

## Genesis Chapter 4 Notes (Defenders Study Bible by Henry Morris)

**4:1 Cain.** The name “Cain” means “acquisition,” expressing Eve’s thankfulness that the Lord was keeping His promise to her, and her faith that her son would grow to manhood. Possibly Eve jumped to the unwarranted conclusion that Cain was the promised Deliverer. Actually, however, he was “of that wicked one” (I John 3:12), and thus was the first in the long line of the Serpent’s seed.

**4:2 Abel.** “Abel” means “vapor” or “vanity.” By the time Abel was born, Eve was fully aware of the effect of God’s curse on the creation, which was made “subject to vanity” (Romans 8:20).

**4:2 tiller of the ground.** Both Cain and Abel had honorable occupations, Cain producing food for the family and Abel sheep for clothing and sacrifice. As time would pass and populations would multiply, such specializations could provide the basis for trade and optimum implementation of the Edenic mandate.

**4:3 process of time.** Literally, “at the end of the days,” undoubtedly a reference to the “seventh day,” which God had hallowed as a day of rest and blessing (Genesis 2:3). On such a day, men would follow God’s example in ceasing from their regular labors in order to have fellowship with God, possibly meeting with Him at the entrance to Eden (Genesis 3:24).

**4:3 an offering.** Such fellowship, however, required that worshipers approach God with an offering that would make them suitable for His presence. Adam and Eve no doubt had instructed their sons that this required a substitutionary sacrifice of innocent blood (Genesis 3:21). Cain, however, chose to bring another type of offering on this occasion.

**4:4 Abel.** Abel was a man of faith, the first listed in the chapter of faith (Hebrews 11). Since he brought a “by faith...a more excellent sacrifice” (Hebrews 11:4), it is evident that God had given instruction concerning the sacrifice, which Abel believed and obeyed. The Lord Jesus described him as “righteous” (Matthew 23:35) and even as one of God’s prophets (Luke 11:50,51).

**4:5 his countenance fell.** Cain’s anger reflects pride in his own works which, because of that very fact, God regarded as “evil” (I John 3:12).

**4:6 Why art thou wroth.** God’s questions reminded Cain that he knew the type of sacrifice required and had no reason to be surprised when God would not accept another.

**4:7 rule over him.** Note the similar terminology to that of Genesis 3:16b. Just as Eve’s desire would be toward Adam and he would lead her, so would an unrepentant Cain become so committed to rebellion that “Sin” (personified as a crouching animal) would become Cain’s obedient servant.

**4:8 talked with Abel.** Abel was a prophet and no doubt urged Cain to repent and believe God’s Word, but this only angered Cain further. The Serpent was quickly striking at the Seed of the woman, corrupting her first son and slaying her second, trying to prevent the fulfillment of the Protevangelic promise.

**4:9 I know not.** Cain thus added blatant lying to his sins of self-righteous pride and murder. However, in one sense, he was speaking the truth. He knew where Abel’s blood was spilled but not where Abel himself was. Abel was now the first human inhabitant of Sheol (or Hades), that place in the heart of the

earth where departed spirits would reside while awaiting the coming of the Savior (Luke 16:22-26; Ephesians 4:8-10; I Peter 3:18-20).

**4:10 *thy brother's blood.*** This first mention of “blood” in Scripture prefigures the innocent blood of Christ, which “speaketh better things than that of Abel” (Hebrews 12:24). The voice of Abel’s blood cried for vengeance (compare Revelation 5:9, 10), but the blood of Christ speaks of cleansing and forgiveness (I John 1:7; Ephesians 1:7).

**4:11 *cursed from the earth.*** The earth had been cursed because of Adam’s sin; now the earth itself had been defiled by Cain’s sin. God’s curse was *on* the earth; Cain’s curse was *from* the earth. His boastful pride in the fruits he had been able to grow from the cursed earth had been the occasion of his sin, but now he would no longer be able to till the ground even for his own food. Those who trust in their own good works eventually find it impossible to produce them any more.

**4:12 *vagabond.*** As yet there was no law given to order man’s behavior. Therefore Cain’s crime could not be punished by governmental means, but only by its natural consequences.

**4:13 *punishment.*** The word “punishment” is usually translated “iniquity,” and its use by Cain indicates that, for the first time, Cain acknowledged his sin and guilt to the Lord. This may partially explain the degree of mercy shown by God in sparing his life after Abel’s murder.

**4:14 *every one.*** Adam had daughters as well as sons (Genesis 5:4), and brother/sister marriages were necessary at least in the first generation, before the accumulation of genetic mutations could make such close marriages genetically dangerous. Since the antediluvians lived for hundreds of years and since they could propagate children for hundreds of years (note Genesis 5:15,32), the population multiplied rapidly. This concern of Cain’s, therefore, was quite realistic. Since Cain could not produce his own food, he would have to purchase it from others, but other people would naturally tend to fear him and try to avoid him or even to do away with him.

**4:15 *mark.*** The “mark” is not described. The Hebrew word *oth* is better rendered “sign.” Whether this sign was a physical marking on Cain’s body or a miraculous display of some sort, it was widely known for many generations (see Genesis 4:24) and did serve to inhibit any who might be inclined to slay Cain otherwise.

**4:16 *from the presence.*** Cain thus becomes the type of those “that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord” (II Thessalonians 1:8,9).

**4:16 *Nod.*** “Nod” means “wandering,” and so may be a figurative expression depicting Cain’s vagabond life-style. Since he built a city, however, it probably was also the name of the specific region in which he led this wandering existence.

**4:17 *knew his wife.*** His wife was probably one of Adam’s daughters (see Genesis 5:4), although it could have been a later descendant, since it would easily have been possible for the population to grow to several hundred thousand by the time of Cain’s death.

**4:17 *Enoch.*** Cain named his son “Enoch,” meaning “dedication” or “commencement,” probably signifying the beginning of a new manner of life.

**4:17 city.** Urbanization is usually considered by evolutionary archaeologists to be one of the first indicators of the emergence of true civilization from a hunting-and-gathering culture (so-called stone age culture). It is significant that true civilized cultures, by this definition, have existed since the very first generation following Adam, with no suggestion whatever of a long evolutionary advance from an imaginary stone age. Evidently Cain, unable to survive either as a farmer or by trade, had to develop his own self-sufficient economy, through the patriarchal clan which he established around his son Enoch and the city which Cain built for him.

**4:18 Lamech.** The possible meaning of these names are: Irad, meaning “Townsmen,” Mehujael, meaning “God gives life;” Methusael, meaning “Man of God;” Lamech, meaning “Conqueror.” The similarity of some of the names to those in the Sethitic line, as well as their religious “-el” endings, probably indicates that the two families kept in touch with each other and that the Cainitic line continued to believe in God as long as Adam remained alive to exercise some degree of patriarchal leadership.

**4:19 two wives.** Lamech is the first recorded rebel against the divine command of monogamous marriage. It is probable that Adam died during Lamech’s time (by comparison with the chronological data in the Sethitic line) and the Cainites thenceforth became more openly rebellious against God.

**4:19 Zillah.** “Adah” apparently means “ornament” and “Zillah” means “shade.” Lamech’s motivation in taking two wives may have been partially physical lust and partially the desire to establish a large clan in the increasingly violent antediluvian society.

**4:20 bare Jabal.** Lamech’s children were given names associated with their talents: “Jabal” seems to mean “wanderer;” “Jubal” means “sound” and “Naamah” means “pleasant.” “Tubal-cain” is of uncertain meaning but is associated etymologically with the Roman God Vulcan. The inventions of these talented progeny no doubt contributed greatly to the wealth and power of Lamech’s clan, and to the increasing materialism of the Cainite civilization in general.

**4:22 brass and iron.** Evolutionary archaeologists have attempted to organize human history in terms of various supposed “ages”—Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, etc. The Noahic record, however, indicates that early men were very competent in brass and iron metallurgy, as well as agriculture, animal husbandry, and urbanization. It is significant that both many kinds of bronze and iron implements are known to have been used in the earliest civilizations of Sumeria and Egypt. The same is true of musical instruments, and it is evident that the science and art of both metallurgy and music, as well as agriculture and animal husbandry, had been handed down from ancient times to these earliest post-Flood civilizations. Modern archaeology is confirming the high degree of technology associated with the earliest human settlers all over the world.

**4:23 speech.** This fragment of Lamech’s song is history’s first recorded poem, and exhibits the humanistic attitude often typical of both ancient and modern literature.

**4:24 sevenfold.** A Jewish tradition (no more than that) suggests that one of the men slain by Lamech was his ancestor, Cain himself. In any case, Lamech’s boast is nothing less than blasphemy against God in promising protection for Cain.

**4:24 seventy and sevenfold.** Contrast Lamech’s vindictiveness with the forgiving attitude enjoyed by Christ, who urged Peter to forgive his brother seventy times seven times (Matthew 18:22).

**4:25 Seth.** “Seth” means “appointed” or “substitute.” Contrast Eve’s attitude of thankfulness and trust with Lamech’s attitude (in Genesis 4:24) of vengeance and pride.

**4:26 Enos.** “Enos” means “mortal frailty.” It is interesting that Eve gave the name to *her* son, while Seth gave the name to *his* son. This probably suggests that both husband and wife normally consulted with one another in deciding on appropriate names for their children.

**4:26 call upon the name.** To “call upon the name of the LORD” normally implies a definite action of prayer and worship. It was evidently at this time that godly men and women first initiated formal public services of sacrifice, worship and prayer, replacing the earlier practice of meeting personally with God, as Cain and Abel had done. The practice of individual prayer is also intimated, implying that God’s personal presence was no longer regularly available. In any case, an act of faith is implied. In later times, “calling upon the name of the LORD” was accompanied by the building of an altar and the offering of a sacrifice (Genesis 12:8; 26:25; etc.). Since Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary, however, men need only call in faith on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13).

**4:26 the LORD.** The name of the self-existing, redeeming Lord, *Jehovah*. There is no contradiction with Exodus 6:3, especially if the statement there is punctuated with a question mark: “But by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them?” The obvious answer to this rhetorical question is yes.