance against **God's** wandering for him **(4:14)**. **He** became a **city** dweller because the ground would no longer produce for **him**. It is interesting how evolutionists like to ascribe millions of years from the beginnings of man to the first civilizations and here we have it in the first generation! **And he named it after his son Enoch (4:17b)**, which means *set apart or dedicated*.

To Enoch was born Irad, which means city man.

And Irad was the father of Mehujael. There is no "j" sound in Hebrew, so it is pronounced Mehuyael. It means *God gives life, or God makes me live*.

And Mehuael was the father of Methushael, which means man of God or man of prayer. The **el** at the end of the names **Mehuael** and **Methushael** means *God*. Because of this, some commentators deduce that **Cain** repented and became a godly man. I don't know what to make of these names, but the Bible makes no such claim. In fact, **Jude**, in the second to last book in Scripture, pictures him as being lost. In speaking of the false believers, who **are godless men and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign Lord**, **Jude** says: **Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion (Jude 11)**. After wrestling with **God**, Jacob's name was changed to Israel **(32:28)**. And after Rabbi Sha'ul was converted on the Damascus road **(Acts 9-19)**, his name was changed to Paul. But at the end of the Bible, **Jude**, with the clear light of progressive revelation, still warns us not to go **the way of Cain**.

And Methushael was the father of Lamech (4:18), which means a warrior or conqueror. **He** is the seventh generation from Adam.

Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah (4:19). From here on, we learn more about Lamech's family. He had two wives. This is the first case of bigamy and polygamy. The names of his wives had sensual connotations. The first was named Adah, which means *adorned or ornament*. According to rabbinic tradition, her main function was childbearing. The name of the other was Zillah. In Hebrew it is pronounced *Tdzilah*. According to rabbinic tradition, her function was sexual pleasure. Lamech and his wives produce four children.

Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock (4:20). Her first born was Jabal, pronounced *Yabal*, which means *producer or procession*. The root of this word means *to yield, to produce, or to bring to procession*. He was the father, or originator, of tent dwellers. His was a nomadic lifestyle and he raised livestock. The word *livestock* is a more comprehensive word than merely being a shepherd as Abel was. It is a broad term, like a farmer, that includes flocks and herds of various kinds, including camels and donkeys. According to rabbinic tradition, he was the first person to build altars to idols.

His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp and flute (4:21). Jubal is pronounced *Ubal* and means *to bring procession* and is the same basic word as *Jubilee*. He was the father, or the originator, of musical instruments, the harp (stringed instrument) and flute (wind instrument).

Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron (4:22a). His second wife also had a son and a daughter. The son, Tubal-Cain, means *one who has acquired production*. He was identified with metal works of all kinds. The inventions of the three sons made life much easier and tended to reduce the effects of the curse. Moses is making the point that although disobedient, the line of Cain provided many of the world's great cultural discoveries.

Tobal-Cain's sister was Naamah (4:22b), which means *pleasant, graceful or gorgeous*. Normally, a woman's name is not supposed to be mentioned in Hebrew genealogies, so she must have been significant in her line. The rabbinical interpretation is that she later became Noah's wife. All the names of Lamech's children were festive, but the mood quickly changes with the Song of Lamech, which is a taunt song of defiance against God.

Lamech said to his wives: This is the first poem and the first song in the Bible. The audience was a little restrictive, just his two wives! It is three couplets. Hebrew poetry does not follow rhythm or rhyme, but parallelism. One line is followed by a second line, and the second line refers back or clarifies the first line.

The first couplet pictures **Lamech** boasting to, or threatening his wives.

Adah and Zillah (wives of Lamech), **listen to me** (hear my words);
wives of Lamech, hear my words.

The second couplet shows how he was bragging. It describes how strong he was in combat and his ability to defeat a younger warrior.

I have killed a man (a young man) **for wounding me** (for injuring me),
a young man for injuring me (4:23).

A young man injured or wounded Lamech, and Lamech, who had the advantage of using metal weapons forged by Tubal-Cain, killed him (see my commentary on **Exodus Dp - You Shall Not Murder**). The word **killed** is the same word used when **Cain killed Abel**. This went beyond the need for self-defense. This was the law of the jungle. It is pride and self-justification. **The way the rabbis interpret this incident goes back to the survival of Cain. According to rabbinic tradition Lamech was blind, and was led around by his son Tubal-Cain. One day they went hunting and Tubal-Cain happened to see Cain, but lied to his father and told him that there was a deer in front of him. Lamech shot an arrow and killed Cain. When Lamech realized what had happened, he also killed Tubal-Cain.**

The third couplet speaks of a human society without the LORD, and Lamech taking the law into his own hands.

If Cain is avenged seven times (seventy times seven),
then Lamech seventy times seven (4:24).

Whoever hurts Lamech will receive from him *ten times greater vengeance* than that which God promised to avenge Cain. He was a proud man who didn't hesitate to kill anyone. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree and we can see Cain's attitude in his great-great-great grandson. So we have moved from unrepentant Cain to defiant Lamech. Violence was glorified, and *the sign of Cain* no longer stood as a stigma of exile, but as a badge of honor.⁸⁸

The Line of Cain

Adam

Cain

Enoch

Irad

Methujael

Methushael

Lamech

Jabal

Jubal

Tubal-Cain

Naamah