

The Sheltering influence of a Godly Home

Genesis 4:16 - 5:32

With the story of Cain killing Abel we saw the corrupting influence of sin. What happens when sin is left unchecked? The next section of Genesis shows us. There were over 1500 years between the Fall and the Flood. More than fifteen hundred years of history is covered in only 43 verses taking us to the time of Noah.

Here we see two lines being traced: an ungodly line and a godly line. The ungodly line is traced through Cain and the godly line through Seth. It's interesting that Moses pauses to comment after the seventh from Adam in each line. In the Bible, seven is a number of completion. In the ungodly line this pause is after Lamech. It shows the final reaping of tares. In the godly line this pause is after Enoch. It shows the ripening of the wheat. Ungodliness climaxes then in the coming of lawlessness, while unworldliness climaxes in the rapture to heaven of one who walked with God.

Indeed the account becomes a type of what is yet to come in the future. And in each case we see the importance of the family line. In Cain's line, we see ungodliness passed down through the generations. And Seth's line remains godly from generation to generation; thus giving silent affirmation to the sheltering influence of a godly home. Let's notice each line.

Notice first the Ungodly Line of Cain in 4:16-24. We see that ***it was a world of multiplying disdain*** (vv. 16-18). We are confronted immediately with a dilemma. What about Cain's wife? Believers, unfortunately, are notorious for waffling and for their inability to deal with such issues. At the historic Scopes Trial in Tennessee in 1925, William Jennings Bryan, the prosecutor who stood for Christianity couldn't answer ACLU lawyer, Clarence Darrow about this issue. The trial transcript reads as follows: Darrow; Did you ever discover where Cain got his wife? Bryan; No sir; I leave the agnostics to hunt for her. Darrow; You have never found out? Bryan; I have never tried to find. Darrow; You have never tried to find? Bryan; No. Darrow; The Bible says he got one doesn't it? Were there other people on the Earth at that time? Bryan; I cannot say. Darrow; You cannot say. Did that ever enter your consideration? Bryan; Never bothered me. Darrow; There were no others recorded, but Cain got a wife. Bryan; That is what the Bible says. Darrow; But where she came from you do not know?

Without getting too deep into this matter, we need to realize that Cain's wife was his sister, or some other female relative (i.e., a niece, etc.). There were no other races, or people. All descended from Adam. This is easily defensible, as it is not necessary to resort to fanciful interpretation to explain where Cain got a wife from. Many reputable Bible scholars and teachers come up with interesting interpretations at this point, rather than accepting a straight forward reading of the text. Even many conservative commentators teach doctrines such as the intermarriage of fallen angels with mortal women, producing another race of human beings (cf. Genesis 6:1-2). But Jesus made an interesting comment in Mark 12:25 in this regard. In that passage, the Sadducees had presented a hypothetical situation to Jesus in which a man dies without children. His wife is taken by the brother of the deceased, in order to raise up offspring, however this man also dies before children are born. The same thing occurs through seven brothers.

Then the question is posed - "who's wife will she be in the resurrection?" In response Jesus says, "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven" (Mark 12:24-25). Obviously, Jesus is not intending to teach that angels didn't marry humans with this statement. Instead, He clearly is teaching the reality of the resurrection, however, in making the statement that the eternal state does not contain such relationships as marriage and in so describing it saying that in our eternal state we are like the unmarried angels, does this not also imply very strongly that marriage is not an issue or a possibility for angels?

It seems much more logical to me to accept a straight forward reading of Genesis 4:16-17 and to say that Cain's wife was obviously related to him. We may have difficulty with this today, but there certainly wasn't any difficulty with it then. Abraham's wife, Sarah, was his half-sister! The Law forbidding marriage to a family member had not yet been given. And mankind had not had nearly enough time for genetic mutations to occur in the DNA structure thus making it possible for a brother and sister to marry and have children without the resulting difficulties of producing offspring. Suffice it to say that it is absolutely necessary for Cain's wife to be his sister, for if Cain's wife can't be traced to Adam, Adam's sin can't be traced to Cain's wife, and thus the Scripture is wrong and the gospel is meaningless!

We clearly see in this passage Cain's disdain of God in his ungodliness. His plan was to create an artificial paradise to compensate for the one lost. So his family becomes the world's first builder of cities. And he sets in motion a disdain for God that extends throughout succeeding generations. This, I think, can be seen as we look at the names of his descendants. Granted, this is somewhat speculative as this is not explicitly stated in scripture. Nonetheless, names carried a lot of meaning during Biblical times, so let us examine these names to see the truth we learn from them. Notice first of all that some end in "el." This signifies a relationship to the Hebrew word, Elohim, indicating a lingering knowledge of God. But eventually this use of God's name disappears and there's no thought of God at all!

Look also at the meanings of the names. Irad means "fugitive" or "wild ass;" it points toward the nature of unregenerate man. Mehujael means "blot out that Jehovah is God," which is pretty explicit! Methusael means "died inquiring." This suggests that some had misgivings about their society, but they were killed. And Lamech means "powerful" or "conqueror." In Lamech, the lust for power comes to fruition.

When our homes aren't right, it inevitably passes on to the next generation. It seems here that the disdain was not only passed on but intensified with each succeeding generation. It finally reached the pinnacle in Lamech who becomes the "first shadow on the sacred page of the coming lawless one of the last days" (Phillips). Make sure your home is passing on godly principles, not selfish ones!

It was a world of moral disorder (v. 19). This is the first instance of polygamy. Lamech's wives were Adah, which means ornamental, and Zillah, which means shade or seductress. Adah seems to have appealed to his "lust of the eyes," while Zillah appealed to his "lust of the flesh." Sin has a strong grip. It certainly had hold of Lamech. So he introduces a "new morality."

There are many today who would do the same. Many clamor for homosexuality to be accepted. There is open immorality among many. And there are all manner of

other “new moralities” among those who would do what is right in their own eyes! Apart from God’s revealed truth, we truly live in a world of moral disorder!

It was a world of marvelous discovery (vv. 20-22). The world seems to think they have a corner on the intelligence market. Believers in God are portrayed as backwards, ignorant individuals. The truth is that there is no relationship between intelligence and faith. I know really smart believers, and I know some pretty ignorant ones too. Likewise, I have met brilliant lost men, but I also know plenty of heathen without much sense! In this case, we see the brilliance of ancient man (intelligence is not limited to the 20th century).

Notice the **marketing of Jabal** (v. 20). He was one who **focused on prosperity**. It seems that he cornered the cattle market. His name means “the producer.” He could crank out work and turn a profit, but that does not ultimately satisfy!

Notice the **music of Jubal** (v. 21). He was one who **focused on pleasure**. His name means “the undulator” or “a joyful sound.” He provided the world with a way to drown out the thought of God - lively music with a beat. He sought to provide pleasure as a way to fill his void, but it does not ultimately satisfy!

Notice the **metallurgy of Tubal-cain** (v. 22). He was one who **focused on power**. He began the industrial revolution of the ancient world. I can imagine how formidable they became in the eyes of their foes with their clubs as they faced Tubal-cain and his clansmen with swords! But even power won’t satisfy - it will only corrupt even further!

It was a world of marvelous discovery - but what good is it apart from the truth of God?

Finally, *it was a world of militant defiance* (vv. 23-24). Here apparently is the world’s second murder! But the sin of murder is compounded by Lamech’s militant defiance. As Phillips says, “an age . . . had come when men flung down the gauntlet, as it were, in the very face of God Himself.” Phillips continues to describe this ungodly line aptly: “Man had everything. He was rich and increased in goods; he had an organized, urban life; he had economic matters under central control; he had all the refinements of art and culture; he had a new, free-and-easy morality; he had weapons of singular power. He had no need of God. That ancient world bore all the hallmarks that so clearly mark the age in which we live.”

But we come now to a contrasting family line; seen in the Unworldly Line of Seth in 4:25 - 5:32. Notice first *the birth of a godly son* (4:25-26). Seth is born, many say, as a replacement, but I don’t think so! Eve makes an interesting statement: “God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel.” What does this mean? Heretofore it was only Cain and Abel. At this point, the Scripture is not chronological. We’ve already seen years of succeeding history in the previous chapter, but at this point, Moses reverts back to the dawn of time to begin discussing the birth of Seth and his godly line.

Eve was trusting in the promise of the seed, the one to come to redeem. Cain’s rebellion and disobedience had been manifested - he certainly would not be in the line of the seed. The other possibility was dead - how many years we don’t know. Perhaps Eve wondered for years at how God would fulfill His word. But Seth was born and now there was hope. *Now there could be a godly seed through which the Messiah could come!

Note how we quickly progress to spiritual insight. In verse 26 (where Seth’s son, Enos, is born) we read that “then men began to call upon the name of the Lord.” Here we

see salvation by faith for “whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13). God’s plan has always been that way from day one; a plan made crystal clear with the birth of a godly son!

But notice ***the book of a godly saint*** (5:1-5). This book is the generations of Adam, who, when he was created, was created in the image and likeness of God. But of Seth, we are told he was born in the image and likeness of Adam (v. 3). The truth is we are all born in the image and likeness of fallen, sinful man (our parents). That is why we must be born again; Christ must be formed in us!

We also stand by Adam’s graveside here. In just a few messages, we’ve gone from creation from nothing to the beauty of a Garden to the Fall due to sin to the continuation and spread of sin and now to the death of the world’s first human. We find ourselves facing the future already seeing what a struggle that future will be. But it’s not one to be faced on our own. The godly seed has begun. Satan knew he brought disaster into the world when Adam and Eve succumbed to temptation. He knew that they would eventually die. But God had a plan for redemption. Satan sought to foil that when Cain slew the godly line of Abel. But now there is Seth, and the godly line continues. What about you tonight - is your name written in this book of godly saints? Will you continue to propagate God’s truth from generation to generation?

Notice now ***the begetting of godly seed*** (5:6-32). We see first **five patriarchs** (vv. 6-20). We have already been introduced to Seth. Next is his son Enos, whose name means “mortal man,” thus showing a need for trust in God. Enos is followed by Cainan, and next in line is Mahaleel, whose name means “praising God.” Then we see Jared. Folks, godly principles are best communicated at home, not at the church, not in the school, not anywhere, other than that institution established by God for that purpose - the home. I believe the primary reason godliness was continued in the line of Seth was because it originated in the home.

Not much information is given in the passage, except for some “not so immediately obvious” truths. With each one it says they “lived.” Then it says again that they “lived.” That is not said of anyone in Cain’s line. Here is silent testimony to the truth of what Jesus spoke to Nicodemus in John 3:3: “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” It is also said of them that they “died.” Over and over and over again, we hear that phrase - “and he died.” A walk through Genesis 5 is like a walk through a graveyard. In Genesis 3, Satan had lied to Eve in saying, “thou shalt not surely die.” Here we see God proving the devil a liar as over and over again we face the cruel reality of death. But death for them was really only the beginning for they had been born twice. So must you if you are to truly live!

We also see here **four prophets** (vv. 21-32). First we meet *Enoch who witnesses to the presence of God*. What an amazing character! His life shows a surrounding gloom, but also a saving grace. We’re told of his simple goodness, and finally his sudden glory. His testimony is simply this - in a corrupt age it’s still possible to live godly!!!

Next we meet *Methuselah who witnesses to the patience of God*. Here we have the oldest man who ever lived - 969 years! He is one who’s very name has prophecy embedded within it. His name means, “when he dies it shall come.” What will come? The Flood. If you do the math and trace the chronology, you’ll see that Methuselah died in the same year as the Flood of Noah! God is patient (2 Pet. 3:9). Do not wait too late!

We also meet *Lamech who witnesses to the peace of God*. This is certainly a different Lamech than the one mentioned in chapter four. His testimony is seen in how he named his son, Noah, which means rest or comfort. Lamech anticipated that things could not go on as they were much longer. He saw God acting in the lifetime of his son - and such a thought brought him peace!

Finally we meet *Noah who witnesses to the purposes of God*. Lamech was right - things would have to change. And through Noah, a great change would come! Not so amazingly, if you trace the chronology, all these of the godly line from this period died before the Flood! When Noah was the only one left, God could accomplish His purpose!

The story is told of two paddle boats that left Memphis at the same time, going down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. The sailors from one made remarks about the snail's pace of the other boat. Words were exchanged, challenges were made, and the race began. One boat began falling behind; there was not enough fuel. There was plenty of coal for the trip, but not for a race! An enterprising young sailor took some of the ship's cargo and tossed it into the ovens. The sailors began fueling their boat with the material they had been assigned to transport. They won the race, but burned their cargo. God has entrusted cargo to us - our families. Our job is to see that this cargo reaches its destination - heaven! I know of no better way to do that than to insure that child grows up in a godly home as part of a godly line. Perhaps you need to become part of that godly line by accepting Jesus Christ.