



11 | GENESIS 4

JESUS, WORSHIP, & THE HEART (CAIN AND ABEL)

The only place of true joy and human flourishing is worshipping God from a fully surrendered heart. All else is vanity and meaningless. Without Christ, we have no hope and no satisfaction, but with Christ, we have fullness of joy!

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Call to Worship

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; ²³ they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ²⁴ "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."—Lamentations 3:22-24

Songs

Bow the Knee

Before the Throne of God Above

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Announcements

WELCOME: We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet if you are visiting with us.

MARK AND MICHELLE: This is the last Sunday for Mark and Michelle until August. They will be heading out to California this week to begin a month internship for Mark. They spend another month

Introduction

21 MILLION SLAVES IN THE WORLD

Perhaps no statistic reminds us more graphically of the distortion of power in our world than this: **there are twenty-one million slaves in the world today**. With the end of slavery at the end of the civil war in America, this is a **shocking statistic**. At this moment, there are precious human beings who are slaves. They labor as brick makers, coffee harvesters, cigarette rollers and domestic servants. They are not free to leave. If they try, they are savagely beaten.

Remember Jesus' words in John. "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin" (Jn 8:34). In modern, secular societies perhaps the clearest example of idolatry is the enslavement in life we call **addiction**. Addictions can be to human beings. We call that co-dependency. It could be a dependency and enslavement to chemicals like drugs or alcohol. It could be the desire for earthly comfort, possessions, power, or for people to think well of you. All addiction is enslavement that displaces the Lordship of Jesus Christ in our heart.

This enslaving kind of life dominating sin begins with essentially good, created stuff; even the chemicals that become addictive drugs are part of God's good creation and often have beneficial uses in the right context. But in the throes of addiction, we invest that created stuff with transcendent expectations. We depend on people and things to fulfill the deepest desires of our heart, and we we are left miserable.

Enslavement to something begins to hold out the false promises of godlike expectations. The most powerfully addictive substances, like **crystal meth**, are the ones that can make you feel good no matter how horrible your emotions or circumstances are.

A behavior like **gambling** promises to give us a sense of mastery over the random forces so we can have the power to **create wealth without having to work**.

Pornography promises intimacy without risk, commitment and the limitations of our often awkward and vulnerable bodies.¹

TWO GROUPS: SLAVES AND FREE

In Genesis 4, we see two opposing powers. **Cain represents the offspring of Satan**, willing to do the serpents bidding by killing his brother Abel. **Abel represents the Seed of the woman**, a man of faith, fully surrendered to God.

Which group are you a part of? Are you **a slave of Satan**, or are you **a free child of God**?

¹ Andy Crouch, *Playing God: Redeeming the Gift of Power* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 56.

The prophesied division of mankind into two spiritually opposed groups (*cf* 3:15) took place immediately after the fall, when Eve gets pregnant with the first baby. **Talk about “raising Cain.” She thought she was birthing the Messiah, but she was birthing a killer!**

The story of Cain and Abel traces the escalation of sin in the ungodly line of Cain through the generations leading to the flood.² By the time we get to Genesis 6, there are only eight righteous people on the whole earth. **Cain’s murderous family line** is completely wiped out in God’s flood judgment against the rebels on earth.

No longer does humanity need the personal presence of Satan for temptation, because the heart of man is corrupted, and he is now “lured and enticed by his own desire” (Jas 1:14).

Key thought: The only place of true joy and human flourishing is worshipping God from a fully surrendered heart. All else is vanity and meaningless. Without Christ, we have no hope and no satisfaction, but with Christ, we have fullness of joy!

1. THE CONCECRATION (4:1-5)

We see the kinds of people Cain and Abel are by their worship. Cain is the first baby born, and he has a brother Abel. Their worship reveals who they are loyal to.

But first we consider Adam and Eve’s faith as they **await the birth of their firstborn son whom they believe could be the Messiah**. We see this by the reaction of Adam and Eve to Cain’s birth in conjunction with the promise of God to send a deliverer (Gen 3:15).³ They are excited! **Listen to Eve burst with excitement.**

THE WONDER

Genesis 4:1 | Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.”

Adam and Eve were told they would die once they ate the forbidden fruit. They did die spiritually that day. They became “dead in their trespasses and sin” (*cf* Eph 2:1-3). But God does not leave sinners alone. **He sends them help**. The **Savior was promised** (3:15). Adam believed God’s promise, that there was the hope of God’s Seed coming through the woman. The woman’s Seed would crush the serpent’s head.

After the first couple were **deported from the Garden of Eden**, **Eve did become pregnant**. Can you imagine wonderful beyond description this news would be!⁴ **Good news! A baby would be born** to deliver and save Adam and Eve! This is the **first pregnancy in human history**. This was not just to be a precious life, but a promised life. Adam and Eve were awaiting their Messiah.

Eve says, “I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.” The Seed God promised has been gotten! Her words were an **implicit declaration of faith**. The new mother praised God with fresh and exciting faith.⁵ Apparently **Eve assumed that this son was God’s promised Redeemer** who would crush the serpent’s head (Gen 3:15).⁶

Eve’s hope that this child was Messiah would be crushed. Little did Eve know, her baby Cain would **grow up to be the first murderer**.

² Meredith G. Kline, *Genesis: A New Commentary*, ed. Jonathan G. Kline (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2016), 24.

³ James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 249.

⁴ James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 249.

⁵ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 102.

⁶ Rushdoony, *Genesis*, 44.

THE WORKERS

Genesis 4:2 | And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground.

Now there are two sons. Both would be workers for the Lord. One son, Abel, was a **shepherd**. The other son, Cain, was a **farmer**. There is nothing wrong with either occupation.

We know nothing of the boys' growing-up years other than **that Cain followed in his father's footsteps** as firstborn, becoming a **farmer**, while his little brother **Abel became a shepherd**. Both had honorable professions.⁷

THE WORSHIP

Both Cain and Abel's offerings were perfectly legitimate. But Cain's as a grain offering (Lev 2:1) was out of place.

Genesis 4:3-5 | 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.

"In the course of time"—nearly always denote a precise period of time, here likely **referring to the end of an agricultural year** when sacrifices would be presented.⁸ It was an opportunity to offer their worship to God.

Abel brought a **sin offering** (Lev 5:1-6). He knew his sin needed atonement. **Cain** offered a **thank offering** (Lev 7:11-34), apparently feeling no need for atonement.⁹ There is no indication in the text that one offering is inferior to the other. Both are prescribed in the Levitical sacrifices.

WHY WAS ABEL'S OFFERING ACCEPTED?

The LORD looks favorably on the presentation of Abel's sacrificial offering because **Abel came to God with a surrendered heart, full of faith**.¹⁰ We see this in the "hall of faith" in Hebrews 11.

Hebrews 11:4 | By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice.

Abel went out of his way to please God (which meant he had faith in God, Heb. 11:6). By faith, Abel **offered a more excellent sacrifice**. Abel's offering was more excellent, because he offered it with complete trust, surrender, and faith.

WHY WAS CAIN'S OFFERING REJECTED?

We know why Cain's offering was not accepted. Cain had **a selfish, self-centered heart**. He brought what the Lord required, but his heart was "far from the Lord". It's as Isaiah warned.

Isaiah 29:13 | This people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me.

⁷ Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, 103.

⁸ Wenham, "Genesis," *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 1*, 103.

⁹ Rushdoony, *Genesis*, 44.

¹⁰ Victor P. Hamilton, "Genesis," in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, vol. 3, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 15.

Cain's offering was **indifferent, cold, calculated, and calloused**. Cain had no regard for the LORD, so the LORD had "no regard" for Cain's offering. **Cain** was **not worshipping God**, but simply discharging a duty. Abel's actions were righteous, whereas Cain's were evil (1 Jn 3:12).¹¹

1 John 3:12 | 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.

Cain did not come to God in faith, and as we see by the context, he was **not aware of the sin in his own heart** that was "crouching" like a rabid animal, ready to destroy him.

The language here indicates that **Cain was indifferent** and brought a token offering of grain to God, but Abel brought the very first and best of his flock—"firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions." He gave God **the very best and the pick of his flock**.¹²

YOUR WORSHIP

Of course, we know that the things that happen in the Old Testament were shadows – "a shadow of things to come" (Col 2:17). Remember what Peter tells us.

1 Peter 2:5 | You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

These two offerings may have been fine according to the later Levitical law, but **what was not fine was Cain's heart**. What is explicit here is that Abel offered the pick of his flock and that **Cain's spirit was arrogant**.¹³ Worship was an irritating duty to him. And God saw this heart of self-sufficiency.

1 Samuel 16:7 | The LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.

Where is your heart? Is Christ the blazing center of your life? Do you want to give him your first and your best? **God is not impressed with your spiritual gifts** or your **tithes** or your **worship** if he doesn't **first have your heart**.

We find that Cain's offering is rejected because God knows the heart, and Cain's heart is not only **indifferent** but **angry** with God.

A GPS FOR WORSHIP

I love the "Life 360" app because it tells me where my family is at all times. Don't you wish you had something like that for our worship? Actually, we do have a kind of GPS for our worship. **Our treasure demonstrates where our heart is.**

Matthew 6:21 | Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Do you want to see where your worship of of God is? Look at how you are currently investing your life: your treasure, your time, your thought life. God wants all of you, and he deserves all of you. What you treasure points to what you love. What does your **time** say that you love? What does your **money** say that you love? Where are your **thoughts** most of the time?

¹¹ Allen P. Ross, "Genesis," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 34.

¹² Wenham, "Genesis," *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 1*, 103. Wenham notes that the rabbinic commentators note that "fat" and "firstborn" mean that Abel gave God the pick of the flock.

¹³ Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 80.

Worship of God has to do with living for God in full surrender each day. Anything that takes the place of God is an idol. Idolatry will destroy your life. If Christ is not at the center, you will be miserable, unsatisfied, and living a joyless existence without God's blessings.

Paul summarizes our worship when he says, "everything is dung" compared to the "excellency of the knowledge of Christ" (Phil 3:8). According to Jesus, we exist for one purpose.

Matthew 22:37 | You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

You can't serve two masters. We are called to have only one Master (Mt 6:24). We are called to be a **slave of Jesus Christ** and not anything or anyone else (Rom 1:1; Gal 1:10). If you are not enslaved to God, you will be enslaved to sin (Rom 6:16). Does **fear** control you? **Anger**? **Anxiety**? **Despair**? **Lust**? Is it **substance or alcohol**? **Media**? **Pride**? You can't serve Christ and the world. Forsake the mastery of anything but Jesus Christ.

2. THE CONFLICT (4:6-8)

If you don't worship God, you will be at war with him. This is the sad story of Cain's life. What we find is that there is an inner war within Cain that leads to murder.

THE STRONGHOLD OF WAR

Because Cain's heart was not right, he found himself at war not only with God, but **his anger fueled his war with his only brother**. Sin makes us Satan's slaves and turns friends into enemies. Sin brings all kinds of instability into our lives.

Genesis 4:5b | So Cain was very angry, and his face fell.

Cain's problem is that he's self-centered, lacking faith and humble surrender to God. **His anger is merely an "idol indicator."** Cain's anger revealed his true attitude of self-love, which resulted in his despondency.¹⁴ Anger has mastery over him. Anger is a stronghold that Satan loves to use. Remember the warning about anger in Ephesians.

Ephesians 4:26-27 | Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil.

When you seed sin in your heart, you cede authority over to Satan. Don't give Satan a stronghold in your heart. What is at the root of all our interpersonal conflicts? We put ourselves above God.

James 4:1-2 | What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ²You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.

We do what we do because we want what we want, and we are willing to sin to get it. **Our fussing and fighting reveals our worship!**

¹⁴ K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, vol. 1A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 268.

THE SCOWL OF WAR

God asks a question: “Why are you scowling?” (4:6). This captures the visual grimace etched across Cain’s face. Cain’s scowl revealed the bitterness of his darkened soul.¹⁵ **His anger was about to overtake him**, and he would make a terrible choice.

Genesis 4:6 | The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen?”

The wars in your life demonstrate what you are worshipping. What is it that you fuss about? **What is it that you are willing to sin to get?** That’s your idol. **What makes you angry if you don’t have it?** That’s your idol. **What is it that causes you to blow up or clam up or scowl with your face?** That’s your idol. **Cain’s scowl was there because he had chosen sides.**

James 4:4 | Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

THE SOLUTION FOR WAR

God now warns Cain. **Resist sin, or it will master you.** Sin is like a wild animal, crouching at your door. Sin is contrary to you. The devil wants to lie, kill and steal. Sin will take you captive.

Genesis 4:7 | 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 contrary to you, but you must rule over it.

God is now counseling Cain. Get rid of sin. Take the way of escape. God says to Cain, “Run to me! Be accepted by me. Rule over sin, resist it. Do what is right and well pleasing to me.” How do I do that? Remember Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 10:13 | No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Cain was so angry over the rejection of his offering that God warned him of the peril he was in. **He had no idea that his sin of anger could curse him for life and damn him to hell.**

Run away from sin! “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (Jas 4:7). God warns you of the damage sin can do in your life. Sadly, Cain would not heed God’s warning.

DON’T IGNORE THE WARNING

The final eruption of Mount St. Helens in May of 1980 was not a sudden event. For two months prior to the massive blast—the most deadly and destructive in American history—earthquakes and volcanic activity signaled a major event was underway. Authorities had plenty of time to sound the alarm and warn those living nearby of the looming danger. Yet despite the seriousness of the threat, some people chose to disregard the warnings.

The best known of those who refused to evacuate was Harry Randall Truman. The eighty-three-year-old man had survived fighting in World War I, and he was not about to leave just because scientists thought there was danger. Truman told reporters, “I don’t have any idea whether it will blow.” They urged him to leave, but Truman didn’t listen. On May 18, 1980,

¹⁵ Ibid., 269.

Truman and his lodge were buried beneath 150 feet of mud and debris from the volcanic eruption. His body was never found.¹⁶ How much more foolish it is to ignore Scripture’s warnings!

SATAN’S STRATEGY FOR WAR

What is the warning God gives? Sin is “crouching at the door” like a wild, rabid animal ready to pounce. Here, then, is the predicted conflict (3:15) between good seed and evil seed arising immediately.¹⁷ Cain must decide: will he be on the side of the **Seed of the woman, or will he join Satan’s team?**

Genesis 4:7b | Sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.

SIN CROUCHING LIKE AN ANIMAL

Sin is personified as an animal couching at the door and ready to pounce on Cain. It literally comes from the cognate “to demonize.”¹⁸ One Jewish translation of the Torah has it: “Sin is the demon crouching at the door.”¹⁹ **Cain’s anger made him susceptible** to this evil influence. It reminds us of a similar warning about Satan from 1 Peter.

1 Peter 5:8 | Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

When you choose sin, you choose to be demonized: harassed by Satan. In the gospels, Jesus calls Satan the “strong man”. **Satan is like a kidnapper**, and only Jesus can “bind the strong man” and release his “goods” (Mt 12:29). What about you? Has Satan taken you captive? **Are there blind spots in your life?** Do you feel stuck and entrapped? **Jesus alone can set you free!**

John 8:36 | If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

THE SAD RESULT OF WAR

Cain surrendered to his sinful desires and look where he ended up. He kills his brother. He does Satan’s work for him.

Like Cain, if you don’t surrender your anger, your anxiety, and your despair to God, sin will overtake you like a wild animal. **Satan is the ultimate puppet master**. We wrestle not against flesh and blood. **Satan loves to us sinners to do his work**. Cain held on to his anger and became Satan’s slave to do his bidding. **Unable to strike at God, Cain struck and killed Abel his brother.**

Genesis 4:8 | Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

We must recognize that hatred towards people often displays man’s anger and rebellion against God.²⁰ **You may be more civilized than Cain**, but **Jesus** says “**whoever is angry with his brother is a murderer**,” no different than Cain (Mt 5:22). It’s shocking what the New Testament tells us about hatred, anger, and bitterness.

¹⁶ Shirley Rosen, “The Old Man and the Mountain,” *The Columbian*, April 1, 2010, <https://www.columbian.com/news/2010/apr/01/the-old-man-and-the-mountain/>.

¹⁷ Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 158.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Rousas John Rushdoony, *Commentaries on the Pentateuch: Genesis* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2002), 44.

1 John 3:15 | Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Christians are called to love all people, even our enemies. We are to do good to them. We are to pray for them. We are to bless them (*cf* Lk 6:27-36). Those who have a perpetual unforgiving, bitter spirit do not enter the kingdom of God. Remember Jesus' commentary on the Lord's prayer.

Matthew 6:14-15 | If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Take heed to Cain's heart. If you are enslaved to sin, you will do the bidding of Satan. **Anything is possible—deception, destruction, even murder.** Watch an episode of Dateline of some mystery show, and you'll see that we are all capable of the words, darkest, most destructive of deeds. We need Christ!

3. THE CULTURE (4:9-16)

Cain created a religion and a culture of self. Cain would become a wanderer, lost in false religion. His false religion had four qualities.

A CULTURE OF FORCE

Genesis 4:8 | Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

Cain's false humanistic religion created a society and culture of **force**. This is exemplified by Cain killing his brother in order to put himself first. We see this in the religion of **cancel culture**, where a society can create their own hell, and there is no forgiveness or redemption. False religion creates a culture that is **rude and ruthless**.

Without God, there is no real freedom. Societies that reject God must have a society of force, with threat of death, because the more you reject God, the more animalistic you become. People without God use force to get their way.

God's people on the other hand are reasonable and peaceable and humble (*cf* Jas 3:13-4:10). They have an inward accountability with the indwelling Spirit guiding their steps (Eze 36:25-27; Jn 5:5; Gal 5:22-23).

A CULTURE OF FALSEHOOD

And then it's a religion of **falsehood**. Cain's flippant, indifferent reference to his dead brother revealed a heart hardened in its depravity.²¹

Genesis 4:9 | Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?"

I don't know where my brother Abel is! Cain's first instinct is to lie and deceive. If a person is willing to murder, they are willing to lie. If a person is willing to commit adultery or fornication or view pornography, they are willing to lie. This is what happens to a culture given toward sin. Cain is the founder of the godless society, and **falsehood is a major characteristic of life without God.**

²¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 105.

Every society that rejects God will pass off responsibility on to another. It's the victim culture. **The godless society will not take responsibility for their actions.**

In answer to the question, "**Am I my brother's keeper?**" The answer is **yes!** We are all stewards and managers of God's creation, and we are to take responsibility for looking out for one another. Ultimate **stewardship is evangelizing and disciplining one another.**

A CULTURE OF FUTILITY

Next it's a religion of **futility**. God strips away the falsehoods of Cain's culture and religion, and he is left with futility.

Genesis 4:10-12 | And the Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. ¹¹And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹²When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a **fugitive and a wanderer** on the earth."

True faith made Abraham "a pilgrim and a stranger" on the earth. **False religion made Cain a fugitive and a wanderer.** Cain was lost. No matter how meaningful a pursuit is, we learn that "everything is vanity" without Christ at the center (Eccl 1:2, 12:13). Whatever a person does without Christ, no matter how amazing, will be tedious and tasteless. No matter how great Cain's accomplishments were, he would always be wondering and lost.

Only Christ can satisfy. In Christ we find our ultimate purpose and identity. Everything else is vain. In his presence is "fullness of joy" and at his "right hand there are pleasures forevermore" (Psa 16:11).

A CULTURE OF FEAR

It's also a religion of **fear**. Cain can't take his punishment. He feels it is too much! And it is! Bearing the guilt and shame of life is **a terrorizing, fearful thing.**

Genesis 4:13-16 | Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. ¹⁴Behold, 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." ¹⁵Then 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. ¹⁶Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

There was **no repentance in Cain's religion**, no remorse, just resentment against the consequences of his own sin. Yet and still, God protects Cain with a mark. God is concerned not only for the innocent Abels, but for the sinful Cains. Some have said that God leaves Cain alive to leave room for repentant. **God in mercy gives time the unrepentant** that they might turn back to God.²²

Do you feel that you are beyond saving? No matter what you've done, or even if you are as guilty as Cain, remember the words of Peter about God's love and patience toward you.

1 Peter 3:9 | God is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Come to Christ now. Jesus gives you the invitation.

²² Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 82.

John 6:37 | Whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

Matthew 11:28 | Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Why would you reject Christ and enter into the lake of fire? Why would you give your own soul to pay for your sin? Forsake your sin, because, like Cain, your punishment for sin will be more than you can bear. Turn to Christ who took your sin upon himself to bring you to God (1 Pet 3:18).

4. THE CITY (4:17-24)

Now in the final part of the chapter, we get an idea of what life without God looks like. It's the best man can do on their own. The best man can do is **build a fake godless paradise**. We see that the first thing Cain begins to do is **build a godless city**. The work of Cain and his life is fourfold: the unregenerate person lays up treasure on earth, is lawless, loves lavishness, and is lost. To be sure, the Cain's work of city building is all in vain. Indeed, "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? ³⁷ For what can a man give in return for his soul?" (Mk 8:36-37).

A CITY THAT LAYS UP TREASURE ON EARTH

Cain inaugurated something new. He built a city. His plan was to create an **artificial paradise** to "lay up treasure on earth" and distract himself from his coming judgment. Cain didn't care for God. He wanted his good things here and now. If he could not have the garden, he would make a city.

Genesis 4:17 | 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.

Cain marries and decides to found a city.²³ The city described here is **a culture adrift and in rebellion against God**. He names it after his son, Enoch. This is Enoch, from the unrighteous line of Cain. There is another Enoch from the righteous line of Seth in chapter 5. Cain had gone "away from the presence of Yahweh" (4:16). Now he builds his own **godless city to perpetuate his godless heart and culture**. Cain attempts to evade the consequences of the curse by **ingenuity and enterprise**.

Cain's prosperity is great, but it doesn't make up for the misery of life apart from God.²⁴

A CITY OF LAWLESSNESS

Cain passes on **his lawlessness to a host of generations**. Cain fathers Enoch, not the Enoch that walks with God. He's later. And then several generations later, we hear of Lamech who takes two wives.

²³ According to Hughes, "Cain apparently wandered for several decades before settling down because we must assume that Cain's wife was one of Adam's other daughters or granddaughters." R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 110.

²⁴ Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 166.

Genesis 4:18-19 | 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.

People without God do whatever they want. They think there's no consequence. Lamech is the first in the Bible to violate God's order of creation and take two wives. He creates a culture of rebellion against God.

A CITY OF LAVISHNESS

We read about the first technologies of the world to make life a paradise on earth. It's truly fascinating. Life before the flood had amazing advancements. We read about several here.

Genesis 4:20-22 | 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.

We read about the first steps in civilized society.

Jabel is the **creator** of the **Shepherd's guild**. He sets up his tents and his butcher shop. He herds the sheep, cattle, goats, and camels.

His brother, **Jubal** is the **founder** of the **Musician's guild**. Harps, lyres (like a guitar) and flutes are encouraged to be taught and played.

Then there is **Tubal-cain** who is the founder of the **Technology guild**, since he was "a forger of all instruments of bronze and iron."

With all of these amazing advancements, **life without God, no matter how lavish, is meaningless.**

A CITY OF LOSTNESS

Lamech sets the tone and contrast for the line of Seth. **Lamech is the picture of multigenerational rebellion against God**. There is generational sin. Here we see in the initial growth of civilization the first sign of degeneration (civilization's demise in its rise) with the **tragic institution of polygamy**.²⁵

Genesis 4:23-24 | **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."

Lamech has his wives, and we assume he has his cities, but he is **eaten up with vengeance and anger**, like his father Cain.

Riches and lavishness do not cover up the depravity of a person's own heart. **No amount of riches and technology** can take away the guilt and emptiness of life without God.

A NEW CITY OF LOVING GOD

Finally, we see the godly seed of Seth. Here is the Seed of the woman that will eventually lead us to Jesus Christ. It is Seth's line from which comes Abraham, David, and eventually the Messiah that will crush the serpent's head (Lk 3:38).

²⁵ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 111.

Genesis 4:25-26 | 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.

In one generation there is the hope of changing this godless society. **With Seth we have a counterculture of God’s kingdom standing against the culture of rebellion.** After Seth was born, his family “began to call upon the name of the LORD.” Seth names his first-born son **Enosh, which means “new beginning”** and would eventually lead to godly Noah and his family who is saved from God’s judgment by entering the ark.²⁶

Seth’s motive was not to build an earthly city, but to live for the kingdom of God. **Seth hits the reset button and begins the godly line that leads to our Savior.**

It’s always a good time to start anew and afresh. What about you? Are you **stuck in sin**? Are you **deceived by lawlessness**? Are you overcome by the **wickedness** of our society? Are you **distracted** from the important things because of **technology**? This is all nothing new. This is the fabric of godless society.

Instead, turn from this godless society and generation and live for the kingdom of Christ!

Conclusion

My brothers and sisters in Christ, the simple solution to joy and flourishing in life is to worship the Lord with all your heart. Look at all the chaos that entered the earth on a societal level due to Cain’s cold heart. Make sure that your heart is hot for Christ.

Thirty years ago, **Neil Marten**, who was a member of the British Parliament, was giving a group of his constituents **a guided tour of the Houses of Parliament.** During the course of the visit, the group happened to meet **Lord Hailsham**, then lord chancellor, wearing all the regalia of his office. **The Lord Chancellor recognized his friend Neil Marten** among the group and cried, “Neil!” Not daring to question or disobey the “command,” the entire group of visitors promptly fell to their knees!²⁷

Of course, this wasn’t a command, but they obeyed the Lord Chancellor from the heart. Do we obey the Lord this way. That’s what worship is. We kneel before God. We listen to his voice. We humble ourselves. This is the secret to human flourishing and true joy that no one can take away.

Let us be lights in the midst of a fallen culture. Let’s evangelize our friends, family, and neighbors. We can change the world, one heart at a time for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Benediction

Revelation 1:5-6 - To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

²⁶ Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 83.

²⁷ “When They Cried Neil Everyone Fell to Their Knees,” *Today in the Word*, July 30, 1993.