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GENESIS: THE SEEDS

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15I 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.”

Genesis 3:15 (ESV)

17Cain 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.

Genesis 4:17 (ESV)

William Ernest Henley’s poem “Invictus” (“Unconquered”) is drenched with the spirit of Cain:

*Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.*

*In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*

*Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.*

*It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.¹*

The etymology of *Enoch* probably is related to Hebrew *ḥānak*, “train up, dedicate,” or West Semitic *ḥnk*, meaning “introduce, initiate.” Those who interpret Enoch as the first builder understand the name “Enoch” as derived from “dedicator” or “founder” of cities.

¹ Hughes, R. K. (2004). [Genesis: beginning and blessing](#) (p. 109). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

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

Genesis 4:18-19 (ESV)

IRAD – wild ass

MEHUJAEL – BLOTTED OUT BY GOD

METHUSHAEL – MAN OF SHEOL

ADAH & ZILLAH – DAWN & DUSK; JEWEL & TINKLE

²⁰Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. ²¹His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. ²²Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

Genesis 4:20-22 (ESV)

JABAL – HERDSMAN

JUBAL – ARTS AND MUSIC

TUBAL-CAIN – TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRY

NAAMAH – PLEASANT, GRACEFUL, GORGEOUS

“Culture, used or abused, offers no redemption”

²³Lamech 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. ²⁴If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold.”

Genesis 4:23-24 (ESV)

Reference to his wives in this alarming setting probably indicates the worse consequence of the judgment oracle in [3:16b](#), where the woman suffers under a despotic husband. In this case the women experience the humiliation of polygamy and the violent spectacle of a savage killing. His repeated exhortation demands their acquiescence: “Listen to me” renders “hear my voice,” another possible allusion to Adam's sin ([3:10](#), [17](#)) and the murder of Abel ([4:10](#)).

Cain's genealogy entails an irony that speaks to the personality of this family tree. Genealogies are designed to celebrate life and accomplishment by tracing the continuation of family from one ancestor to the next, but Cain's record involves the cessation of life, as represented by the murderers Cain and Lamech.

²¹Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” ²²Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

Matthew 18:21–22 (ESV)

²⁵And 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.” ²⁶To 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.

Genesis 4:25–26 (ESV)

As in the case of naming “Cain” (see 4:1), Eve explains theologically the choice of Seth’s name. “Seth” (šēt) is related by sound (if not etymology) to “granted” (šāt). Eve attributes the birth of the child to the mercy of God, who has provided her a third son. It would seem that the first round is won by the serpent in the murder of righteous Abel, but the gift of Seth insures that the promise will stay alive through Eve, who is found after all to be the “mother of all living” (3:20).

The name “Enosh” (’ēnôš) in Hebrew can function both as a common noun and as the name of an individual, like the word for “man” or “Adam” (’ādām; [4:26](#); [5:6–7](#), [9–11](#); [1 Chr 1:1](#)). As a common noun it may indicate an individual “man” in a general sense (e.g., [Job 5:17](#)) or collective “mankind,” where it is synonymous with ’ādām (e.g., [Job 36:25](#); [Ps 8:4](#) [5]). “Enosh” then is the new “Adam” who heads a new line that will receive the blessing and survive the flood ([5:1–11](#), [29](#)). Though the etymology of Hebrew ’ēnôš is uncertain, its usage often refers to the frailty and insignificance of “man.” Perhaps Seth’s naming of Enosh reflects his own sense of mortality and in light of the murder of Abel the tenuous character of human life.

The Jewish targums, however, reflect the opposite opinion of Enosh. They rendered the Hebrew “began” but also took it as the verb “pollute.” Thus the verse referred to the defilement of the name Yahweh by the making of an idol and giving it the sacred name. Enosh then was viewed not as the paradigm of antediluvian godliness but the beginning of moral degradation. The infamous “Generation of Enosh” was degenerate and initiated a string of wicked generations that resulted in the flood.

²⁹“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, ³⁰saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ ³¹Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. ³²Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers.

³³You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? ³⁴Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, ³⁵so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. ³⁶Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

³⁷“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁸See, your house is left to you desolate. ³⁹For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Matthew 23:29–39 (ESV)