

Now we see in Chapter 4 there is another tragedy. ‘Progress in sin’. It is good to know the context: we are dealing with primeval history, the history of creation, the early history of mankind and now, in chapter 4, the early history of civilization.

Mankind married, had children and now we have genealogies that lead to passages that deal with more than Adam and Eve or just one couple, so I call it the Early History of Civilization—and it is not a positive progress, including the Genesis Flood. Here we have the decline of civilization leading up to the Flood, 4.1-6.8. There are several things that tell us why God needed to bring a Flood, beginning in chapter 6. The decline of civilization: once sin enters in the universe and, you could say, has its ‘spreading effects’, chapter 4, the Cainite line which continues to verse 24 when another line is introduced.

I. The Primeval History	1:1-11:26
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a. Cainite Line	4.1-24
1) Depravity of Cain	4.1-15
a) Children’s background	4.1-2

The Depravity of Cain can be broken down into different parts, starting with the children’s background—we have descendants of Adam and Eve. Their background begins in verse 1:

4.1 Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, “I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD.”

Interestingly, we are reminded of Genesis 3.15: the woman will have seed or descendants, and we also know, toward the end of chapter 3, that Adam named his wife ‘life’ or Eve who then gave birth to Cain.

The phrase ‘had relations’ is a euphemism, not uncommon in Scripture: a word that substitutes for a word or phrase that is a little harsh—to soften or avoid something that is too explicit. In this context ‘had relations’ refers to sexual activity of a husband and wife. Then in 3.7 the eyes of both of them were opened, and they *knew*... Now they had new knowledge—that they were naked. So the word is used 3 times before we encounter it in chapter 4. In 4.9: ‘Where is your brother?... *I do not know*... (a lie, because he knew where he was).

The Hebrew text uses a very common word *iadah* which occurs 943 times in the OT. Most of the time it has the common meaning of ‘to know something’. We have in 3.5 the serpent says...*for God knows*...an example of a common use of *iadah*.

Notes

1. <i>iadah</i>	
to know -	3.5, 7, 22; 4.9
intercourse -	4.1, 17, 25

But *iadah*, can refer to the most intimate act that humans can enter into, so it is an appropriate word for the sexual act. Further on it states that Cain, 4.17, had sexual relations. Some translations translate it ‘knew’, more literally perhaps but still as a euphemism. In 4.1 it is clear, in the context, that she conceived.

4.1 Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, “I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD.”

So now we have the first child, the first birth—beginning of fulfillment of Genesis 3.15.

The name Cain has the idea to fashion, shape, give form, almost relating to what Eve went through: she fashioned the baby, or God did within her. She gave him a name that is associated with her pregnancy.

- Notes** 1. Relations *iadah* 4.1
2. Cain - to fashion, shape, give form

4.1 Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, “I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD.”

Her response is “I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD.” All of the translations kind of add words to make sense of what it is communicating, but in some cases it may be even clouding the sense in the Hebrew text. A literal translation: the verb *I have gotten*; then the word ‘manchild’ is *ish* which is the word, obviously, ‘child’ at this point. Then a third word is *Yahweh*. The translators insert ‘*with the help of the Lord*’; there is no ‘*help*’ in the Hebrew text.

It might be indicative of Eve’s faith in terms of the Genesis 3.15 passage, that is, she might have been involved in the birth of a messianic personage that ultimately is Yahweh Himself. This man child she viewed, certainly as human, but also divine in some sense. These are theological conclusions basically from the literal wording of the text. The translators use the word ‘*help*’ maybe because God was involved in the whole process. But I think it is more than that: it gives insight into what the rest of Scripture will develop later on—in Jesus Christ who was fully God and fully man.

Notes

1. Relations *iadah* 4.1
2. Cain - to fashion, shape, give form
3. Gotten - word play with name Cain
qain - *qaniti*
4. Man-child *ish* = man
5. Literal - ‘I have gotten a man, Yahweh’

We note the word play with the name Cain: the Hebrew *qain* is Cain and the word *qaniti* is ‘gotten’; the verb stem is *qana* which is ‘I have gotten’. And as noted, man-child here is *ish* which is the word for ‘man’, the translation ‘man-child’ being rather interpretive, something obvious. Another thing to note is that the word *yahweh* has the direct object ‘sign’ added to it, so it can be read: ‘I have gotten a man Yahweh’.

Then in verse 2, the second child. Now in verse 1 she had the theology correct—one of the seeds would be divine, God Himself, who be human also. But one thing that she got wrong—not only the timing, not only the specific descendant (is not the Messiah), but the application was applied to the wrong descendant. Throughout Jewish history people never knew who the Messiah would be until He fulfilled the other prophecies as well. But early on all we know is that she had the revelation of Genesis 3.15. A son would come that would deal with the problem of evil. There is a Jewish tradition of girls thinking that they could be the mother of the Messiah. Also, the general pattern is that the first son was the one blessed, although God sometimes reversed that. Eve may have had that in mind: here is the first born who has a priority.

4.2 Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

Notes

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6. Abel - act emptily, become vain 4.2

There is a hint here of what would become the difference between these two. 'Abel' means 'act emptily, become vain' which is an interesting name to give a child—you remember that names, particularly in the early chapters of Genesis, have significance and often reflect characteristics. She named the second child 'vanity', the same Hebrew word that we have in Ecclesiastes for 'Vanity of vanities! All things are vanity!' Some commentaries say that the vanity of things could already be observed by Eve.

Now we have background on them as grown men, jumping from birth to active lives.

4.2 Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

Abel was a keeper of flocks, the first profession, if we look back at Adam.

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Adam was also a tiller of the ground, which we would describe more as a farmer.

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Then we have offerings, both of which could have been blood offerings, but there were also other types in the Law.

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| b) Contrasting Offerings | 4.3-5 |

So there different kinds of offerings and in verses 3-5; we have a contrast.

4.3 So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground.

Time has elapsed; not only are they adults, but their professions were different.

4.3 So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground.

Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. It appears that they are familiar with the worship and approach to God that involves an offering, the sacrificing or the setting aside of something in order to approach God. So he brought an offering of the fruit of the ground—where he made his living or produced the outcome of his life.

Cain	vs	Abel
> 1st born		2nd born
> Optimistic		Pessimistic
> Farmer		Shepherd

So we can begin some contrasts between Cain and Abel. Cain is the 1st born and Eve is optimistic in thinking that anything other than the Messiah obviously is ‘vanity’. Cain was a farmer. And Abel, the second born would not be a priority; she is more pessimistic in her naming. He is a shepherd.

4.4 Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering;

5 but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

The best portions, the firstlings—indicating the priority—were brought by Abel. I don’t think Cain is entirely condemned because of the wrong sacrifice, though it may be part of it, but I think there are 2 things involved: not only do you have to bring the proper sacrifices, but you have to bring them with the

appropriate attitude. The firstlings and fat portions would be the very best—taking pains that there be no defects.

4.4 Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering;

5 but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

And there is the evaluation of the Lord: the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering. Again: ‘regard *for Abel*’, looking at character and attitude ‘and for his offering’. One of the applications that we can draw is that: you can bring an offering, but if you have the wrong attitude, that can be a reason that God does not regard it. This is seen in the NT as well.

4.4 Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering;

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Then the contrast: but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. I think we will see the deficiency of the attitude of Cain when we see his response. I think both are involved, the appropriate offering and, as in the NT, when we approach God we do the proper ritual, but attitude is even more important in the eyes of God.

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7. Professions - shepherd and farmer
8. Main point - worship through sacrifice by faith 4.3-5

So the main point here is worship through sacrifice and I think the emphasis is 'by faith'. That is the attitude: I am doing this not just as a ritual but I am doing it by faith. We look at a Hebrews passage that solidifies this: the sacrifice, the blood aspect and the attitude.

Hebrew 11.4 *By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.*

The blood sacrifice was the better one, but also it was offered *by faith*. Here the writer also mentions that Abel was righteous, a right relation, so fellowship is important. The better sacrifice must be offered with faith as well.

Cain's Sin

Refused to: 1. Worship Properly

We will see Cain's sin: one of the points is that outwardly he was obedient but he did not do it properly, with the right attitude. The Hebrews passage may not just be the writer's intellect, but by divine revelation as well. There is a passage in Jude that refers to Enoch also as a prophet—where did he get that?

4.4 Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering;

5 but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

The response of Cain: it had an effect on the emotions. An application that we can make is that bad behavior oftentimes results in bad emotional states and this is just an example of a wrong response producing somewhat of an emotional effect. Biblical counselors go to this passage to bring out some of that and other things we will talk about later.

We don't have repentance here; we don't have a proper response but a negative one. We can begin contrasting Genesis 3 and 4:

Genesis 3 and 4

> <u>Fruit</u> of Garden	Fruit of Ground
> <u>Sin</u> Begins	Sin Progresses
> <u>Deceived</u>	Premeditated
> Individual	Family
> God	Fellowman
> Confrontation	With Counsel
> Skins	Offerings

The fruit of the garden was in view—and part of the very first temptation to sin, and the first sin as a result of Adam and Eve following through on the temptation. The NT tells us that Eve was first deceived and Adam voluntarily sinned. In Genesis 3 we have the individual sin of Adam and Eve. Obviously, the sin was against God—as is all sin—and we have the confrontation of God after the sin. And we also have God providing a means of restoration and evidence that Adam and Eve were restored are the skins.

In chapter 4 we see similar themes: Cain brings an offering of the fruit of the ground. Now we see that sin progresses, in verse 5, and ends in the first murder. And rather than being deceived as Eve was, we have premeditated murder. The sin affected the whole family, not just the individual. This sin, like all, was against God but also fellowman. Then, not only do we have a confrontation, but what follows in the next verses is God

counseling. Then following the restoration we have offerings, proper ones as opposed to improper, and also proper attitudes in terms of offering whatever God has stipulated to provide.

Implications

1. Effects of Fall Passed on

A major implication we can draw from chapter 4 is that we are seeing the effects of the fall are passed on to the second generation, and not only passed on but the 'progress' or degeneration continues.

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c) Counsel and Response	4.6-8

In 4.6-8 there is counsel and another response from Cain.

4.6 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"

Yahweh, the Lord, the personal God that enters into relationship with man spoke. The only one that was justified to be angry would have been Yahweh, not Cain. But that is the issue God raises, "Why are you angry?" Now the Bible doesn't condemn anger and I don't think it condemns it in this passage either. There is a verse that tells us that in itself anger is not sin but rather our attitude and how we express it that is sin.

Ephesians 4.26, *BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger.* Deal with it properly, quickly and don't let it linger which will bring bad effects. I think parents on some occasions need and should, in God's will, express anger in raising children. There are occasions when children need to see that—without excessive discipline or treatment of the child.

4.6 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"

It's not the anger itself; it is what are you going to do with it, Cain? Why has your countenance fallen? Why has it affected you emotionally? Then we have the counsel:

4.7 "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? The corrective to sin and to emotions like anger is responding rightly or in obedience or in a Biblical way. That would apply in a family as well: Parents with children that need to be disciplined need to respond well. They can respond badly and do excessive or inappropriate discipline and/or they can do well in that they had proper discipline and proper way of dealing with the anger. In this case, will not your countenance be lifted up? The application here: will not the child be benefitted from the discipline? Will this teach them certain things concerning what is right and what is wrong? So, if you do well, doing what God instructs, following Biblical principles, it also affects our emotions in a positive way. So right decisions result in proper emotional effects as well.

4.7 "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

Here is the alternative: if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. The desire of sin is like an animal that is about to pounce on a victim or its prey. In the field, Cain does not respond to the counsel of the Lord. That is the encouragement, the counsel that God gives to Cain.

4.7 “If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.”

Sin is personified here with qualities of a man: crouching at the door, and its desire is for you or to dominate you or to do damage to you. But, *you* must master *it*. In other words, you exercise your will, you make the proper choices, you respond rightly.

4.8 Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

And Cain told Abel his brother, gossiping here.

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Cain does not respond to the counsel of the Lord.

4.8 Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. Notice the emphasis on ‘his brother’; it is clear, there have only been two that were born, but it is added to kind of emphasize the closeness

and the severity of the sin that follows. That’s where the passage ends in terms of the sin of Cain.

Cain	vs	Abel
> 1st born		2nd born
> Optimistic		Pessimistic
> Farmer		Shepherd
> Unacceptable		Acceptable
> Anger		Worshipper
> Murderer		Prophet (Jesus)
> Seed of Satan		Seed of Woman

Jesus identified Abel as the first prophet. Luke 11.50 *so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.*’

Cain’s Sin

- Refused to:
1. Worship Properly
 2. Heed Counsel
 3. Love his Brother

Implications

1. Effects of Fall Passed on
2. Corrupting effects of Sin

The second implication: the effects of sin continue to corrupt—which we will see all the way to the Genesis Flood. So this is the background to the Flood; by that time we will have seen the full corruption of sin and God must intervene in order to preserve that which He loves.

Change negative feelings by repenting, confessing sin and obeying God’s truth!