

## The Identity of the Seeds Unveiled (Gen. 4:1-15)

- I. **Expectation of the Seed.** Immediately after recording the fall and the promise of the seed, we are told of Eve conceiving and giving birth to a son. We are not only told of the birth of Cain, but of what Eve says at his birth and the rationale for his name. He was named Cain because Eve had gained a man with the help of the Lord. We should not read this merely as Eve's excitement at the first birth in history. Rather, given that this recorded right after God's declaration concerning her offspring, that the focus of the birth narrative falls on Eve specifically, and that the following chapters take care to record genealogies, we should read Eve's declaration as her belief that Cain is the promised son. Eve lived in expectation of the coming seed and we are intended to read Genesis in the same way, looking to see how God will bring what He said in **3:15** to pass. However, this does not only consist of looking for the promised son, but also for the seed of the serpent that will war against the seed of the woman.
- II. **The Enmity Begins**
  - A. **The two sacrifices.** We quickly discover that Eve's expectation is misplaced. Eve gives birth to another son and, some years later, they come to offer sacrifices to the Lord. Cain offers the produce of the field which he had worked, and Abel offers the produce of his flocks. God accepted Abel's sacrifice but not Cain's. Given that Genesis was written to the people of Israel after the Exodus, we are to understand these sacrifices in light of the law God had revealed. Cain's sacrifice did not take into account that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins (**Heb. 9:22**). We should not assume that Cain would not have known this requirement. God had already provided a blood sacrifice for Adam and Eve by providing for animal skins to clothe them (**Gen. 3:21**). It is also right to infer that God has given additional revelation not recorded for us from the fact that Cain and Abel know that they are supposed to offer sacrifices at all. Cain exemplifies the attitude that is common in unbelievers, which is that they have the right to draw near to God by their own works, rather than by the means that God has given for worship and reconciliation.
  - B. **The two seeds.** Cain was angry that God rejected his sacrifice. In spite of Cain's disregard for His commands concerning worship, God graciously comes to him and tells him what he should do. However, just as he did concerning worship, Cain disregards God's command. He goes out and murders his brother and shows no remorse when confronted by God. Rather than Cain proving to be the promised seed of Eve who would destroy the works of Satan, he shows himself to be of Satan's seed. Eve and her seed are believers who worship God in truth, Satan and his seed are those who rebel against God and seek to destroy God's people. The sad reality is that both of these seeds will physically descend from Eve and so this war that God promised would come will be between her children. Cain launches the first attack of this war, the seed of the serpent rises up and strikes down the seed of the woman.
  - C. **God's curse.** Cain is guilty of murder and worthy of the death penalty (**Gen. 9:5-6; Ex. 21:23**) and Cain fears that he will be killed for what he has done (**Gen. 4:14**). God preserves his life, but still casts him further away from Eden and from the rest of his family. He curses Cain that he may no longer benefit from his work in the field and that he should be a wanderer all his life.

## Contrasting Genealogies (Gen. 4:16-5:32)

- I. **The Pattern of the Genealogies**
  - A. **Genealogies of the serpent and the woman.** The pattern of genealogies that make up the major sections of Genesis is set here. First, we have the line of Cain and the seed of the serpent that comes from him. Then we have the line of Seth, identified with Adam, representing the seed of the

woman. Similar contrasts between genealogies of the serpent and genealogies of the woman occur where Noah's sons (serpent) are contrasted with the particular line that culminates in Abraham (woman) (**Gen. 10-11**), the line of Ishmael (serpent) is contrasted with the story of Isaac's family (woman) (**Gen. 25-35**), and the line of Esau (serpent) is contrasted with the story of Jacob's sons (woman) (**Gen. 36-50**).

- B. **Membership in the genealogies.** Although these genealogies represent the two seeds, this does not mean that we should regard every member of the genealogies of the serpent as unsaved and every member of the genealogies of the woman as saved. We find some who have no place in genealogies of the woman who believe (Melchizedek; **Gen. 14:17-20**) and some in the genealogies of the woman who do not believe and end up being put in the genealogy of the serpent later (Ishmael, Esau). So it is better to view the genealogies of the serpent as representing those outside of membership in the church and the genealogies of the woman as representing the visible church. But we always need to remember that not all who are part of God's chosen people are believers and that it is only those who have faith who are truly of the seed of the woman (**Rom. 9:6; Gal. 3:7**). The story of Cain provides an example of how the narrative of Genesis will play out in this respect. The seed of the serpent will often come from the household of the family of faith, even from the one that was hoped to be the child through whom God would continue His promises.
- C. **The importance of the genealogies of the woman.** Although we have seen that not all who are listed in these genealogies belonging to the woman are saved, it is important for us to keep track of them nonetheless. For it is through this line being chronicled in these genealogies that the ultimate seed of the woman, Jesus, will come. With each genealogy, we see God narrowing the field from which the Messiah must come. He must come from the line of Seth, not Cain; from the line of Isaac, not Ishmael; from the line of Jacob, not Esau; and from the line of Judah, not Jacob's other sons. These genealogies always have in view the ultimate fulfillment of the seed of the woman in Jesus and are teaching us to look with anticipation towards His coming.

## II. *The First Genealogy of the Serpent (4:16-24)*

- A. **The first city and God's curse.** This genealogy tells us about the descendants of Cain. This genealogy tells us three things primarily about Cain and his line. First, they establish the first city. This may be in rebellion against God's curse on Cain that he should be a wanderer in trying to settle down. It is also likely a testimony to the curse that the ground will no longer yield for him, so he turns to other trades to provide for himself. This sets a course throughout Genesis of identifying cities with wickedness and with those who oppose God (Babel, Sodom and Gomorrah) whereas those who are of God's people tend to live rural lives, closer to the image of life in Eden.
- B. **Industry.** These other trades are another defining characteristic of this line. They become those who raise livestock, develop music, and forge metals. These things communicate something positive about them that is important for us to remember. Although this line represents those who are outside of God's people, they are able to develop good and useful skills and services. We should not deny that unbelievers are also made in the image of God and make exceedingly valuable contributions to humanity. However, these beneficial things that they have done do not lessen their guilt or need for reconciliation with God. The mention of these innovations is a hint at the rebellion of this line against God. They are building civilization and advancing the knowledge and dominion of humanity; however, they do this not for God's glory, but only for their own benefit. In particular, the mention of metalworking may speak to the development of instruments of war and the bloodthirstiness that characterizes the line of Cain.

- C. **Polygamy and murder.** The line of Cain comes to a culmination and a focus on Lamech, who displays the wickedness of this line. The first thing we are told about him is that he had two wives. This is not an idle detail but demonstrates his departure from God's intention for marriage between one man and one woman. Then we are told of his boasting to his wives about murdering another man. Though he speaks of being struck by this man, this is not something he did in self-defense, but instead of an eye for an eye, simply killed the man who had injured him. Unlike Cain, he does not seek to hide what he has done, but openly boasts of it to his wives and declares that what he has done is of such a nature as to have exceeded the sin of Cain and be worth an avenging that seventy-seven, rather than sevenfold. All of these things have shown the degree of sin for the seed of the serpent. They are characterized by ungodliness and bloodthirstiness.

### III. *The First Genealogy of the Woman (4:25-5:32)*

- A. **A replacement for Abel.** In contrast to the line of Cain, the Scriptures then turn to tell us of the seed of the woman. Though Abel has died and Cain has departed from the presence of the Lord, God gives Adam and Eve another son, one who displays the faith of Abel rather than the sin of Cain. The hope that accompanies the birth and life of Seth is expressed by the name that he is given and the connection of true worship of God with him and his son.
- B. **The line of life.** Unlike the previous genealogy, we are not told anything about what those in this genealogy do. This genealogy follows a simple pattern. It tells us how long a man lives until he has a particular son, tells us how long he lives after the birth of that son, mentions that he had other sons and daughters, and that he died. This emphasis on the lifespans of those in this line clearly link them to Eve, the mother of all living. It also gives us a constant reminder that the curse of the fall has not been undone, as we are reminded time and again of the reality of death.
- C. **Eschatological hope in this genealogy**
1. **Enoch and eternal life.** This genealogy highlights two individuals for whom the pattern of the genealogy varies. The first is Enoch. He is specially mentioned as being one who walked with God and, in connection to this, he is the only one who does not die, but rather we are told that God took him. He is one of only two people in Scripture that we are told did not undergo death but were taken immediately into heaven (Elijah; **2 Ki. 2**). The emphasis in the genealogy on death and Enoch's deliverance from it speaks powerfully to the hope of resurrection. The hope of God's people is eternal life that lies even beyond death. The true fulfillment of the seed of the woman must be one who overcomes death, not only for himself, as Enoch does, but for all of God's people.
  2. **Noah and deliverance from the curse.** The second individual highlighted in this genealogy is Noah, the last member of it. The recitation of Noah's birth is similar to that of Cain. Like Cain, one of Noah's parents declares great hope and expectation for this son being the fulfillment of the promised seed. Noah's father expects Noah to give rest (which is the meaning of his name) from their toil under the curse. It is the expectation that is set in these words that then causes the following chapters to focus on Noah, to see if he will prove these words true. These words of Noah's father also further indicate what we are to expect from the promised seed. He is one who must give relief to God's people from the curse brought by the fall.
- D. **The generational God.** One of the things that this genealogy and all others in the Scriptures should tell us is that God is not only a God of individuals, but from the beginning has been a God whose faithfulness is to families throughout their generations (**Deut. 7:9**). This is true just as much in the New Covenant and should give Christian parents hope in raising their children.

## The Identity of the Sons of God and Nephilim (Gen. 6:1-7)

### I. *The Sons of God as Demons and Nephilim as giants?*

A. **Reasons some adopt this interpretation.** Many believe that the sons of God are fallen angels who mate with human women to produce a giant race. In fact, some translations simply translate Nephilim as “giants” in **Gen. 6:4**. This belief comes from the idea that it takes a supernatural origin to create giants, from the usage of the term Nephilim to speak of those who seem gigantic the one other place the word appears in Scripture (**Num. 13:33**), and from the use of the phrase, sons of God to speak of angels elsewhere in Scripture (**Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7**). However, there are many reasons that this interpretation is faulty.

B. **Reasons this interpretation is wrong.**

1. **The meaning of Nephilim.** Nephilim does not mean giant, and there is no indication that those spoken of here were giants, but rather great men of renown. This language is similar to that of Nimrod, who is identified with the same word 3 times (**Gen. 10:8-9**). If we take what we can learn of Nimrod, who was a conqueror, we can infer that the Nephilim were not necessarily giants but were likely particularly violent.
2. **The meaning of Sons of God.** Although this phrase is used to speak of angels in some contexts, that is not the only meaning that can be given to it. In addition, it would be problematic to give such a name to demons who are against God in every way. Even in Job, though Satan comes with the sons of God, he is distinguished from them.
3. **Problems with demon and human mating.** We have no Scriptural reason to believe that angels or demons have the capacity to take bodies to themselves that are capable of reproducing with human beings. It also strikes at the uniqueness of Christ as the only man born without a human father and, therefore, not fallen in Adam.
4. **Context gives no support.** There is nothing in the context of this passage that indicates that we should expect anything like this. This supposed recitation of the origin of demon offspring would come out of nowhere, at best creating confusion as to what it means to be of the seed of the serpent, since there would now be actual children of demons. It also would not explain why judgment needs to come on all the human race, since the trigger for the sin that characterizes the world would seem to be from the actions of the demons, who are not judged.

II. ***Intermingling of the line of the woman and the line of the serpent.*** The proper understanding of the opening verses of Genesis 6 is that the line of the woman has entered into marriages with the line of the serpent. There are many reasons that this interpretation better fits the text.

- A. **Context.** This view makes sense in the immediate context because the last two chapters have been spent separating the lines by genealogy. It also fits the context of Scriptural warnings not to marry unbelievers (**Deut. 7:3-4; 1 Cor. 7:39**) and explains why Noah alone found grace in God’s sight (**Gen. 6:5-8**), since the godly line had compromised with those who rebel against God.
- B. **The meaning of Sons of God.** This view explains the phrase, sons of God, since Adam is made in God’s image and the genealogy specifically speaks of Seth as being born after Adam’s image (**Gen. 5:3**). This also explains the theology of Luke’s genealogy, as he traces Jesus’ descent all the way back to Adam, who is called the son of God (**Luke 3:38**).
- C. **The meaning of Nephilim.** This view accords with the idea that the Nephilim are particularly violent since the previous chapters have highlighted the murderous nature of the line of Cain and would speak to the wickedness the Lord saw that brought His judgment (**Gen. 6:5**). With this, the stage is set for God to bring His judgment in the flood.