

# Genesis 4:16-26—Civilisation without its roots in God

## Memory Verse

**Genesis 3:15 NKJV (God speaking to satan)**

**And I will put enmity between you [satan] and the woman, and between your seed [the antichrist] and her Seed [the Messiah]; He [the Messiah] shall bruise your [satan's] head, and you [satan] shall bruise His [the Messiah's] heel."**

## Outline: (Genesis 4:16-26)

1. Cain chooses to move away from the presence of God (4:16)
2. Cain's descendants and city are a picture of our modern civilisation—a civilisation without its roots in God (4:16)
3. Cain gets married and builds a city (4:17)
4. The dysfunctional family of Cain (4:18-24)
5. The godly line—The light of the gospel shining in a dark world (vs 25-26)

## **Genesis 4:16-26 NKJV**

**Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. <sup>17</sup> And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son—Enoch. <sup>18</sup> To Enoch was born Irad; and Irad begot Mehujael, and Mehujael begot Methushael, and Methushael begot Lamech.**

**<sup>19</sup> Then Lamech took for himself two wives: the name of one was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah. <sup>20</sup> And Adah bore Jabal. He was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. <sup>21</sup> His brother's name was Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute. <sup>22</sup> And as for Zillah, she also bore Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron. And the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah.**

**<sup>23</sup> Then Lamech said to his wives:**

**"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;  
Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech!  
For I have killed a man for wounding me,  
Even a young man for hurting me.**

**<sup>24</sup> If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,  
Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold."**

**<sup>25</sup> And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, "For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed." <sup>26</sup> And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the LORD.**

## 1. Cain chooses to move away from the presence of God

Genesis 4:16 NKJV

Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden.

v 1 **Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD**: The choice to not repent is the choice to distance ourselves from God—this is a sad but inevitable result of unrepentance. Put simply, our unrepentance or continued disobedience is us making the choice to move away from God. The consequence of being unrepentant is that we miss out on the fullness of joy and the fruit of the Spirit that God promises us that we would have experienced if only we had chosen to humble ourselves, repent of our sin, and so continue to live in His presence. Cain could have repented at any time, but he continued to harden his heart against God.

What does God desire to show or reveal to every person?

Psalm 16:11 NKJV

You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Psalm 16:11 HCSB

You reveal the path of life to me; in Your presence is abundant joy; in Your right hand are eternal pleasures.

Psalm 16:11 NLT

You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.

This is a revolutionary thought. While many people are seeking someone or something in their pursuit of joy, satisfaction, contentment, the truth is that God is the only source of true and eternal joy. But remember, joy and love aren't things that God gives us that we can experience apart from Him. Rather, love, joy, satisfaction, and contentment are the natural and beautiful consequences of choosing to remain in His presence, and so experience *oneness with Him*. This just reinforces what the Bible has said all along—a man is only complete if they are walking in harmony with God. This of course requires humility.

Micah 6:8 AMP

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, and to love kindness and mercy, and to humble yourself and walk humbly with your God?

Lead your heart, not follow it

If our reason for living is to pursue the pleasant emotions of love, joy, and contentment etc, then we will never find them—*worldly pleasures bring short term happiness, but long term emptiness and disillusionment—satan's gifts are not good gifts*. However, if we first choose to sacrifice what we want, choosing to willingly and sacrificially serve God, then all those things will be freely given to us. As Jesus says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

Again, worldly counsellors tell us that we must follow our heart to be fulfilled: But seeking satisfaction from the things of this world will only leave us empty.

- God's way is *delayed gratification*—*short term pain (I deny myself by giving up what I feel like having right now), which leads to long term gain (love, joy, peace).*
- The world's way is *instant gratification*—*short term gain (getting what I want right now) followed by long term pain (an empty and unfulfilled life).*

In the verses below from John chapter 4, the woman at the well could not experience what Jesus wanted to give her, unless she first repented, which she did (see John 4:15-26).

John 4:10, 13-14 NKJV

Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

According to the biblical principle of delayed gratification, the desired emotions or feelings will eventually follow the action. For example, I may not feel any love for my wife, but if I decide to be unselfish and do something nice for her, like wash the dishes or vacuum the floor (especially when I don't feel like doing it), then my feelings towards her will change. I am leading my heart, not following my heart. If you are struggling to love someone, then find opportunities to serve them—your heart attitude towards them will change rapidly.

Jesus did the same thing when He prayed to the Father at Golgotha. Even though He didn't have a sinful nature, He still had to deny or die to what his human nature wanted (to stay alive, the natural and very strong instinct of self-preservation), and instead submit His will to the Father's will, and be willing to give up His life.

Why can't we just live by sight, trusting our heart (our feelings and emotions) to guide us? Why must we, *by faith*, live by the truth found in God's word, making choices based on what we know is right, even if we don't feel like doing it? *Because our feelings are like a broken compass—they will lead us astray.* Because of the fall of man into sin, our emotions have been corrupted, now being motivated by, or originating from, the completely selfish sinful nature we are all born with.

To summarise what we have covered so far:

- ***Selfishness leads to emptiness:*** Being controlled by my sinful nature leads to selfish words, thoughts, and actions that result in shallowness and emptiness. Why? I get what I want now, but it's at other's expense. My selfishness only works to destroy the genuine friendships that I actually require to experience the love, joy, peace, and contentment that I need to be fulfilled.
- ***Unselfishness leads to a fulfilled life:*** Being controlled by the Spirit leads to unselfish decisions and thinking, which results in deep, genuine friendships. These unselfish relationships, with God's being the most important, satisfy our desire for real love, joy, peace, security, belonging, and contentment.

What is required to enjoy God's genuine love, joy, peace, and contentment? Repentance!

We must change the direction, motivation, and purpose of our life—from chasing instant gratification (temporary or passing pleasures) in people and things, to being willing to give up those things so we can pursue a deeper relationship with God. *If we just pursue joy and love, we'll never find them, but if we are willing to give up what we want, and surrender ourselves to God's will, then we will experience God's love and joy in ways that we will never experience otherwise.* This is why Jesus says that to live, we must first die. We must die to or deny the selfish desires of our sinful nature, so that we can live in submission to God and His will—only then will we experience what we are all created by God to seek—the love, joy, contentment and satisfaction that we only enjoy when we choose to walk humbly with our God.

Luke 9:23-24 NLT

Then [Jesus] said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be My follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow Me. <sup>24</sup> If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.

Romans 8:12-13 NLT

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. <sup>13</sup> For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live.

Again, this is a revolutionary concept. Many of us know it intellectually, but few actually put it into practice. If we are to experience the eternal and limitless love, joy, peace, contentment and satisfaction that comes with walking with God, we must first be willing to endure the pain and discomfort experienced when we sacrifice or give up the temporary, fleeting, or passing pleasures of sin. Simply put, we will only experience the beautiful love of God if we are willing to give-up, forsake, or not love the things of this world. We must cease chasing the feeling of being loved, and instead choose to love God by putting Him first; then and only then will the real and lasting feelings come—we must love the giver of the gifts, not the gifts themselves. As Augustine said in his Confessions, "Thou hast formed us for thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in thee."

1 John 2:15-17 AMP

Do not love or cherish the world or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him.

<sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh [craving for sensual gratification] and the lust of the eyes [greedy longings of the mind] and the pride of life [assurance in one's own resources or in the stability of earthly things]—these do not come from the Father but are from the world [itself].

<sup>17</sup> And the world passes away and disappears, and with it the forbidden cravings (the passionate desires, the lust) of it; but he who does the will of God and carries out His purposes in his life abides (remains) forever.

*Sin separates us from God and prevents us from experiencing the joy of His presence*

v 16 **Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD:** Cain thought that he could have what he wanted, and still continue to enjoy the benefits of living in the presence of God. But he learned the hard way that sin separates us from God. What happened to Cain physically when he moved away from the presence of God, is what happens to us in the spiritual when we, like Cain, refuse to repent.

Isaiah 59:2 NKJV

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

Isaiah 59:2 HCSB (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

But your iniquities have built barriers between you and your God, and your sins have made Him hide His face from you so that He does not listen.

Isaiah 59:2 NLT

It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, He has turned away and will not listen anymore.

An example: there are many Christians who choose to live with their boyfriend or girlfriend—they refuse to marry. But just think about what they are sacrificing for the passing physical pleasure of the live-in relationship. They are giving up intimacy and friendship with God for the sake of a few moments of pleasure. But all the while, they try to convince themselves that what they are doing is okay, and pretend to be walking with God. We could say that they are believers who are walking in the way of Cain (see Jude 11)—pretending that everything is all alright with their relationship with God when it isn't—and all so that they can continue living in sin. There are many other examples of Christians who live in sin, but continue to go to church and pretend that everything is okay—the many with sexual or lust addictions, those addicted to alcohol and/or drugs, or video games, or any other idols [especially spiritual pride or reputation] that they may have in their lives.

Matthew 15:8-9 NLT

'These people honour Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. <sup>9</sup> Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.'

Matthew 15:8-9 AMP

These people draw near Me with their mouths and honour Me with their lips, but their hearts hold off and are far away from Me. <sup>9</sup> Uselessly do they worship Me, for they teach as doctrines the commands of men. [Isa. 29:13.]

Isaiah 29:13 NLT

And so the Lord says, "These people say they are Mine. They honour Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. And their worship of Me is nothing but man-made rules learned by rote.

Isaiah 29:13 AMP

And the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near Me with their mouth and honour Me with their lips but remove their hearts and minds far from Me, and their fear and reverence for Me are a commandment of men that is learned by repetition [without any thought as to the meaning]

May we examine our hearts to see if there is any sin in our lives that is preventing us from walking humbly with our God (see Micah 6:8).

What was Cain's other choice? How could Cain have instead drawn near to God instead of running from God?

In Genesis 4:7 God told Cain that he had a choice. We've seen the choice that Cain made, but what would the other choice have looked like, if Cain had chosen to dominate sin instead of letting sin manipulate and control Him.

James 4:4-10 AMP

You [are like] unfaithful wives [having illicit love affairs with the world and breaking your marriage vow to God]! Do you not know that being the world's friend is being God's enemy? So whoever chooses to be a friend of the world takes his stand as an enemy of God.

<sup>5</sup> Or do you suppose that the Scripture is speaking to no purpose that says, The Spirit Whom He has caused to dwell in us yearns over us and He yearns for the Spirit [to be welcome] with a jealous love? [Jer. 3:14; Hos. 2:19ff.]

<sup>6</sup> **But He gives us more and more grace (power of the Holy Spirit, to meet this evil tendency and all others fully). That is why He says, God sets Himself against the proud and haughty, but gives grace [continually] to the lowly (those who are humble enough to receive it).** [Prov. 3:34.]

<sup>7</sup> So be subject to God. Resist the devil [stand firm against him], and he will flee from you.

<sup>8</sup> Come close [draw near] to God and He will come close [draw near] to you. [Recognize that you are] sinners, get your soiled hands clean; [realize that you have been disloyal] wavering individuals with divided interests, and purify your hearts [of your spiritual adultery].

<sup>9</sup> [As you draw near to God] be deeply penitent and grieve, even weep [over your disloyalty]. Let your laughter be turned to grief and your mirth to dejection and heartfelt shame [for your sins].

<sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves [feeling very insignificant] in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you [He will lift you up and make your lives significant].

James 4:6 an amazing verse because it contains an amazing truth: **“That is why He says, God sets Himself against the proud and haughty, but gives grace [continually] to the lowly (those who are humble enough to receive it).”** God has promised that He will give us all the strength we need to overcome the sinful desires of our sinful nature, the only condition being that we are humble enough to receive His help. What a revelation. *The only reason we fall into sin, the only reason we choose to walk away from God, is because of our pride—we just don't want to accept God's help.* God please help us to be humble enough to to recognise our inherent weaknesses, and our constant need for your strength.

**2. Cain's descendants and city are a picture of our modern civilisation—a civilisation without its roots in God**

Genesis 4:16 NKJV

Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of Nod [literally: wandering] on the east of Eden.

Cain's sad and tragic life is a physical picture of a spiritual truth. He ended up spending the rest of his life in the land of Nod (or wandering)—he would never feel at home, never be at peace, and never experience rest—he would be a restless wanderer. As we read the next two quotes, see if you can see the similarities between Cain's society and ours.

“He is to be a wanderer and a vagabond. As such he can find no rest. He is therefore condemned to a perpetual searching for God’s presence, the God with whom he wanted nothing to do and in whom he does not believe, and his very condition keeps him from ever finding him. Whatever he does, he cannot succeed, and that is the hopelessness of it all.” (Jacques Ellul)

“Rootlessness is the basic ingredient, not only of this first and ancient culture but of all secular cultures and especially our own. If ever there was a day in which civilisation was attempting to form itself without God, it is the day in which we live. But never has the restlessness of the ungodly been more evident. ...

[Simone Weil] concluded that *the only cure for uprootedness is a rediscovery of the human being as God’s creature and of God himself as the source of those basic elements without which a proper civilisation cannot function: order, liberty, obedience, responsibility, equality, the right to express one’s opinion, security, private property, truth, and others.* Weil is right. Our roots are in God; and if we will not have God, we are condemned to be vagabonds.

Perhaps this is why our civilisation engages in so much frantic activity—to cover up our lack of roots and consequently our loss of destiny. Years ago the noted English agnostic Thomas Huxley was in Dublin, Ireland, for a speaking engagement, and when it was over he left his hotel in a hurry to catch a train. He jumped into one of the city’s famous horse-drawn taxis and, thinking the doorman at the hotel had told the driver where he was going, simply shouted to the driver to drive fast. The taxi set off at a breakneck pace, but after a few minutes Huxley realized that it was headed away from the station. “Do you know where you’re going?” he shouted to the driver.

“No, your honour,” the driver answered, “but I’m driving fast.”

So is our civilisation, with similar confusion. For many of our contemporaries the situation is as Franklin Delano Roosevelt described it in his first inaugural address: “We don’t know where we are going, but we are on our way.” (James Montgomery Boice)

### **3. Cain gets married and builds a city**

#### **Genesis 4:17 NKJV**

**And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son—Enoch.**

v 17 **And Cain knew his wife:** As we learned previously, in that first generation, brothers had to marry sisters. This was not wrong at the time. It wasn’t until the law of Moses that God said that marrying a sister was wrong (see Leviticus 18:9, 18:11, 20:17, and Deuteronomy 27:22). Remember that the reason that marriages to close relatives are not permitted since Moses’ time is because of the buildup of deadly mistakes in our DNA, which are passed on, in ever increasing quantity, to the next generation. Today, if someone marries a close relative, there are many mistakes in the DNA that will match, leading to a greatly increased risk of genetic diseases and birth defects due to inbreeding. This would not have been a problem at the start with Adam and Eve, or even at the time of Noah because everything started out perfect, i.e. with no mistakes in the DNA. Even Abraham married his half sister.

v 17 **And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son—Enoch:** It only takes one generation, and already we have industry and urbanisation—roads, local government, waste disposal, shops, water supplies, building programs, city planing etc.

Remember that, in the conditions that existed before the flood, with people living to be almost one thousand years old, Adam could have lived to see one million of his descendants.

v 17 **And called the name of the city after the name of his son—and called the name of the city after the name of his son—Enoch:** This is another bad sign for mankind. Cain naming his city after his son reveals his “man-centred” thinking—Cain was not thinking about God at all, but was attempting to build his own empire, his own little kingdom on the earth. Now let’s see how Cain’s family turned out.

#### **4. The dysfunctional family of Cain**

##### **Genesis 4:18 NKJV**

**To Enoch was born Irad; and Irad begot Mehujael, and Mehujael begot Methushael, and Methushael begot Lamech.**

Jon courson suggests some meanings of these names:

- The name Irad literally means “Fugitive” or “Wild Ass.”
- Mehujael literally means “blot out that Yah is El.” In other words, “wipe out the name of God.”
- Methusael literally means “They are dead who are of God.” In other words, “Those who believe in God are dead.” It’s a skeptical, scornful kind of name.”

##### **Genesis 4:19 NKJV**

**Then Lamech took for himself two wives: the name of one was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah.**

Here is the first mention of polygamy, the taking of more than one wife. Another indicator that society is falling apart.

##### **Genesis 4:20-22 NKJV**

**And Adah bore Jabal. He was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. <sup>21</sup> His brother’s name was Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute. <sup>22</sup> And as for Zillah, she also bore Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron. And the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah.**

Here we have music, metal work (which would have also been used to make weapons as well as tools and machinery), agriculture, and the beginnings of a nomadic lifestyle. This is an eye witness account of the history of mankind.

“The people in the city of Enoch had varied occupations. Some followed Jabal and took care of livestock (v. 20). Others learned from Jabal’s brother Jubal and devoted themselves to making and playing musical instruments (v. 21). The followers of Tubal-Cain were metalworkers (v. 22), which suggests the manufacture of farm implements, building tools, and personal weapons. Cain lived in a society that was rich in culture as well as in industry and food production. In the city of Enoch, they had everything but God.” (Warren W. Wiersbe)

##### **Genesis 4:23 NKJV**

**Then Lamech said to his wives: “Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; wives of Lamech, listen to my speech! For I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me.**

**<sup>24</sup> If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.”**

Here we see escalating violence leading to murder—“he hurt me, so I’ll kill him”. Don’t we see this more and more in our own culture: “he cut me off on the highway, or he offended me, so I’ll kill him”.

## **Genesis 4:24 NKJV**

**If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.”**

“The literal rendering of “seventy and sevenfold” is “seventy times seven.” Does that ring a bell? Jesus applied the same mathematics to the subject not of vengeance but of forgiveness (Matthew 18:22).” (Jon Courson)

## **5. The godly line—The light of the gospel shining in a dark world**

### **Genesis 4:25-26 NKJV**

**And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, “For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.”<sup>26</sup> And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the LORD.**

Now the history shifts back to Adam and Eve, who have another son, Seth. Seth then has a son called Enosh. Importantly, the Bible says that it was then that **men began to call on the name of the LORD**. What this shows is that the vast majority of the people living at the time did not worship or believe in God. Yes, they believed in the existence of God, but refused to submit themselves to God—the didn’t believe God.

v 25 **And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth:** Seth is important as it is through Seth’s line or descendants that the Messiah would come.

“Adam and Eve had many children who were not specifically named in the Biblical record, but Seth was worthy of mention because he “replaced” Abel and was the one to whom the promise of a deliverer from the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15) would be passed.” (David Guzik)

v 26 **Then men began to call on the name of the LORD:** God always has those that belong to Him. God always leaves the door open—there is always the opportunity to repent and believe and so be saved. There will always be those who exercise their free choice to love God instead of loving themselves. Let us be of those who choose to call on the name of the Lord and be saved.

“Even in those wicked days, the worship of God was not unknown. Some have called Genesis 4:26 “the first revival,” because it was the first indication of a spiritual resurgence after a clear decline.” (David Guzik)

### **Acts 20:21 NKJV**

**And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.**

### **Romans 10:9-13 NLT**

If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.<sup>10</sup> For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved.<sup>11</sup> As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.”<sup>12</sup> Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him.<sup>13</sup> For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”