

“The Line of the Serpent or the Line of Promise”

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Who are you?

Who are you in your most fundamental self? Who are you in your deepest desires, your deepest dreams and priorities? Who are you when someone wrongs you? What goes on inside your heart? Who are you in the place where only omniscient eyes see? As we finish up our sermon series through of Genesis 1–4, we see two emerging pictures of humanity that force us to ask some of the deepest questions.

Right after the fall of mankind into sin, God judged the serpent who had first tempted Eve to disobey God. God said to the serpent in Gen 3:15: I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” At first sight it seems that this verse explains why we are so creeped out by snakes. But as we read through the bible, we realize that the offspring of the serpent are actually people: people who are spiritually aligned with Satan against God and God’s people.

So listen close: every human being is a physical offspring of the first woman. But, many people are spiritual offspring of the serpent. Who are they? They are fundamentally against God and against his people, just like the serpent was.

We find out that Cain is an offspring of the serpent He disobeys God and kills his brother. That’s enmity—division! This is why Cain is said to be “of the evil one”—that is, of the serpent—in 1 John 3:12.

Beyond Cain, we think of Pharaoh in Egypt who oppressed and killed God’s people. In Ezekiel 29:3 Pharaoh is called a “great dragon”—and if you look in a dictionary, you’ll find that a dragon is a type of serpent.¹

In 1st Samuel 11, a man named Nāhāsh the Ammonite attacks Israel. This is enmity. The word Nāhāsh is literally the Hebrew word for serpent—a serpent is leading an army to attack God’s people.

Remember Goliath, who also defied the armies of the living God? Goliath’s armor is described as scaly, just like a serpent’s skin is scaly.² There’s many more example in the OT.

But go to the NT, and we see the Pharisees being described as a “brood [—which means offspring!—] of vipers” (Matt. 3:7; 12:34; 23:33; Luke 3:7). In John 8, Jesus acknowledges that the Pharisees are physically descended from the line of the woman, but then he points to their spiritual allegiance when he says in John 8:44 “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires...”

¹ I draw from the exhilarating biblical theology of the serpent found in Brian A Verrett, *The Serpent in Samuel: A Messianic Motif* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2020), 10–45.

² Not only this, but “bronze” (נְחָשֵׁת) is associated with Goliath four times in the span of two verses in 1 Sam. 17:5–6, and this word sounds like the same Hebrew word for serpent (שֶׁפֶן). See *ibid*, 49–50.

And finally, Rev 12:9 we see that, "...the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world..."

Friends, these two lines continue to today. To say it another way: Who are you? if you are a Christian, you used to be an offspring of the serpent before you were saved. And now, you interact with the offspring of the serpent probably on a daily basis. Our children are born into this world as offspring of the serpent. This is why Christians are oppressed and persecuted in various ways throughout the world, even here in the United States. It's the result of the enmity promised between the two offspring.

You see, the Bible here, is giving us categories here to understand the world. What we see in our passage today is two kinds of people, two categories to understand the world: the line of the serpent, and the line of the woman; the line of those opposed to God, and the line of those who trust in God by faith. And understanding these two categories helps us to live wiser lives as we understand the world around us. So please turn with me to Genesis 4:17-26. It's on page four if your using one of the seatback bibles.

As I read, I want you to see if you can pick up the difference between these two lines.

Gen. 4:17 Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch. ¹⁸ To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech. ¹⁹ And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. ²⁰ Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. ²¹ His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. ²² Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

Gen. 4:23 Lamech said to his wives: "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. ²⁴ If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold."

Gen. 4:25 And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him." ²⁶ To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.

[Pray:]

We have two points today:

- 1. The Line of the Serpent (4:17-24)**
- 2. The line of the Promise (4:25-26)**

1. The Line of the Serpent Seed (4:17-24)

In 4:17, Cain had a child with his wife. Now where did he get his wife? Gen 5:4 tells us that Adam and Eve "had other sons and daughters." So in a world before genetic abnormalities and before God prohibited this practice, Cain's wife was his sister.

Now we see here in Genesis 4 is a genealogy starting with Cain that spans all the way to the seventh generation. But before this we see in vs 17 that Cain built a city, and that he named it after his own son Enoch. Now this is bad on two accounts. First, by plopping down and building a city, Cain was disobeying

God's first command to humanity in Genesis 1:28 to "Be fruitful and multiply and *fill the earth* and subdue it...".

Second, the fact that Cain names the city after his own son—as a type of extension of himself—makes us think of those people who built a city in Gen 11:4 to "make a name for [them]selves," Cain's city is a proto-Babel; it's like a pre-Babylon. Now it's not just one man who rebels against God, it's an entire community of people set up in opposition to him.

So we see humanity progressed in this city of man, and we begin to see the development of culture technology with Ada's children. In verse 20 we read that Jabal was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock.³ In verse 21 we read that his brother Jubal was the father of all those who play the flute and the lyre—which is like a handheld harp. Zillah also bore children, Tubal-Cain was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron, and he also had a sister Naamah.⁴ What we see here is the development of culture: husbandry, music, and metallurgy.

Now, all of these people are from Cain's line. So is their exercise of dominion over these areas a bad thing, or a good thing? Well, the rest of the Bible tells us: it depends. Let's take the lyre and the pipe. Both these instruments are played to encourage Nebuchadnezzar's idol worship in Dan. 3:5, 7, 10, 15. You bow down when the music starts. And yet, David played the Lyre, and all throughout the psalms the lyre and pipe is used in the worship of God⁵. Bronze was one of Goliath's pieces of armor as he went out to defy the armies of the living God. And yet the tabernacle and temple were made using instruments of bronze all through the book of Exodus.⁶

Certain technological innovations have led to great ill and great good. The printing press has printed billions of bibles, but it has also allowed gossip, slander, and propaganda to proliferate. The internet has connected the world and opened up access to the gospel to so many previously unreached places. But it has opened up whole new avenues of sin previously unavailable: cyber crimes, mass proliferation of pornography, and hacking of personal information. The point is, despite the origins of technology, it can be used for evil or good. And this is not the main point of the sermon, but it's a reminder that what determines whether our phones or cars or internet are used for good or ill is ourselves. Sadly, technology can be as corrupt and evil as the humans who create it, and this moves us to consider the father of these sons and the sin that permeates his life.

In 4:19 we read that Lamech takes two wives: Adah and Zillah. Now Biblical narrative is much more "show" than "tell." So in many cases, something bad is happening and the text doesn't say: "hey! Listen

³ If Abel was a shepherd, then how was Jabal the father of those who have livestock? It's likely that Jabal's livestock profession is on a larger scale than Abel, and then fact that he's in a city suggests that he is facilitating the buying and selling of livestock.

⁴ Why include Naamah when she has no cultural achievements to her name? Perhaps it was merely to record exhaustively the number of children that Zillah had. Whatever the case, the fact that Naamah here is in the line of the seed of the serpent gives a subtle hint about how we are to understand Rehoboam, Solomon's son, later in Biblical history. The name of Rehoboam's mother is "Naamah the Ammonite" (see 1 Kings 14:21, 31; 2 Chr. 12:13), and the fact that his mother shares the same name with the Naamah in the line of Cain suggests that Rehoboam is to be understood as part of the serpent's seed.

⁵ Lyre: Psa. 33:2; 43:4; 49:4; 57:8; 71:22; 81:2; 92:3; 98:5; 108:2; 137:2; 147:7; 149:3; Pipe: 150:4

⁶ See Ex. 25:3; 26:11, 37; 27:2-4, 6, 10-11, 17-19; 30:18; 31:4; 35:5, 16, 24, 32; 36:18, 38; 38:2-6, 8, 10-11, 17, 19-20, 29-30; 39:39.

up! This was wrong!”⁷ But when you read the text as a whole, what is subtle and indirect becomes more clear. As we consider Genesis as a whole, we remember that God’s perfect ideal for marriage in the garden paradise was one man and one woman. So this is a departure from God’s ideal.⁸ And when we keep on reading our Bibles, the stories of Abraham, Jacob, Elkanah, David, and Solomon show us a picture of domestic rivalry and strife that shows us the folly of polygamy.

But beyond taking two wives, Lamech shows something even worse. Look with me at 4:23. Gen. 4:23 ¶ Lamech said to his wives: “Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. You’ll notice how in your bible the words of Lamech are set apart. Lamech has turned his boastful vengeance into a poem that is complete with Hebrew parallelism! A lot of Hebrew poetry says the same thing in two different iterations, and this is what we see in this little ditty: so you see the parallels with Ada and Zillah / wives of Lamech, wounding me / striking me, etc. Basically, a young man hit Lamech, and he is telling his wives to listen to him boast about his escalated vengeful killing. And look at how much worse Lamech is than Cain is in verse 24. He says, If Cain’s revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech’s is seventy-sevenfold.”

Lamech here is alluding to God’s pronouncement in 4:15, where God had said to Cain, “if anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold” And then we read in verse 16, “And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him.” Now what is the “mark” of Cain that keeps Cain from being attacked?⁹ The answer is hidden in plain sight in the middle of 4:15. “if anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold”

The mark of Cain is the *threat of escalated vengeance* from Cain’s family.

If someone from Adam and Eve’s family killed Cain because he murdered Abel, that person would have seven-fold retaliation by Cain’s community... and this very reputation will keep Cain from being killed by anyone. Now I hope your slightly skeptical until I prove this to you. In fact, I hope that you don’t believe any major claim I make about the Bible unless I can back it up with the Bible. So put on your thinking caps and pay close attention, because understanding what the mark of Cain is very important and very applicable to your life.

The mark of Cain is a *threat of escalated vengeance* for four reasons: First, the *threat of escalated vengeance* is the very first thing that is associated with the mark in the text. Immediately after the

⁷ For example, in Gen. 35:22 we read, “While Israel lived in that land, Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father’s concubine. And Israel heard of it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve.” There is little indication in the text about the gravity of Reuben’s sin in Jacob’s eyes. It’s not until Genesis 49:3–4 that we see the gravity of what Reuben did—Reuben does not receive the firstborn blessing, and Jacob grounds this in a public rehashing of Reuben’s sin.” Other examples abound. For a greater understanding of Hebrew narrative, see Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, Rev. & Updated ed (New York: Basic Books, 2011). Alter is not a Christian, but his understanding of the nature of Biblical narrative is remarkable.

⁸ And ironically, the taking of two wives arises out of that same sense of discontentedness that drove Adam and Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit in the first place. To have all of the variegated blessings of a wife, and then to desire more and more of those blessings beyond what one has, is to fall into the same temptation of Eve. Eve had already been granted access to every tree that was “pleasant to the sight and good for food” (Gen 2:9; 1:29) except for the one tree, and yet these were two attributes that tempted her to eat of that one forbidden tree (Gen 3:6). She had it, but she wanted more of it, and this desire ruined her.

⁹ This argument draws heavily from R. W. L. Moberly, “The Mark Of Cain—Revealed At Last?,” *Harvard Theological Review* 100, no. 1 (January 2007): 11–28.

pronouncement of vengeance on anyone who kills Cain, God places a mark on Cain—we're supposed to read the mark and the pronouncement together, I would argue.

Second, our text says that God put a mark "on" Cain, but the actual Hebrew preposition means "to/for" Cain. Moses could have used a different word if he wanted to specify that this was a mark that actually physically went "upon" Cain, but he didn't, likely to show that this was not a physical mark at all.¹⁰ This is a mark that is to or for Cain, which weakens the idea of a physical mark.

Third, note how God responds directly to Cain in **verse 15**. And because He is talking directly to Cain, you would expect God to say to Cain, "If anyone kills you, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold" But instead of saying "you," God says, "If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." The fact that God speaks *about Cain* in the third person instead of *to Cain* seems to show that God is introducing here "a saying that will pass into general use."¹¹

Finally, if this sign is a threat of escalated violence, then it makes Lamech's boast make more sense in **verse 24**, "If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold."¹² What do we see in Lamech? We see a continuation and even escalation of the mark of Cain: Lamech boasts about how his revenge is 11 times greater than Cain's. Why would Lamech boast about a very particular instance of escalated vengeance? Well, like father, like son. Or, like great great great great grandfather, like grandson. Lamech learned this type of vengeance from somewhere! And I would argue: it was from his forefathers. Cain and his family community are marked by an escalation in vengeance. And this is the reason why no one will attack Cain to kill him, because they fear the vengeance that will be enacted by Cain's community.

So just to be clear, when God makes the pronouncement to Cain in **Gen 4:15**, he is speaking words of judicial hardening: It is not a good thing that Cain and his line will be marked by escalated vengefulness. And yet, in the sovereignty of God, this vice of Cain's line is also their protection. We see massive parallels between **Genesis 2–3** and **Genesis 4**: both times people are kindly warned by God, both times people are tempted by sin and partake, both times people are asked questions by God, and in both cases people are given judicial sentences that describe a new avenue of temptation. God gave the same kind of judicial announcement to Adam and Eve in **Genesis 3:16** when God told the woman: "Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you." This is a judicial hardening: Adam and Eve and all their progeny will struggle with this kind of marital temptation for the rest of their lives.¹³ This is the same thing that's happening with Cain.

¹⁰ The Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, also supports this by using the dative case when describing how the mark relates to Cain, "καὶ ἔθετο κύριος ὁ θεὸς σημεῖον τῷ Κάιν". This dative case is primarily translated as "to/for"

¹¹ Ibid, 15.

¹² Another supporting reason is the fact that a "mark" (translated in most places as "sign") can be a saying. We see this in Deuteronomy 6:8, where the Israelites are commanded to bind the words of the Shema (Deut 6:4–5) on their hands as a "sign" to remind them of it. This supports how the "mark/sign" of Cain can be a phrase—"If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold" that discourages people from killing Cain.

¹³ The end of Gen 3:16 reads, "Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you." The woman's desire and the man's ruling are both sinful, and they are also a result of God's judicial consigning over to temptation.

And what's astounding is that the mark of Cain overflows right off the pages of scripture and into the very lives of people today.¹⁴ We see this in large ways in gangs and cartels. 'They rough up one of our guys, we'll *kill* one of their guys.' But we also see this escalated vengeance in more subtle ways. It's that macho ethic that says "I'm not going to take anything from anybody" It's the coldness that one spouse gives to another person who emotionally hurt them. It's the passive aggressive unkindness that one co-worker directs towards another coworker. I wonder how many adult children carry "the mark of Cain" against their parents because of parental failings from decades ago? Slander, Slit tires, signing someone up for junk mail, posting someone's private information online, or ordering pizza delivery to someone who never bought it—the mark of Cain is the common denominator in all of these.

And what's so sad is that this kind of revenge culture is that it's a fool's errand: escalating revenge can never be fully satisfied. If revenge continues to escalate, someone has to die—like with Cain and Lamech—but even then that death doesn't satisfy... Because at death the person can no longer feel the pain that you want them to feel. Living a life where you take escalated revenge is like scratching an infected itch. It satisfies for a moment, but then the itch roars back even worse because you've scratched it. Does this mark your life?

But if we consider what is the catalyst for escalating revenge, we realize that it's an overly inflated view of self. Show me a vengeful person, and I will show you a very proud person. A proud person is a one-dollar bill strutting around like he's a hundred. It's an average Joe demanding VIP recognition. And this over-inflated view of our own self-worth then causes deep offense when others don't treat us with the honor that we expect. Is this you? When they tarnish your sense of your own dignity, do they need to *pay dearly*?

What was the culture of the serpent's seed probably like? Well, if human nature has stayed the same, then it was a culture of being easily offended and taking things personally. It was probably a culture where the threat of physical force was used, where those who were weaker experienced fear of violence done against them. Do you think that Lamech's boast to Ada and Zillah about how explosive vengeance in **verse 23** made them feel more safe around him, or less safe? It was probably a culture where sons learned to imitate their father's explosive anger, and daughters learned to imitate their mothers' passive-aggressive record keeping of perceived slights. This is a culture of self-focus and boasting.

But I can tell you for certain, the culture of the serpent's seed is ultimately a culture of not trusting in God. Every time someone commits an act of revenge—whether overt or subtle—they are proclaiming their lack of faith in God's justice. Every vengeful act is a vote of no confidence in God as the divine judge. You see, God will settle every account, and he will disburse total justice. With God, you can be sure that no one will ever get away with anything: every idle word and every secret evil will be one day exposed and answered. This is one of the reasons why the Bible says in **Rom. 12:19** "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'" If you truly believe this, then you can let go of your strong desire to personally punish another person for the hurt that they have caused you.

Who are you really—what do you really believe?

¹⁴ Technically, Cain's line perished in the flood, but as we have been arguing, the line of the serpent—and the "mark of Cain" that identifies that line—is not limited to merely genealogical categories.

If you believe that every sin will be paid for by God, then you can trust that the punishment that God will give will be far more severe than any puny revenge that you might offer. Moreover, if we take justice into our own hands by enacting personal revenge, then we are in a trying in some feeble way to steal God's gavel and shove him off His place on the court of human history—and this is just plain ridiculous and insulting. Why did Lamech feel the need to dispense such violent punishment on a young man who struck him? Because Lamech did not believe in a God who would call every wrong word and deed into account.

This is the community of Cain. This is the community that is marked by the seed of the serpent. It's a worshipping community, where the objects of worship are the egos of the mighty. And yet, we see at the end of **verse 24** a numbered jewel in the mud, and this brings us to our second point:

2. The line of promise.

Where else in the bible have we seen the word “**seventy seven**”? These are the only two places in the entire bible where the Greek phrase for seventy-seven is used: Genesis 4:24, and Matthew 18:21–22.¹⁵ We read there, “**21 Then Peter came up and said to [Jesus], ‘Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?’ 22 Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.’**”

Do you see what Jesus is doing here? By using some of the same language of Lamech Jesus is contrasting the community of the serpent's seed with the community of promise!

Who are *you*?

What marks the line of promise, the Christian community, the church? Longsuffering, patience, humility, bearing with one another, and even—as the pinnacle of relational healing balm—forgiveness.¹⁶

And right after this Jesus gives a parable. A servant owed an un-payable debt to his master of millions of dollars, and his master called him in to pay. The servant begged for his mercy, and the master extravagantly forgave his debt out of pity. But when another servant came to the first servant to ask the first servant's mercy on a few hundred dollars owed, that first servant that had just received mercy from his master refused to give it to this other servant. And when the master found out about it, the master severely punished that first, unmerciful servant. Jesus ended the parable by saying in **Matt. 18:35** “**So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.**”

Who *are* you?

This is where the gospel is so crucial for Christian relationships. When my Christian brother or sister asks for forgiveness after they have sinned against me, How can I withhold forgiveness? How can I withhold forgiveness when I have sinned against God every single day of my life and have received

¹⁵ The phrase in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) and the Greek New Testament is “ἑβδομηκοντάκις ἑπτὰ”.

¹⁶ For a very helpful resource that goes into the practicalities of forgiveness, see Chris Brauns, *Unpacking Forgiveness: Biblical Answers for Complex Questions and Deep Wounds* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008).

unmerited and full forgiveness? How can I take escalated vengeance upon my brother when God has not taking vengeance upon me—even though I deserved it?

This is the gospel message: We have all sinned against this holy God; we all owe him an un-payable sum, and our only hope is the shed blood of Jesus on our behalf. When Jesus was dying on the cross, he was receiving in himself God's judicial wrath for all of the sins of his people. All of the times that I took justice into my own hands, all of the times that I made that person emotionally pay because they hurt me, all of the times that I was unnecessarily offended because of my pride— those are all serious sins that are unjust, and God will have perfect justice. But Jesus paid it all. Sin had left a crimson stain, but he washed it right as snow.

Friend, *who are you?*

Do you have the basis to forgive others, because you've been forgiven yourself? This is an unmerited gift that you can receive by faith in Jesus—whoever you are. When you turn away from your sins and follow Jesus, he changes you. You who were aligned with the serpent, he can make you a new creation! He gives you new desires and capacities and a new identity; he makes you a citizen of a new and heavenly city where Jesus is king! And Jesus grants you a disposition of forgiveness towards others because you've been forgiven so much yourself.

Friend, if you would like to know how you can join this community of heaven, you can talk with just about any member of this church to help you in this. Jesus prayed in [John 17:21](#) that the love and unity of the church would be something that brought about saving faith in the people who see it. What other community is there in the world where sinners can love each other and persevere and forgive even in the midst of hundreds of wrongs and offenses and hurts that are experienced on a yearly basis? What other community has such an accurate view of ourselves that we don't get easily offended, and where we don't have to be the ones defending our dignity? Oh how beautiful the church is!

What type of humanity do you belong to?

We see a preview of this in the line of promise at the end of Genesis 4. By the time we get to the end of [Genesis 4:24](#), the major questions that hangs over humanity is this: If Cain is the seed of the serpent, what would happen to God's promise of the offspring of the woman? Just like all of God's promises, it would be fulfilled. Adam and Eve had another child, named Seth. Now note the language that is used of Seth at [the end of verse 25](#), "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him." The promise was for "offspring" in [Genesis 3:15](#)?¹⁷

Who in this passage is marked as the true offspring of the promise? It's Abel, who Cain killed, and it's Seth. Seth's genealogy goes on into [chapter 5](#), as we heard this morning in our scripture reading, and it's

¹⁷ Note how Cain's birth is *not* framed as Eve bearing an "offspring", but bearing a "man." The unusual nature of this pronouncement means that Cain is not identified with the "offspring" language, thereby setting him apart from the line of promise.

an intentional contrast with Cain's line.¹⁸ In Cain's line we see a community of boastful pride and vengeance.

But In Seth's line we see people beginning to call on the name of the Lord, which is another way to describe prayer in other parts of the bible.¹⁹ We see Enoch, who walked with God, and we see a promise of peace at the birth of Noah, through whom God will save the world. We see a community marked by humility and godliness and love. And it's through this line of Seth that eventually the true messiah, the true offspring of the woman, will come, namely, Jesus. In Luke 3:38 we read of the genealogy of Jesus, that he was the "the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God."

And it's significant to note: why do we see genealogies recorded in the bible? Why do we see it in Genesis 5 and Gen 10, the end of Ruth and that super long section in 1 Chronicles 1-9? It's to show the unbroken line of promise that Goes throughout all of scripture! O Come O Come Emmanuel is playing behind every genealogy in the Bible. And then, come the New Testament, the genealogies stop at Jesus, because the Messiah has come.

Friend, who are you?

There are two kinds of people in this world: a person marked by pride and anger and vengeance, and a person marked by humility and love and forgiveness. And if you are part of the community of Jesus, then one day you will be welcomed into an eternal community... a heavenly city where there are no more occasions for sin, a place where we will live together in a world of love and harmony and joy in the presence of our God and savior Jesus Christ. And until that day it's our mission to speak to those in another community: to call them to saving faith in Jesus Christ, to call them to join us through faith towards that heavenly city, a city of love and fullness and joy in the presence of our savior. In that day we will know fully who we are: we will be his!

¹⁸ Note also the contrast in how Cain "call[s]" a city by the "name" of his "son" in 4:18, and how this contrasts with a "son" being born to Seth, who "call[s]" his "name" Enosh, and then immediately after the announcement of Enosh's birth we read "At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD." The similar language seems intentionally used to further contrast the two lines. This insight was pointed out to me by my friend Jonathan Zavodney.

¹⁹ See Zechariah 13:9; Psa. 116:13, 17.