

# A Curse, a City, a Call

## Genesis 4:11–26 (ESV)

**INTRODUCTION:** The passage before us chronicles the **evolution** of culture in the midst of the **devolution** of morality. The story from Eden onwards is most certainly slouching toward the deluge. Yet, there is something familiar in this story for those of us who daily watch hypersonic missiles falling on the great cities of Israel. Then turn to the next channel only to discover our favorite team playing baseball. This mixture of serious **destruction** and helpful **diversions** have always been around.

- **Pablo Picasso's *Guer-nic-a*** (1937) was painted in the midst of the Spanish Civil War as bombs fell around him.
- **Shostakovich's (shaa - sta- kow- vihch's) - Symphony No. 7**, composed in **1941** during the **Nazi siege of Leningrad**.
- **Jean-Paul Sartre's *No Exit***, was first performed in **1944** in **Nazi-occupied Paris** during World War II.

It brings to mind the words of Christ who warned that, <sup>37</sup> ...as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. (Matthew 24:37)

Meaning - people were praying, carrying on with life, marrying and giving in marriage as a great torrent of judgement was looming in the distance.

**CONTEXT:** As we learned last week, the **first man**, ever born of natural means (**Cain**) ruthlessly murdered the **second man** ever born by natural means (**Abel**).

### ***I've heard it put this way:***

Consider the fact that, at one time, a third of the people on the planet were murderers.

A third of the people in prison aren't murderers. San Quentin, Folsom Prison, and Alcatraz were all safer than chapter 4 of Genesis. You thought Compton and Baghdad were tough? Try downtown Eden after sunset. There's murder and violence at person three.

Cain killed 25% of the world's population. That's more than Stalin, Hitler, Idi Amin, Pol Pot, King Herod, Genghis Khan, Typhoid, Cancer, and AIDS, all combined.

Cain killed a third of the people he knew. He knew three people. He killed one of them. If you knew Cain, you had a 66 and two-thirds percent chance of survival.

Yet, in the midst of all of this wickedness and chaos, culture begins to evolve - music, the arts, industry, metalurgy, fashion, as well as the food industry.

***It all begins with...***

## **1. An Enhanced Curse**

**TEXT: Genesis 4:11–26 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

So in the original curse, the ground was cursed so that it no longer cooperated willingly with Adam. In this case, Cain is cursed from the ground. In what way?

<sup>12</sup> When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength.

Despite his most valiant efforts, he will not succeed. Keep in mind, Cain was a farmer - he knew how to work the ground. But because of this sin, even when Cain does his job **RIGHT**, the ground will behave **WRONG**.

***Cyclical Predictability is the key to overcoming fear.*** One leader said it this way, “Losers react, winners anticipate”. When you can recognize the patterns of life and use them in your favor - you eliminate fear and you win.

**ILLUSTRATION:** If you were just dropped on this planet and told - survive. In about two months, you might think you know what's going on, but then what happens? The season changes. But if you can listen to those who have gone before you, ask great questions, read great books, you learn - OH! The seasons change in a predictable pattern, you can live accordingly. Well, patterns happen far beyond the world of agriculture - how do you learn those patterns? You read books.

For Cain - the patterns meant nothing. Seed time and harvest made no difference. It was an enhanced curse and it was his own fault.

**The Great Theologian John Wayne** said it this way, “*Life is hard, it's harder when you're stupid*”. Well, that is certainly true. I would add to that, “Life is hard, it's harder when you are sinful”.

When you choose a path that is diametrically opposed to the revealed will of God, you are inviting trouble, pain, and heartache into your life.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Do you remember when Jesus encountered Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus? He made a simple, yet profound statement - **Jesus said**, “It is hard for thee to kick against the goads”.

A goad was a long, thick stick that was very sharp on one end. A plowman would use the goad to motivate an Ox to pull the plow. Occasionally, the Ox would raise opposition to the goad by kicking against this sharp, pointed object. That only made his misery worse.

Well, that is much of what is happening to Cain. Life was already far more difficult than it had been in Eden, but rather than humbly cooperate with God's plan, Cain kicked against the goads. ***He added insult to his own injury.***

12b. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.”

The phrase in Hebrew means, “*You will stagger upon the earth*”. The same phrase is used in Isaiah for a drunken man. Have you ever felt like you just couldn’t get your footing in life?

James says something similar in **James 1:8 (ESV)** <sup>8</sup> ...a double-minded man, **unstable** in all his ways.

<sup>13</sup> Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is greater than I can bear. <sup>14</sup> Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

Do you see that Cain is concerned that this punishment is far too severe, he might die, you see... *like Able did*.

This is the first **Martyr complex**. The sin of Cain had distorted his perspective of reality. The gap was growing larger between how Cain views reality and how God views reality.

From God’s vantage point - He has shown remarkable grace to Cain in not killing him and casting him into Hell immediately. From Cain’s perspective, he was a victim.

Now, there is very little you can do to reason with a person who is so warped to the reality of life as it is. For such a man, logic is lunacy and reason is ridiculous. And this is nothing new; Cain, the murderer, is portraying himself as the pitiful victim.

<sup>15</sup> Then the Lord said to him, “Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. <sup>16</sup> Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, **east of Eden**.

This was, apparently, the first tattoo, and God was the tattoo artist. We see man drifting further and further East from the Garden of Eden. This phrase comes up again and again.

### **After the fall in Genesis 3:**

- Adam and Eve are driven east of Eden (Gen 3:24).
- Cain is driven further east to the land of Nod (Gen 4:16).
- Humanity keeps going east:
- People settle in Shinar (Babylon) to build the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:2).
- Lot “moves east” toward Sodom (Gen 13:11).

Then God calls **Abram from Ur** (in the east), and guess which way God calls him to journey? Back west, indicating that the reversal of exile, redemption, had begun.

But at this point, the movement is still, further and further from God.

*An enhanced curse...*

## 2. An Established City

<sup>17</sup> 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.

God cursed Cain

to wander upon the Earth, and as an act of defiance, Cain built the first city. A cursed man is building a cursed city.

Cities are interesting - the concept of a city in the ancient world was a **fortified settlement**.

It provided:

- a. **Protection** - a city had a system of justice, the enforcement of laws.
- b. **Permanance** - Because of the protection the city provided, people no longer had to nomadically wander, but rather they could develop symbiotic means of survival through the division of labor.
- c. **Polination** - Cities cause people with different skills and talents to be brought together in close proximity. Inevitably, they influence one another and new innovations occur, as we see in the text.

<sup>18</sup> To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered **Lamech**. <sup>19</sup> And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

Lamech is an interesting guy. In many ways he is the epitome of evil in the OT, even more so than Cain. He is the antiChrist of this epoch of time.

Lamech commits the first case we have of **polygamy**. Lamech married **Adah** and **Zillah**, he had marriage covered from A - Z. Any time polygamy is mentioned in the scripture, pain and heartache follow. God made for Adam one wife and declared that marriage very good. That was the master plan, that is how it is supposed to be.

But notice in their children who live in this city begin to produce and shape **culture in a single generation**:

<sup>20</sup> **Adah** bore **Jabal**; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock.

If the tribe of Cain would live in this city long term, they would need a source of protein. So, Jabal innovated a way to allow the herds to grow and be sustained through a ranch-style approach. He takes up the mantle of Abel and develops heards.

<sup>21</sup> His brother's name was **Jubal**; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe.

A big part of any city is **Entertainment and the Arts** - it gives people something outside of themselves to appreciate and celebrate. Jubal introduces the **arts** to humanity. Incidentally, this is where we get our word "jubilee."

Adah bore two sons, Jabal and Jubal...I suppose if he had a third, the name would be Jeebal.

<sup>22</sup> **Zillah** (the second wife) also bore **Tubal-cain**; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

Tubal-cain begins industrializing the Cainite city. He develops way to forge the tools he needs out of metals in the Earth. This would be a tremendous step forward. The metalwork that Tubal-Cain produces would impact all of the other professions.

- **Sowing and reaping** would be done by plow rather than by hand.
- The **livestock** that Jabal raised would be domesticated, not only for meat, but also to pull the plow.
- The reed **pipes** and instruments that Jubal used to make music would evolve into horns and trumpets.

I want you to see that the development of culture is not happening slowly over 10's of thousands of years, but rather in a single generation. These three were the sons of Lamech, 7 generations from Adam - shaping culture.

**HOW DO YOU SHAPE OUR CULTURE?** How do you take what God has given and shape it into something we can all appreciate? The three men, in spite of being placed in an extremely difficult household, did some amazing things.

Their father, **Lamech**, on the other hand, was a scourge to the city. The only recorded words of Lamech we have are those in verse 23.

<sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold."

My vengeance is 10 times greater than God Himself. What a sick, satanic way of thinking. He thought that the answer to everything was MORE. More Women. More War. More Wealth.

NOW - the last couple of words of verse 24 should be familiar, the phrase actually means 70 times 7. Where have we heard that? Christ - remember that, we will see what was likely on the mind of Christ when he made that statement.

*An enhanced curse...an established city...*

### 3. An Emerging Call

<sup>25</sup> 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."

Now, this is not to say this is the only child the first couple had after the death of Abel, but rather this is the next significant individual in redemptive history. At this point, Eve had likely had other daughters, and perhaps sons as well. However, Seth stood out in some way as a replacement for Abel.

Keep in mind, this is **7 generations later** - Eve is still getting pregnant and having kids. We do not know how old she was, but we do know that according to - Genesis 5:3 (ESV) <sup>3</sup> When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.

So, we can imagine that Eve was close to the same age. She was likely created mature, as if she were 30 years old. So she would have appeared to be 160 years old at this point, and she is still intimate with her husband and able to conceive. She was a Great X6 Grandma, and a brand-new mom at the same time.

Now, 160 in that time didn't look like 160 in our time. At least we hope it didn't.

Soon we will see that God will at a Governor to the length of a person's life - **Genesis 6:3 (ESV)** <sup>3</sup> Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years."

It is interesting that Eve is still haunted by the deep trauma that occurred when one of her sons murdered the other.

#### 3 John 4 (ESV)

<sup>4</sup> I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

If you want to give your Dad joy on Father's Day - get along with your siblings. As far as it depends on you, live at peace. I remember Julie's father desired more than anything in life - that his three girls enjoyed life together as often as possible.

<sup>26</sup> 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.**

That is - mankind began to invoke Yahweh by name. Just seven generations back, mankind walked closely and intimately with God in the cool of the day. Now, they are

far from Him. Yet, there was something about the generation of Enosh. They heard the stories of old, and they called out to the **God of the Garden**.

As the story progresses, the overwhelming mass of humanity will wander in darkness, lost, separated from the Lord. Next week, we will read about the unthinkable, demonized evil that man is capable of. Yet, you will perpetually be reminded of this **remnant of people who call out to Yahweh**.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Several years ago, I was in Chicago for a conference, this was pre-uber, so I called a cab to take us from the conference back to the hotel. This cab driver was a chatty Kathy - he wanted to talk.

He could tell we had been at a conference, so he wanted to know what it was all about. I'm always hesitant to tell people what I do when I am traveling, because they immediately assume that you must be like the last Preacher they met, for better or worse.

Nevertheless, he kept asking, so I said, "we are both Pastors from Alabama, and we are here for a conference". To which he replied, "Ahhhh... Pastors, so what kind of Christian are you guys". I think he was asking what denomination, so I said, "we are baptist".

He said, "Well, you know, I've read the Bible, and as far as I can tell... there are good guys and there are bad guys... and the moral of the story is... you gotta be one of the good guys".

Now something about that statement changed my attitude. I said, "friend, that's not the point at all". The point of the Bible is we are all bad guys, and there is only one good guy - Jesus. The only thing that makes some people different from others is that they recognized that they are bad guys, and they called upon the one good guy to save them.

You see, throughout the Bible, you will see that every single hero, without exception, has a fatal flaw - except for Jesus.

- **Noah** seems like a truly righteous man, but once he gets off of the Ark, he gets drunk and what he does is so wicked that it is veiled in the most mysterious aspects of the Hebrew language. I will just say that, "to look up nakedness" means more than you might assume.
- **Abraham** seems like a truly righteous man, the father of the faithful right? But twice, he gives his wife away to another man in cowardice and shame.
- **David** is a man after God's own heart! A slayer of Giants! Until he is slain by his own lusts as he looks upon Bathsheba.

You see, ALL have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The only hope is that some, will recognize they are sinners and turn to call upon the God of the Garden.

- The story begins with Cain calling out to the Creator, saying, I don't think you are treating me fairly.
- The story ends with the sons of Seth calling out to the Creator, saying, I am a sinner and I desperately need you.

### **CONCLUSION/INVITATION:**

YET - all of the godlessness and evil we see in the text from CAIN to LAMECH, remember, one day the seed would come and smite the serpent.

I find it interesting that all of the things that Cain feared would fall on him, actually fell on Jesus Christ.

- Cain would be a restless wanderer on the Earth - Jesus said, "foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, yet the Son of Man has no place to lay His head.
- Cain said, "whoever finds me will kill me". But for Christ, they did find him in the garden and they killed Him.
- Cain said, I will be driven from your presence. On the cross, Christ was actually driven from the presence of God crying, "my God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?"
- As a result of His work, though Lamech sought vengeance 70 fold, Christ and His followers will forgive 70 times 7.

***One better than Cain has come***, He seeks to turn His followers into a city set upon a hill. They are to shape a new and better culture, where the arts, commerce, industry, are no longer used for evil, but leveraged for good.

***Have you begun to call upon the God of the Garden?***