

# THE WAY OF CAIN

Genesis 4:16-24

## INTRODUCTION

- The “slippery slope” argument says that a certain decision or course of action should be rejected because it will lead to a chain reaction resulting in undesirable ends
- Often the slippery slope is rejected as a fallacy because there is no apparent connection between the starting point and the final consequences
- But there are times when warnings of the slippery slope are valid – when we can make connections between the decision and its consequences
- The thing about the slippery slope is that it starts from a place of goodness and righteousness, but it descends into a place of evil and unrighteousness
- It is slippery because once the course is started it is almost impossible to stop the descent
- The slippery slope of sin can be seen in individual lives, in families and in societies
- The human race was plunged into the slippery slope of sin when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden
- Ever since, man has been set on a downward course of sin, ending with death
- The only means of changing course and bringing us back to a state of righteousness is by God reaching down and himself saving us
- The Bible presents truth in a very binary manner:
  - ✓ Good, evil
  - ✓ Light, darkness

- ✓ Clean, unclean
  - ✓ Saved, lost
  - ✓ Just, unjust
  - ✓ Seeing, blind
  - ✓ Sheep, goats
  - ✓ Wheat, tares
  - ✓ Babylon, Zion
  - ✓ Heaven, hell
  - ✓ Broad way, narrow way
  - ✓ Seed of the woman, seed of the serpent
  - ✓ The way of Cain, the way of Abel
- In Genesis 3:15, God said there would be two diverging, opposing lines of people descending from Adam and Eve – the woman’s seed and the serpent’s seed – who would be at continual enmity against each other
  - In Genesis 4-5 we see those two contrasting humanities described – civilisation without God (Cain’s line), and civilisation with God (Seth’s line)
  - In the opening part of chapter 4 we have the account of Cain and Abel, their different offerings, followed by Cain’s murder of Abel
  - The “way of Cain” (Jude 11) is a way of:
    - ✓ Idolatry
    - ✓ Self-righteousness
    - ✓ Rebellion against God
    - ✓ Hatred of God’s people
    - ✓ Murder
    - ✓ Lies
  - The way that Cain took soon became a slippery slope of sin, not only in his own life, but in the lives of his descendants, which would culminate in the utter corruption of the whole world in Genesis 6
  - The spiritual descendants of Cain are in the world today and comprise the vast majority of humanity
  - Question: Where did Cain get his wife?

- He would have married one of his sisters
- Adam and Eve “begat sons and daughters” (Genesis 5:4), and in the early days of humanity God allowed marriage between close relations
- Prior to the Mosaic law, consanguine marriage was not forbidden and there are a number of examples of this
- The genetic purity of the human race in the centuries following the creation meant that there was not the risk of genetic mutations that happen today when close relatives marry
- Note that this also shows evolution is false. If evolution were true, the human DNA would be improving and perfecting, but it is rather increasing with genetic problems

## **I. THE WAY OF CAIN IS THE WAY OF SEPARATION FROM GOD (16)**

### **A. Cain was sent away from God’s presence**

1. This was a separation from God and from all the good influences in his life

- a. From his godly family
- b. From the place of worship
- c. From the community of saints

2. While Cain was banished from these, it appears he willingly set his course away from them – he “went out”

### **B. Cain represents rebellious sinners who wilfully remove themselves from those places and people that manifest God’s presence**

1. God dwells especially in the church in this age

2. The ungodly do all they can to avoid anyone connected with God
3. What is hell but giving those people what they have spent their lives pursuing – a place where every trace of God is removed (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9)

## **II. THE WAY OF CAIN IS THE WAY OF SELF-WILL (17-18)**

### **A. Cain sought to build a city**

1. God had cursed Cain to be a fugitive and vagabond, wandering the earth with no permanent abode
2. Yet Cain sought to defy God's curse and establish himself a fortified city
3. The Hebrew here indicates "was building", giving the sense that Cain attempted to build this city but was not able to complete it, leaving it to his son, Enoch (meaning "dedicated")
4. Cain represents the people of the world, restless, drifting and tossed about in their souls, seeking for a "city", something permanent they can find rest in, but finding none
5. Wealth, career, pleasure, relationships, false religions – all these will be found to be unsound foundations to build one's life upon
6. Solomon, in Ecclesiastes discovered this, declaring that all that this world can offer is "vanity", and the only enduring and permanent foundation is found in the fear of God and obedience to God (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

### **B. The names of Cain's descendants indicate there remained some acknowledgement of God in this line**

1. Mehujael means smitten of God
2. Methusael means man of God

3. Yet this appears to be a mere “form of godliness” (2 Timothy 3:5), where God was honoured with the lips, yet their hearts were far from him (Matthew 15:8)
4. Wicked men can, and often do give lip service to God while remaining in rebellion against him

### **III. THE WAY OF CAIN IS THE WAY OF SECULARISM (20-22)**

- A. Lamech’s sons became pioneers in their fields of technology, making advancements in human civilisation
  1. Jabal was a pioneer in animal husbandry
  2. Jubal was a pioneer in musical instruments
  3. Tubal-cain was a pioneer in metallurgy, particularly in brass and iron
    - a. This Tubal-cain is highly esteemed by Freemasons, being the first blacksmith and is regarded as their “Masonic ancestor”
  4. This can be seen as man taking steps to fulfil the dominion mandate of Genesis 1:28
  5. This record of the early civilisation of man refutes the evolutionary notion that man was originally primitive and beast-like, only very gradually developing technology
- B. Civilisation without God
  1. Notable here is the absence of any reference to God
  2. Notable also is the contrast with the Sethite line in chapter 5 – the record there has no reference to their technology, but rather reference to their worship
  3. The technological advancements are not evil in themselves – it is for man to make use of the abilities God has bestowed him with

4. The problem is when man pursues advancement without God, independently of God
5. Because of man's fallen nature, when advancement in knowledge and technology is employed without God, it invariably becomes corrupted and used for evil
6. The ungodly had no concern for eternal things – they set their hearts on, and give their strength unto worldly things
7. God gave us all things to be used for his glory, but man corrupts them and worships the creature more than the Creator
8. Their work and pursuits become idols to which they are devoted
9. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36)

#### **IV. THE WAY OF CAIN IS THE WAY OF SINFULNESS (19,23-24)**

- A. Lamech, the seventh from Adam, receives particular attention
  1. His name means "overthrower, wild man"
  2. He marks the fulness of sin in the Cainite line
- B. Lamech's sensuality
  1. He is the first recorded polygamist, marrying two wives
  2. God's order for marriage was one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24)
  3. Polygamy corrupts the primary intention of marriage; rather than being a union of companionship and mutual support (Genesis 2:18), marriage becomes primarily the means of procreation

4. Though God permitted polygamous marriage even among his saints, this was a deviation from the original design and invariably resulted in negative consequences
5. It has always been the way of Cain to attack marriage and the family through defacto relationships, sodomite marriage, polygamy, divorce
6. Lamech's sensuality is also observed in the names of his two wives and his daughter
  - a. Adah – pleasure, beautiful, ornament
  - b. Zillah – shade. Beautiful hair
  - c. Naamah – lovely for beauty
7. The sensual people of this world focus on outward beauty
8. "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised." (Proverbs 31:30)

#### C. Lamech's savagery (23-24)

1. This is a poetry, the earliest work of poetry extant; it has been called "The Song of the Sword"
2. Evidently Lamech had killed someone, perhaps two men, though the circumstances of the killing are not clear
3. Like Cain, he is also a murderer, and his attitude is one of pride, boasting of the murder
4. In his pride, he scoffs profanely at God stating that if Cain would be avenged sevenfold, he would be avenged seventy and sevenfold if anyone attempted to harm him
5. "Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour." (Proverbs 14:9)
6. What a contrast is this seventh from Adam with the other seventh from Adam, Enoch – the one inflicts death in his

rebellion against God, while the other escapes death in his fellowship with God (5:24)

## CONCLUSION

1. Behold the spread and growth of sin in the world!
2. What began in Eden as a simple act of eating the forbidden fruit has resulted in a world filled with wicked rebels against God
3. When parents make wrong choices and sin, the most devastating consequences are often manifest not in their own lives, but in their children's lives
4. Perhaps the most glaring characteristic of the line of Cain is not what is found in them, but what is *not found* in them or their lives
  - ✓ No thoughts of God
  - ✓ No worship of God
  - ✓ No service of God
  - ✓ No prayer to God
5. "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts." (Psalm 10:4)
6. For most people in the world today, God is not in their thoughts, none seek after God – they are without God and without hope
7. "The men of the world...have their portion in this life" (Psalm 17:14)
8. Examine yourself and consider if you are in the way of Cain
  - ✓ Is God at the centre of my life, guiding my thoughts, decisions and actions?
  - ✓ Am I living for the things of this world, or for the world to come?