# Torah Series - Book of Genesis

## C. Early Human Generations and the Spread of Sin (4:1–5:32)

Cain and Abel, Cain's descendants, genealogy from Adam to Noah.

Picks up immediately after the expulsion from paradise (Genesis 3); no explicit time gap in the text, though at least nine months pass in Genesis 4:1. The cherubim with the fiery sword protect fallen humanity from God and paradise.

**Genesis 4:1 – Adam knew Eve:**

- *Yada* ("knew") emphasizes intimacy and relationship, **not just factual knowledge** or a mere euphemism for sex. Contrasts modern externalized/objective "knowing" with biblical relational knowing (cf. John 17:3 on eternal life as knowing God and Christ).
- Sexuality has a spiritual dimension: husband and wife become "one flesh" (echoing Genesis 2), foundational for later teachings on marriage, divorce, and sexual immorality (ex: Leviticus 18). Commandments against sexual sin address **destructiveness** to relationships with God and others, not arbitrary rules.
- Primary purpose is **intimacy/relationship connection**, beyond pleasure or procreation.
- Eve recognizes each new life as **coming from God** (body from parents, life/soul from God), countering deistic views (ex: God builds the clock then lets it go). Every person, including Cain, is created by God. Sets pattern in Genesis of older/younger brothers and reckoned "firstborn."

**Genesis 4:2 – Cain then Abel:**

- Names are symbolic/role-oriented, not necessarily literal given names (ex: Abel/*Havel* = vanity/emptiness/wind; Seth later = "replacement").
- Cain tills ground like Adam
- Abel shepherds (wool for clothing/shelter; pre-Flood, no meat-eating implied).
- Both roles are respectable and contributory.

**Genesis 4:3-5 – Sacrifices:**

- Sacrifice **assumed** (no prior explicit command detailed)
- "In the process of time" implies established practice/times for offerings, with background details not fully narrated (Genesis not claiming to tell everything).
- God accepts Abel's but not Cain's. Not due to animal vs. grain (grain offerings and wheat-based sin offerings exist later in Torah). Not about "correct procedure" (magical thinking - follow the recipe, guaranteed result)
- **Sacrifices are about hospitality/sharing**, not automatic/magic rituals.
- God retains agency; offerings must be joined with right heart, **repentance**, thanksgiving, and reconciled relationships (cf. Christ's teaching on leaving gift at altar if someone has something against you; Old Testament critiques of empty sacrifices).
- Cain's rejection ties to **his deeds/heart** (foreshadowed in 1 John); unrepentance/resentment means going through motions fails.

**Genesis 4:6-7 – God questions Cain:**

- Hebrew emphasizes: "If you do well, will you not also be accepted?" (Greek translation struggles with archaic/Akkadian terms. LXX: “Have you not sinned if you offer rightly but do not divide rightly? Be still! His recourse will be to you, and you will rule him”).
- **Sin** is personified/demonified as "crouching at the door," like an underworld demon prowling to master/devour (cf. 1 Peter 5:8 on the devil as a roaring lion). Cain must master it instead.
- **Sin** (as a singular force/power, not just acts) entered the world through Adam (Romans 5); now it targets Cain.
- Church Fathers: link this to **the passions**, which make us passive—anger, pride, lust, etc., take control.
- Self-control (fruit of the Spirit) is the struggle for mastery over sin/passions.

**Genesis 4:8 – The first murder:**

- Cain **premeditatedly** lures Abel to the field and kills him—not a sudden rage, but deliberate.
- Sin escalates to **murder** very quickly in human history.

**Genesis 4:9 – Where is Abel?:**

- God asks Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" (God isn’t seeking information, but offering **opportunity for repentance**, as with Adam).
- Cain denies knowledge and retorts, "Am I my brother's keeper?"—ironic, as he was responsible. Complete **lack of repentance**; "high-handed sinner!"

**Genesis 4:10 – Abel’s blood cries out:**

- Another opportunity for repentance.
- "The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground" (cf. Revelation 6:9-11 martyrs crying for justice).

**Genesis 4:11-12 – Cain is cursed:**

- Cain is cursed *from* the ground (escalation from Adam's curse *on* the ground). Earth "opened its mouth" to receive blood; Cain cut off from creation's cooperation—cannot farm successfully; will be a wanderer ("groaning and trembling").
- This breaks relationship with God ***and*** creation (animals). (cf. Saints like St. Seraphim of Sarov who restored harmony with animals).
- Cain as archetypal unrepentant sinner; **first biblical use of "sin"** attached to him. His influence **compounds wickedness** in descendants (per later Jewish texts like Josephus).

**Genesis 4:13-14 – Punishment is too great:**

- Cain complains his punishment is too great ("My guilt is too great… anyone (Dad) who finds me will kill me")—**no repentance**, just fear of consequences ("sorry I got caught").

**Genesis 4:15 – Protective mark:**

- God shows mercy, protects Cain with a "**sign/mark**" (not skin color (racism) or visible tattoo/barcode; God is watching/ensuring no vigilante revenge) → Holy Baptism.

- Vengeance on any killer of Cain sevenfold. God halts cycles of blood revenge common in the ancient world.

**Genesis 4:16 – To Nod:**

- Cain leaves "the presence [face] of the Lord" and dwells in the land of Nod, east of Eden (further away - like Jonah fleeing God's presence/plan).
- Deliberate rejection of God's presence, despite God's ongoing interaction.
- Hebrew idiom of God's "face/presence" (places of special encounter, fulfilled in Christ). cf. Aaronic Benediction Numbers 6:26

**Genesis 4:17-18 – Cain's Genealogy:**

- Cain built the world's **first city**. Urbanization (commerce, trade, etc) **replaced farming** due to his curse from the ground.
- City life was the opposite of garden life as Cain remains unrepentant.
- Enoch → Irad → Mehujael → Methushael → Lamech.
- Trivia: One of the earliest Sumerian cities was called "Irad."
- Cain's evil snowballs into more and more wickedness

**Genesis 4:19-24 – Lamech:**

- Takes **two wives** (Adah and Zillah)—first recorded polygamy, signaling moral decline. Boasts to his wives about killing a man (and a boy) for wounding him, claiming vengeance "seventy-sevenfold" (escalating beyond God's sevenfold protection of Cain). (cf. Jesus' saying about forgiveness "70 times 7" MT 18:22).
- Arrogant, violent "song of the sword"
- Lamech as archetype of escalating human wickedness and blood revenge.
- Cultural achievements in Cain's line (implied):
    - Jabal - Tent-dwellers/herdsmen
    - Jubal - Musicians (harp and flute)
    - Tubal-Cain - Metalworkers (bronze and iron).
- Civilization, technology, and arts develop rapidly—but in a line marked by separation from God, violence, and self-glorification.
- Book of 1 Enoch - Book of the Watchers (6-8) explains these achievements as being **revealed by demons**. Azazel shows them how to make swords, knives, shields, armour, jewelry, makeup, dyes, sorcery, spells, astrology, etc. It is presented as corrupting humanity, speeding up violence & sin that brings about the flood.
- This parallels Genesis 4, but says these aren't human innovations, rather they are angelic secrets dumped on people too soon, causing chaos.
- Parallels Genesis 3 with the devil tempting knowledge (good & evil) to humanity which goes against God's ordering & timing. (Ex: give a 3 year old a loaded gun)
- Common grace allows progress even in rebellious humanity.

**Genesis 4:25-26 – Seth:**

- Adam and Eve have another son, Seth ("appointed" or "placed" as "replacement" for Abel). Seth fathers Enosh.
- "Then men began to call on the name of the Lord" (or "proclaim/call upon" Yahweh)—beginning of **public worship**, invocation of God's name, and **a contrasting godly line**.

- Sets up **parallel genealogies**: Cain's (worldly city/culture) vs. Seth's (line leading to Noah and ultimately **Christ**).
- Thematic contrast: **Two legacies/humanities emerge**—one building a world without reference to God (autonomy, violence, legacy through human achievement), the other calling upon the Lord and preserving the promise of the seed.
- Foreshadows ongoing biblical theme of two seeds/ways (cf. later Cainite influences in Genesis 6).

**Genesis 5:1-20 – Adam to Noah:**
- Marks a new structural section in Genesis via the *toledot* formula (book of the generations).
- Parallels the creation account and shifts focus to the line leading to **Noah and the Flood story**.
- Emphasizes humanity created in God's image/likeness (recalling Genesis 1). "He fathered a son in his own **likeness, after his image**, and named him Seth"
- Longevity in the genealogy (often 900+ years) - Hebrew doesn't have numerals. Greek version is significantly different from Hebrew. These ages don't really add up to give the "age of the earth." Biblical genealogies often intentionally leave out generations for emphasis.
- Parallel ANE material: list of Sumerian Kings are hundreds of thousands of years old! Their math system was base 60 (instead of our base 10). Our modern concept of time is a hold-over from that! (60 seconds per minute, 60 minutes per hour, etc.).
- We don't know what emphasis the longevity numbers are indicating in the Bible. Something is being communicated, but it remains a mystery.
- Pattern of "**and he died**" in Adam's genealogy underscores the **reign of death** (where as Cain's line emphasized **sin**), with each generation reiterating **mortality**.

**Genesis 5:21-24 – Enoch:**
- Adam → Seth → Enosh → Kenan → Mahalalel → Jared → **Enoch**
- Enoch - **Seventh** from Adam in Seth's line. "Enoch walked with God [or 'walked faithfully with God']... and he was not, for God took him."
- "**365 years**" Stands out dramatically from the "and he died" pattern. cf. The 7th Sumerian King in the list was credited with creating the solar calendar. Enoch lived exactly 365 years - the same number of days in the solar calendar (same number in Hebrew & Greek texts). A big part of the book of Enoch is the laying out of a **calendar** (found with the Dead Sea Scrolls).
- Enoch is taken up/"**translated**" without seeing death (cf. Hebrews 11:5). Viewed as entering God's presence/divine council; a model of righteousness and repentance.
- Sets up broader biblical themes of assumption (cf. Elijah) and righteous figures preserved amid wickedness.
- Genealogy traces the godly line of Seth (contrasted with Cain's line in Genesis 4), culminating in Noah (10th gen from Adam). Lamech (*different* Lamech - Noah's father) prophesies **relief/comfort** from the cursed ground through his son, framing the Flood narrative as **God's plan of salvation through Noah** rather than mere judgment on evil.

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