

## Gen 4:1-26

### "The Faith; The Flesh"

The transition between Ch's 3 & 4 is from sin's *root* to sin's *fruit*. It's here that we discover that Adam could not pass on what he did not have. What he no longer had was a *sinless* nature. What he *now had* was a *sinful* nature. Therefore when he began to fulfill the command to be fruitful & multiply, his children (from the 1<sup>st</sup> one till the day that God wraps up & winds down human history) would be born w/that same sin nature; he would reproduce after his own kind.

Understand that it's not that you sin; that's why you're a sinner. It's that you're a sinner; that's why you sin! Does that make sense? The fact that you sinned (from infancy forward) was only bearing witness to the sin nature that you inherited from the moment of conception. David declared in the 51st psalm, "*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.*"<sup>1</sup> What that means is that sin was present the moment conception took place. (Btw that also bears witness to when life happens in the womb, it happens at conception. God has said, "The *soul* who sins shall die." Ezek 18:20. If there's no soul there's no sin, if there's sin there must be a soul. So if the bible declares that sin is present from conception, what else must be present? A soul.)

But back to our point; we all received a sin nature from our parents. They inherited it from their parents, who inherited it from their parents all the way back to the 1<sup>st</sup> parents, Adam & Eve. When they sinned they inherited a sin nature therefore that's all they were capable of reproducing (or passing on).

However; the sin nature does not have to *dominate* us; God would have us to rule over our *sin nature* rather than having our sin nature rule over *us*. Here in Ch 4 Abel ruled over his sin nature while Cain was ruled by his sin nature. What made the difference? In short it comes down to the life I choose to lead; I can walk by *faith* or I can walk in the *flesh* (feeding the desires of my sin nature). To walk by faith (in the Son of God, who loved me & gave Himself for me) is to rule over my sin nature, to walk in the flesh is to be ruled by my sin nature.

### Vs 1

When the bible talks about Adam "knew" his wife; the implication is that they had sexual relations & we discover that she conceived & bore a son, Cain. But don't think that Moses uses the word "knew" as some sort of code word for "sex" so that children could stay up & listen to the story.

<sup>1</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (Ps 51:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>2</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (Ps 51:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

God wants a man to *know* his wife; marital intimacy goes beyond a simple sexual union. Peter wrote, “*Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.*”<sup>2</sup> The word translated “understanding” in *that* passage is related to the word translated “knew” in *this* passage; we’re to grow in understanding our wives. How often (in marriage) what we think we know we don’t really know, we don’t work on really getting to *know* our spouse.

Adam “knew” Eve; there was a bond of unity, a building up of the “one flesh” relationship; & she conceived & bore Cain, & said, “I have acquired a man from the LORD”. Of course the name “Cain” means, “Acquire”; this leads us to believe that Eve believed she was holding in her arms the promised Seed of Vs 15 of Ch 3. Talk about high hopes 😊! Most of us as parents have high hopes for our children, but Adam & Eve were taking it to the next level! Evidently they believed that having sinned, God instantly provided the promised Savior; she was hoping he was the *Messiah*, the fact is that he would become a *murderer*... What a shock it must’ve been for them to think their son would save them only to realize that rather than *bring* life he would *take* it... **How often have you discovered that God’s promises require patience? We hear the promise & it’s like, “awesome; let’s get this going, how’s tomorrow sound, or should I wait till next week 😊? It would be 4,000(ish) yrs! The promises of God (more than not) demand our patience... Cain would grow to be the furthest thing from a Messiah, the bible tells us that he was “of the wicked one” (1 Jo 3:12) & we’ll see that become clear as the narrative progresses.**

### Vs 2

The name “Abel” means “vanity” or “breath”, whether this points to a subtle prophecy of the brevity of Abel’s life, or perhaps she realized that her hopes for Cain weren’t going to materialize; I don’t know... **Now, not to read too far into this but it’s interesting that Cain’s life lines up w/the curse in that he was one who “tilled”, who “toiled” or labored cultivating crops. But Abel was a shepherd, his life lined up a little more w/God’s intent of giving man dominion over the beasts of the earth... look @ Vs 3.**

### Vs 3-5

Ok, several things going on here. Sibling rivalries, dysfunctional families have been the standard norm from the beginning of time 😊.

<sup>2</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Pe 3:7). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The very 1<sup>st</sup> family was dysfunctional; it's nothing indigenous to yours ☺. But we note that it's not *easy* to raise a family; how many of you have discovered that? Well, Adam & Eve didn't have a flawless family either. Even if the parents manage to do right (granted we fail in so many ways), sometimes kids go astray. They're born by the seed of man; & the seed of man is a sin nature.

But notice that agriculture & the domestication of animals were practiced even among the earliest of mankind. They weren't spending thousands of years living as "hunter-gatherer cave dwellers". Undoubtedly there were those who sought shelter in a cave, even as you or I would (they even took the time to draw something on them while they were there ☺). But not in a Neanderthal, hunched over "cave man" kind of way that evolution seeks to depict. Adam & his sons worked the earth, domesticated livestock, not unlike people do still to this day.

"& In the process of time" it came to pass that these boys (now men) brought an offering to the Lord. The words "in the process of time" literally mean "at the end of days" pointing to the end of the week, more than likely they set aside the Sabbath day (that God had blessed) to seek the Lord & worship Him together. **But I want you to notice that giving an offering to the Lord isn't something that the church made up to rip you off ☺. It's something that God instilled in the heart of man from the dawn of mankind. It's an aspect of our worship of Him when we give to Him of that which He's provided for us.**

Later on we'll see Abe tithe hundreds of yrs before the law was ever established. When it came to the tithe & offering Jesus told the Pharisees that they *ought* to do such things (Matt 23:23), their problem (1 among many) was that they neglected the weightier matters of justice, mercy & faith. **But don't think that giving to the Lord is an OT thing, or a "law" thing; it's a "God" thing. It should be our joy to render to Him out of that from which He's provided for us. Paul told the Corinthians to lay something aside on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each week (each Sunday when they gathered) storing up as one may prosper.** Now we realize that today people may get paid every 2 weeks, different people give in different rations of time. The point is that as we *seek* the Lord, desire to worship & *serve* the Lord, it's biblical to give *to* the Lord; in every aspect of life. We should give to God of our time, our talents, our money & our ministry.

Cain brought an offering to the Lord (of the fruit of the ground); Abel also brought of the 1<sup>st</sup> born of his flock & of their fat (meaning the very *best* he had).

What does the bible say? *"Honor the Lord with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase;"*<sup>3</sup> We don't give to God of our leftovers, but of our 1<sup>st</sup> fruits. His portion comes off the top; He's our primary priority.

These boys bring their offering to God & we see that God *respected* (or accepted) Abel's offering but He *rejected* Cain's offering. Now some speculate that this is because Cain brought an offering of some sort of vegetation as to where Abel brought a blood sacrifice; however later on in the law God accepted grain offerings, so the real issue isn't *what* they brought so much as it was *how* they brought it. As a matter of fact Cain's offering was undoubtedly more aesthetically pleasing, Abel's would've been a bloody mess. So it wasn't *what* was offered but rather *how* it was offered. "What do you mean?" The writer of Hebrews tells us plainly, *"By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts;"*<sup>4</sup>

God didn't reject Cain because of his offering; He rejected the offering because of Cain! His heart wasn't right w/God. You see man looks to the outward appearance, but God searches the what? The heart (1 Sam 16:7). It's easy to give God an offering w/out giving Him your heart, but it's hard to give God your heart w/out giving Him an offering. **Does that make sense?** God isn't after our offering, He's after our heart, once He has that everything else will fall into place. But to simply go through the motions apart from a heart for God is called religion; God hates religion. He wants a *relationship* w/you. **When we come to God, we come by faith; realizing it's not about what we do, it's all about what He's done & we trust in Him. In the OT they looked *forward* to the promise of a Savior & believed. Today we look *back* to the promise & believe, it's all by faith.** The bible says, *"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."*<sup>5</sup>

Abel was seeking to worship God in spirit & truth; Cain was just going through the motions apart from a heart for God (dead religion). Abel was walking in faith, Cain was walking in the flesh. Question; what kind of worship are you bringing to God today? **The worship of faith; or the motions of the flesh? Is it being accepted or rejected by God?**

God rejected Cain's offering & his countenance fell; translation= you could see his response to God's rebuke in his face; he got mad.

<sup>3</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (Pr 3:9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>4</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (Heb 11:4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>5</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (Heb 11:6). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

He couldn't stand the fact that God accepted his brother's offering but rejected his. His response isn't rooted in humility & a desire to be right w/God, it's rooted in *envy* & envy is rooted in *pride*. Question, when you're rebuked by the word of God how do you respond? Do you puff up in pride & anger, or humble yourself in repentance?

### Vs 6-7

Check it out, God is giving to Cain both a *warning* of the wrong choice & an *opportunity* to repent. God is so faithful, every time we come to that crossroad, God is searching our heart, He knows when we're considering sin. & He says, "Hey, what are you doing? Why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted?" Translation? There's still time to repent, to have a change of heart & change of attitude, you don't have to go this way you can turn around; I'm ready to receive you." He saying, "Cain, you can still come to Me in faith; or you can choose to walk in the flesh." He's exhorting him to respond in repentance rather than anger. Isn't it just like God to reach out to us, & isn't it just like us to wall up in pride & anger & refuse God's correction, God's direction for our lives. *"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword"; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."*<sup>6</sup> That's the essence of what's happening here.

Cain shouldn't have been *bothered* that God received Abel's sacrifice, he should've been *broken* that He didn't receive *his*. Sad, not mad, that's the reaction we're looking for here, godly sorrow that leads to repentance.

God tells him what's coming down the pike. He says, "Sin is lying at the door; its desire is to rule over *you*, but you should rule over *it*." God pictures sin like a crouching beast preparing to pounce upon us; its desire is to destroy us but He tells us it doesn't have to be that way. We aren't puppets in the hands of evil; we can resist sin through obedience to God's word, through the power of God's Spirit. "Cain you can repent & be restored." Yes, we were affected by Adam & Eve's rebellion, but we remain responsible for our own choices...

If you & I entertain temptation it will destroy our lives; we've got to take the way of escape. Write it down & look it up later Rom Ch 6, you don't have to be sin's slave; you have a choice...

Obey the Spirit of God, or follow the sin nature? It wants to rule your life (how many of you have discovered that?) God would have you rule over it; to walk in the Spirit & set your mind on the things of the Spirit, not on the things of the flesh. **Don't let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey it in its lusts... Cain rejects the faith & chooses to remain in his flesh (to follow after the impulses of his sin nature), notice.**

### Vs 8

Notice the danger of holding a grudge, of being bitter & brooding in anger. Far from being a redeemer, humanities 1<sup>st</sup> son was a murderer & the 2<sup>nd</sup> son the victim of murder. Far from being *contained*, sin is out of *control*. Cain's actions testify against him that he's not walking in faith but rather he's of the wicked one. Why is that? Listen to this, ***"In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous."***<sup>7</sup>

Listen to me; sacrifice is irrelevant apart from obedience to God's word. Cain was offended that God didn't receive his sacrifice. It's not about how much we sacrifice for God, it's about our heart's desire to be obedient to God. ***"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams."***<sup>8</sup> What difference does it make if I draw near to God w/my mouth & honor Him w/my lips, if my heart is far from Him? Sacrifice apart from the heart's submission will never make the worshiper right w/God.

### Vs 9-10

Notice the progression. From disobedience, to destruction, to denial; but don't be deceived God *will* deal w/his sin. Jesus (in Jn 8:44) called Satan the father of lies & a murderer from the beginning. Are you sensing "like father, like son" here? God knew where Abel was, but again He's giving Cain an opportunity to confess & repent of his sin...

But instead Cain is all, "I don't know where he is; am I my brother's keeper?" "Hey, he's the shepherd, he's the one who watches over things, not me, I don't know where he's at." As if you can lie to God... or hide your sin from God... **Btw, the answer to the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" is a resounding & emphatic, "Yes"!** That's what loving your neighbor as yourself is all about! But he's sassing the Lord, he's being disrespectful in the way he's communicating w/Him.

<sup>7</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (1 Jn 3:10-12). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>8</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (1 Sa 15:22). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

But God busts him out, “The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground.” What does the bible say? *“...be sure your sin will find you out.”* Num 32:23 No one is getting away w/anything. Jesus said, *“For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.”*<sup>9</sup> We can be sure our sin will find us out...

God says that Abel’s blood cries out to Him from the ground. Now the NT picks up on this & we read in Hebrews that the blood of Jesus speaks better things than the blood of Abel (Heb 12:24). The blood of Abel cries out for justice, for vengeance, it’s the blood of accusation & condemnation. The blood of Christ cries out for mercy, grace, forgiveness, it’s the blood of reconciliation. Abel’s blood brought separation; the blood of Christ brings reconciliation.

### Vs 11-15

Cain was a tiller of the earth, now he was cursed *from* the earth. God had not yet cursed man directly, but now He curses Cain. He wouldn’t be able to till the ground & have it yield its crops to him any longer; he would be forced to wander as a vagabond or a nomad.

But notice again in Vs 13 that it’s not *his sin* that he’s remorseful about, it’s the fact that he got caught. He cries out that his punishment was more than he could bear. It’s a common attitude still today; people feel bad *not* for their sin, but for their punishment. The truly repentant will side w/God against himself, as to where the unrepentant gets angry over the ramifications of their sin.

Interesting that he didn’t worry about killing his brother but was worried that one of his brothers might kill him huh? “Someone might want to avenge Abel & then I’ll be killed!” Then we see an incredible act of mercy & grace; God issues a protective decree upon Cain that his life might be spared. Listen, God’s not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Ezekiel 33, “As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked would turn from his way & live.” As for what the mark was? We don’t know, & it’s useless to speculate...

“Generation, degeneration, regeneration” that’s the cycle of Genesis, man going low & God giving him a new beginning. I’m so glad we serve a God of new beginnings.

<sup>9</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Lk 12:2-3]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

If anyone be in Christ he's a new creation, old things pass away behold all things are made new; praise God?

### Vs 16-17

Perhaps the most talked about wife in all of scripture. "Where did Cain get his wife?" As far as that goes, *when* did Cain get his wife? Ch 5:4 tells us that Adam & Eve had sons & daughters; they were under the command to be fruitful & multiply & Adam was 130 when he had Seth. **How many children were born between Cain & Seth in that 130 yrs? We don't know. I know that if I say, "The Duggars" you might think "19 & counting" ☺. They're just in their late 40s & already have grandchildren & children the same age being married just 20 yrs.** So there could easily be 100's if not 1,000's of people upon the earth when Cain took a wife (a sister, a niece, whatever, the gene pool wasn't yet so far contaminated so as to have risk & it wasn't until the law of Moses that restrictions were placed upon marriages w/in families).

**But Cain builds a city away from God's presence (which would ultimately be wiped out in the flood) but this becomes a man-centered city, not a God centered establishment. (This Enoch is not the Enoch that walked w/God, we'll meet him a little later in Ch 5).**

### Vs 18-22

So the beginning of polygamy, straying from God's original intent was introduced through the fallen line of Cain. Also we have man centered independence, entertainment, wealth & weapons of war (crafting in bronze & iron). Counter to modern theories man actually advanced quite quickly prior to the flood.

### Vs 23-24

**The way we have this translated it looks like he's saying he killed someone in self defense. It could also be translated to say (in a paraphrase) "I'll kill anyone who tries to hurt me." Looking not to the past but to the future. Not evolution by any stretch, devolution for sure. But for all his boasting; he disappears from the pages of scripture. We never hear of him again.** Listen, the bible isn't interested in following every line of mankind. It's interested in 1, the one that leads to Abe, that leads to David, that leads to Jesus, that's it. God isn't interested in satisfying our every curiosity, but in pointing us to J.C. (Let's finish up).

### Vs 25-26



You see, Seth is mentioned because he replaces Abel & will be a key player in the lineage that leads to Christ (through Noah). But we note that in his day, “Men began to call on the name of the Lord.” *There’s been such a sinful decline in human civilization already; but now men are beginning to call on the Lord. We might consider this the 1<sup>st</sup> revival. A spiritual resurgence after a clear decline. But you guys that’s what it’s all about; calling upon the name of the Lord, for whoever calls upon the name of the Lord; will be saved.*

Flesh, self will & unbelief is the way of Cain; faith is the way of Abel. God gives us a choice... Deut Ch 30, *“I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days;”*<sup>10</sup>

### Prayer Points:

Father teach us to call upon Your name; to walk by faith & be found pleasing in your sight. Teach us to set our minds on the things of the Spirit & not on the things of the flesh.

You may be here today & be at a crossroad in your life; God is calling out to you. He’s telling you that if you do well, if you repent of your sin you’ll be accepted. But if you do not do well & choose to carry on in your sin than sin lies at the door; but take heed, sin will destroy your life & separate you from God. Sin brings separation, God desires reconciliation. But that will only happen through faith, faith in J.C. the Lamb of God who’s taken away the sins of the world. Turn from your sin; let Him wash over you & make you new today.

<sup>10</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Dt 30:19–20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.