

Osaka International Church

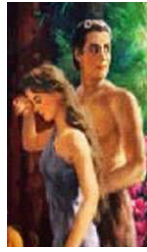
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Daniel Ellrick

Series: Beginnings #12

Title: Children of Eve

Scripture: Genesis 4:1-26



I. Introduction

Good morning! Let's begin with Reverend Fun this morning. Adam and Eve are leaving Eden, and Adam comments, "*But we were seeking knowledge, trying to empower ourselves, and trying to be more godlike.*" Adam's complaint subtly points out the dangers of seeking to do things our own way, apart from God. God loves us and all of His commands are motivated by love. As we discussed last week, even His judgments are motivated by His love and by His desire to see us come to faith and be saved. If we remember this basic truth, we will avoid many errors, both in lifestyle choices and in interpretation of Scripture.



Genesis 1:27 says, "**So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.**" When God did this, He also gave us free will and gifts of creativity, including the ability to have children. God created the first people, Adam and Eve, but then (Genesis 28a), "**God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.'**" God loves people so much that He commanded that the world be filled with people. Sometimes couples wonder whether God wants them to have children. Here, it is clear that God generally desires that married couples have children, although God may say, "no," in some cases. Of course, the earth is much fuller than when God gave the command, so couples can consider that fact also when deciding how many children to have.



Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and they suffered severe consequences. However God also gave the promise that a Savior would come from Eve's offspring. Now, in Genesis 4, Adam and Eve begin to fulfill the command to fill the earth as they wait for the Savior to come. Let's read **Genesis 4:1-7**.

"[1] Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, 'With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.' [2] Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. [3] In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. [4] But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, [5] but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. [6] Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? [7] If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.'"

II. Teaching

Genesis 4:7 makes it very clear that Cain knew that he was doing wrong. Although we are not told about it directly, it seems that God had given instructions about offerings. Cain did not follow those instructions and gave an offering according to his own ideas instead. Cain's anger is an indication of the condition of his heart. Abel, on the other hand, gave a generous offering from a pure heart. This 1870's painting by Sigfried Bendixien shows Abel in worship, but Cain is looking on with jealousy. Many Bible scholars think that the offerings were made at the entrance to the Garden of Eden where the cherubim were stationed. We did not discuss it last



week, but in the Bible, the presence of cherubim consistently indicates a holy place where God is present in a special way, and where people come to worship.

Cain offered vegetables, and Abel offered the best portions from firstborn lambs of his flock. But **Hebrews 11:4a** tells us what the real difference was. **“By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did.”** The real difference was faith. Cain performed a religious ceremony, but Abel had faith. God doesn’t want just a religious ceremony, God wants our hearts, and faith is an attitude of the heart. As we are told in **Hebrews 11:6**, **“Without faith, it is impossible to please God.”**

Cain was angry. So, what did Cain do? **Genesis 4:8** tells us, **“Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.”** From a lack of faith, to a prideful offering, to an angry and resentful attitude, and now on to murder, Cain goes downhill fast. This painting, done by Titian in the 1570s, shows the scene. Cain was a religious man. Cain brought an offering to the Lord. But Cain’s heart was not right. Unable to strike at God, Cain chose to kill his innocent brother Abel. An angry and jealous heart easily turns to violence. Governments seek ways to reduce violence, and counselors have programs for anger management. But the roots of the problem are deeper. Only faith in God and in His love and justice can bring peace to the human heart. Jesus is our peace.



How did God respond to Cain? **Genesis 4:9**, **“Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” “I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?””** The Lord’s question gives Cain an opportunity to confess and repent. But Cain chooses to hide his sin. What a tremendous contrast there is between Cain’s attitude and the teachings of Scripture. **James 2:8** teaches us, **“If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right.”** The law of God is the law of love. Love of God, love of Neighbor, and love of brothers and sisters. But the proud and sinful heart knows only lies, deceit, and violence. Since Cain does not confess and repent, God judges Cain and Cain goes out into exile from his family and from the presence of the Lord. But God also protects Cain’s life and the way is still open for Cain to come back and repent. As **2 Peter 3:9** proclaims, the Lord does not want anyone to perish, the Lord wants every person to repent and be saved.

Let’s skip forward a bit. **Genesis 4:17**, **“Cain lay with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch.”** Considering Cain’s attitude and fears, the city Cain built was probably a fortress-like, walled city. In this city, culture and learning flourished, although worship of God was probably rare. This may be a good place to remind that in Genesis many years are often summarized in a single sentence. Some people forget this and ask questions like, *“Where did Cain get his wife?”* But Adam and Eve were commanded to fill the earth and Genesis 5:4 directly states that they had other sons and daughters whose names are not mentioned.



When I was growing up in Missouri, we used to go to Barbosa’s Mexican Restaurant once or twice a year. The restaurant was like a castle, and the food was fabulous. But the family was even more amazing. Mr. and Mrs. Barbosa married when she was 15 years old and they started the restaurant. On the wall near the door they had photos of their family. The last time I looked, the photos showed 24 children and 108 grandchildren. That was 30 years ago. There might be a thousand Barbosas by now. Adam and Eve would have been much stronger and healthier than the Barbosas, and Cain would have had dozens of sisters and nieces. By the time Cain was a 100 years old there would have been many thousands of people.



If we read all of Genesis 4, we would also see that Cain’s city had people skilled in music and metal working. Historians and archeologists agree that music and metal working are ancient, but they believe these skills developed slowly over centuries. For example, the bone flutes in this photo



are estimated to be about 9,000 years old, but the bronze figure is only about 4,000 years old. Iron tools would be more recent. No proof outside of the Bible has been found for music and metal working being developed close together in times that would correspond to Cain's city.

But this is not surprising, all evidence of Cain's city would have been destroyed in Noah's flood and buried very deep. Maybe someday it will be found. Lack of archeological evidence only means that we haven't found it yet. After Noah's flood, the ability to make iron and bronze tools had to be redeveloped over centuries, matching what archeologists have found. In Genesis 5 and 6, the very long life times and other factors probably gave people an edge in rapid development. After Noah's flood, life spans were shorter and gains in technology had to be relearned by each generation, a different situation. If you read from Genesis 12 onward, the Bible also records gradual technological progress.

Genesis 4:23-24, "Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, listen to me; wives of Lamech, hear my words. I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me. If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times."" Lamech has killed a man who hurt him. For an injury, Lamech returned death. But Lamech wants a different standard to be applied to himself, he wants seventy-seven times the punishment to fall on anyone who hurts him. Lamech seems to be trying to protect himself by threatening massive revenge on anyone who does him harm.

That is man's way of thinking. But the thinking of our Lord Jesus is very different. **Matthew 18:21-22** tell us, **"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."** Man's way is to multiply revenge and to pile up hatred and violence. But the Lord's way is to multiply forgiveness and pile up love and grace. What about us? What is our attitude when someone hurts us? Do we multiply forgiveness? or revenge? Do we pile up hatred and violence? or love and grace? If we wish to follow Jesus, we need to walk in His ways.

Genesis 4:25-26, "Adam lay with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, "God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him." Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call on the name of the Lord." Genesis chapter 4 is not all bad news. We have seen the first murder and the first call for unrestrained revenge. But now we see the first revival. In the time of Enosh, **"men began to call on the name of the Lord."** This phrase may have a double meaning. First, there is the meaning of prayer to God and revival, but second, there is also the meaning of using the name of the Lord to identify God's people.

III. Closing

At the end of Genesis 4, mankind is divided into two groups. There are the children of Cain, who follow the ways of hate and revenge. And there are the children of Seth, who call upon the name of the Lord and who are identified as God's people. In that time, men and women were faced with the same choice that we are faced with today. We each must choose. Will we follow the way of Cain and his children? Or will we follow the way of those who call on the Name of the Lord?



Hebrews 12:22-24 speaks to those who have made the choice to call upon the Name of the Lord saying, **"But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel."**

The blood of Abel cried out from the ground to accuse Cain of murder. But the blood of Christ ran down from the cross to speak of mercy, grace, and love. All who say, "Yes," to Jesus are the people of God, those who call on His Name, and who are saved by faith in Him and in His finished work on the cross. Let's pray

IV. Closing Prayer