

The First Recorded Children and the First Recorded Worship

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[0:00] Jesus is chapter 4 and I'm going to read verses 1-15 and then skip down to verses 25-26.

! The verses I'm going to read here in just a moment teach us.

I'm going to kind of take this systematically. This is a very key chapter in Genesis. And I've said this before on some other occasions as we've looked, especially at chapter 3.

Chapter 4 continues to help us understand why the world is the way it is now. And why we struggle, each of us personally as well, in some of those issues.

And the whole issue of our fallen natures and the depravity that is so easy to see all around us.

[1:10] So this is a key chapter. It also helps us understand that, especially with the last few verses, that from that point on, we're going to now have God's explanation about how he brought about his redemptive plan ultimately through Christ.

We're going to get a little bit of history about early civilization. And then after we get past chapter 4, we're really going to be launched out and see the history that leads ultimately to Christ.

But we're not going to spend all that time on Wednesday night to do that because that would take up the entire Bible. All right, so verses 1 through 15, and then we'll skip down to verses 24 and 25, or 25 to 26, excuse me.

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain and said, I have acquired a man from the Lord. Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel.

Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time, it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord.

[2:26] Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering. But he did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

And so the Lord said to Cain, Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door.

And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it. Now Cain talked with Abel, his brother, and it came to pass when they were in the field that Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, Where is Abel, your brother? He said, I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.

So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you.

[3:33] And a fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth. And Cain said to the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Surely you have driven me out this day from the face of the ground.

I shall be hidden from your face. I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth. And it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me. The Lord said to him, Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.

And the Lord set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him. Then it goes from there to describe Cain and his posterity.

And then we'll skip on down to verses 25 and 26. 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.

This is what Eve said. And as for Seth, to him also a son was born, and he named him Enosh, or Enos. Then men began to call on the name of the Lord.

[4:38] Alright, so that's quite a lot to read. And again, we're not going to get through all of that here tonight. But basically, we could divide this chapter, chapter 4.

And I've not read the entire chapter, but we could divide it really kind of into two parts. Main parts, anyway. You have Adam and Eve's immediate posterity.

That is, the births of three key children. Now, we have their names here given to us. Cain, Abel, and Seth.

And so, that's what we read about primarily in verses 1 through 15, and then 25 and 26. But then, in the latter half of the chapter, we have a record of the earliest civilization on earth.

And specifically, what we have there is a record of Cain's posterity. So, we have just a short little record of Cain's offspring and his posterity.

[5:38] And then, when we get to the end of chapter 4, we're done with Cain. And we take up, like I said a moment ago, Seth and his posterity. Alright, so there's chapter 4, kind of divided into two main parts.

But more significantly, and this we'll get into just a little bit here tonight, but a lot next Wednesday night, Lord willing. Chapter 4 also reveals the doctrine of sin.

We learn a great deal about the doctrine of sin, or specifically, and I've used this word before, the depravity of fallen mankind.

And so, we'll get a little bit, kind of a touch a little bit on that tonight, and then we'll talk a great deal about that next time. Alright, two things I want us to see tonight from the passage that I read.

And the first one is this. We have the first recorded children born on planet Earth. And out of all the children mentioned here, I've said this a couple of times before, Eve had a lot of kids.

[6:44] And that much is clear. And so, the Bible is not giving us an exhaustive list of all the kids that were born to Adam and Eve.

But key children are mentioned here, and we have three of them in this chapter. And they're very key. I do believe that Cain was the firstborn. Firstborn son, anyway.

Though we cannot say anything definitively about that. She may have had some daughters first. I'm sorry, ladies, but the daughters just aren't mentioned. Very rarely are women mentioned in the Bible.

Especially in the Old Testament. Some key women are. And the reason is because they fit in with the genealogy of Christ. And God's plan of redemption.

But generally, it's the men that are recorded. So, Eve may have had some daughters before Cain came along. But I believe Cain was her firstborn son.

[7:49] Alright? So, we begin with Cain. And I want you to notice, first of all, the announcement of Cain's birth. Verse 1. There's a lot to learn from verse 1 about Cain's birth.

Now, Adam knew Eve, his wife. And I don't have to explain to you what the word knew means there. It didn't mean that this was the first time he noticed that she was there.

You know, suddenly he got acquainted with her. You know it doesn't mean that it means something more than that. It pertains, of course, to the marriage relationship and the act of marriage.

And he knew her intimately. And the result was she conceived. Alright? She conceived and bore Cain. Alright? Here's the first son. Cain.

And she said this. She said, I have acquired, or I think the King James uses the word gotten. And literally, that's what she said.

[8:45] I have gotten a man from the Lord. Now, that's a very key statement in verse 1. Now, there's several observations that we need to make concerning the birth of Cain that we can find right here in this verse.

And it would be easy just to pass over these things. Some of them are implied. Some of these observations are a little difficult to prove and may not have any credence at all.

But some things to consider. First of all, Eve, and we can assume Adam, recognized the divine element element in Cain's birth.

The birth of her first son. That's very important for us to see. The divine element in his birth. She spoke, in fact, in Scripture, it's the first time we have a person using, speaking the name of God, Yahweh.

And so she spoke the divine name of God and she spoke his name in reference to Cain's birth. Now, that's important.

[9:57] She said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. And if you notice in your copy of Scripture, Lord is L-O-R-D in all capital letters.

And I've explained this a number of times and you probably already know that that means that this is the English translation of the sacred name for God, Yahweh. Alright, so she uses the name, the sacred name.

And the idea here is, I think we should understand, is that Eve understood and women today and men need to understand even today that the conception of a child is not simply biological. It's not just simply a biological thing. And this is why one of many reasons why the sanctity of the unborn is so crucial.

Because this is not just some fetus there in the womb. It's not just the product of some union between a male and a female, some biological kind of thing.

[11:02] There's a divine element in the birth, conception, birth of all children. And this is what Eve is telling us here. The second thing that we should note here, observe here, is that Eve's words at the birth of her son reveal her intimate relationship with Yahweh.

She had an intimate relationship with Him. And there are a number of reasons why this is clear from what she said. The first one is just the preposition she used.

She used the preposition from, and she used it in the sense of an association, a valuable, significant association between her and God and the birth of this child.

She also did not speak the usual word when referring to the birth of this child. This is kind of interesting. She said, I have gotten or acquired.

Now that may not seem unusual to you. I mean, the word gotten kind of sounds like poor grammar. But, you know, so what's the big deal here, Pastor?

[12:17] Well, the word here, gotten or acquired is the Hebrew word kena. Already you notice that that sounds a lot like the name for the firstborn son.

She said, gotten, acquired, kena, a man from the Lord. She used that word instead of the usual expression or terminology where normally you would say I have bore.

the Hebrew word yalad. I have bore a man from the Lord. Now, what's the point here? She named Cain gotten, or got that from the word gotten, acquired.

So, we have here not just simply here's my first son. I've just borne a brand new son, a new son, and the Lord did all this, but rather, she said, I've gotten from him.

It was a special kind of relationship she had with God and so, again, the idea is not just simply a biological thing happening here.

[13:34] The third thing we need to consider here is that Eve, and this one is rather interesting. I'm not sure that we could prove this necessarily, but Eve may have thought that Cain was the deliverer that God promised back there in Genesis 3.15.

Could be she thought that. I think there's room to think this is the case that we can't really prove it necessarily from the text. The way she referred to the birth of Cain and how she got his name and how she connected that with God and her relationship with Him may point to the reality of this, but she may have thought.

Remember what God said to Eve back in chapter 3.15? He was pronouncing the curses, but he, and this was the curse on the serpent and she said that the seed of a woman will crush the serpent's head.

That was a promise of a deliverer that would come and deal with the problem. The problem of sin, the problem not just of Satan, but the whole problem of being alienated from God.

It was the promise of the Messiah. man. And so, she says, I've gotten a man. In fact, it could be translated, I have gotten a man, the Lord.

[15:12] Meaning, that this Cain is something more than just a human child. That he's actually, literally, from the Lord himself.

That he is the deliverer. And so, the implication, again, being that Cain was born with a divine nature. That he was actually the Messiah.

The one that God had promised would come through the seed of a woman. Specifically, Eve. Now, there's not a lot of textual evidence to support this view, but even if this was what Eve thought and what she meant in the expression, guess what?

She was wrong. She was wrong, wasn't she? And as the next few verses clearly reveal, Eve did not give birth to a Messiah.

She gave birth to a murderer in Cain. Alright? Alright, now let's notice Cain's vocation. Verse 2 and the latter part of verse 2 tells us that it says that Cain was a tiller of the ground.

[16:21] What does that mean? It means he was a farmer. Nothing profound about that. And I don't think I'd have to convince anybody here, but even before we look at what happened with Cain, what he did and so forth, we do need to understand that farming is an honorable occupation.

And in fact, most of my ministry, I have pastored churches that were made up of mostly farmers. And farming is a great occupation, great honorable vocation. And I think some people need to understand that Cain, it wasn't because he was a farmer that Cain went awry.

You know, we kind of sometimes will associate the offering that he brought and say, well, that, you know, comes from the ground and it's a farming kind of thing.

And so that's why it was not acceptable that the only occupation that was acceptable of God was shepherding. Well, it's ridiculous. Of course, that's not true.

Cain was simply doing what God said mankind would have to do in order to survive. Remember, in fact, we can look back at Genesis 3 and verse 17 and see what God said to Adam.

[17:37] He said, then to Adam he said, because you have heeded the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree which I command you not to eat, cursed is the ground for your sake, and toil you shall eat of it.

He's not saying you're not to work it, you have to work it. And he said, all the days of your life you're going to eat of it. Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you and you shall eat the herb of the field in the sweat of your face.

You shall eat bread and so forth and so forth. See, so Cain's just simply taking up an occupation that was necessary. And I think also rewarding, you know, to work with your hands and see things grow and there's anything wrong with that at all.

Now the ground was cursed by God, but not the occupation of farming. Alright, not the occupation of farming. Now, we'll move from Cain then to Abel. We're just kind of running through here, considering considering the birth of these children of Adam and Eve.

And so next comes Abel. And we notice first the announcement of Abel's birth. Verse 2, then she bore again, this time his brother Abel.

[18:50] Alright? Now, since there is no repetition of the expression Adam knew Eve his wife that we have in verse 1, some scholars have speculated that Cain and Abel were twins.

And, you know, that's interesting, but it's not very likely. Not very likely. The name Abel means vapor or vanity.

Sometimes it's translated breath. Breath. But, I think we need to understand the meaning of his name, which, by the way, this is the case with a lot of the names in the Old Testament, that the meaning of the name came after.

Their name kind of took on a meaning because of something that happened in their life or something they did. Not that Eve was somehow a prophetess and named her son a vapor because he wasn't going to live very long.

She didn't have any idea about that. The very word took on the meaning later. We can think of the word Benedict Arnold. His mama didn't name him Benedict because he was going to be a traitor to his nation.

[20:11] But later, because he was such a profound traitor, the very name, Benedict Arnold, carries a new kind of meaning. And that was the case with Abel.

It just means that he had a short life and he certainly did. I don't know how old he was. We don't know how old Cain and Abel were when this took place.

They were grown to a certain point, probably young boys, young teenagers maybe. We don't really know. But Abel didn't live very long. How about Abel's vocation?

Well, verse 2, the latter part of verse 2 and the middle part of verse 2 tells us that he was a keeper of sheep. So what does that make him? Very good.

Get an A. He was a shepherd, of course. And again, before we consider what happened to Abel and the whole dynamic there between Cain and Abel and their offering, we do need to understand that shepherding too is a very honorable occupation.

[21:17] It hasn't always been honored in every culture. It certainly wasn't in the Jewish culture. But it is an honorable occupation. So both farming and shepherding are an admirable vocation.

So the moral character of Adam's sons, Cain and Abel now, was not determined by their occupation. It was determined by their father, Adam.

they were chips off the old block, just like we are, as well. And Adam fell and his sons were caught up in the fall of mankind. So their moral character was due to that.

But also, I would add to that, also due in part to their relationship with Yahweh God. You're going to see quite a distinction between Cain and Abel in that regard.

Alright, how about the third son, Seth? Well, we learn about the birth of Seth in the last two verses of chapter 4, and this is why I read it a moment ago.

[22:22] I'll read it to you again. And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore his son and named him Seth. And this is what she said. She said, For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.

Now, as we're going to see in this chapter next week, not this week, Abel, at this point, has been murdered, murdered by his brother Cain.

And so Abel is in glory with God. Cain is turned over to a reprobate mind and is headed for perdition, hell.

And now, God graced Adam and Eve with a third son. Alright? And so we can make a few observations concerning the birth of Seth. First, Eve still believed God's promise of a deliverer. She still believed that. That is, she believed in the promise of the Messiah. God had promised a deliverer through the seed of a woman. Chapter 3, verse 15.

[23:29] Eve believed God's promise, but she gave birth to a murderer, not the Messiah. Alright? Cain. Now, maybe Abel is the one through whom the deliverer would come, but now Abel is dead, and he's been murdered by his brother.

She knew that God could not bring the Messiah, would not bring the Messiah through Cain, that his promise wouldn't be fulfilled through him. And so, what now? She could have become discouraged, and given up on this, and said, I believe God, and he let me down, and why should I believe him anymore, trust him anymore.

But she didn't do that. Instead, when Seth was born, Eve said, God has appointed another seed, another seed for me, in place of Abel, whom he killed.

And the name Seth means appointed. It means appointed. And so, Eve recognized Seth as the replacement for Abel. not a replacement for Cain, a replacement for Abel.

Second, the promised seed to be born of a woman will indeed come through Seth. That's important for us to note right now.

[24:56] The Messiah will come through Seth. How do we know that? Well, I won't have you turn to it, but I'll quote the last verse of the genealogy of Jesus in Luke chapter 3 verse 38.

You can drop down that passage, but in the last verse of that, because Luke is tracing the genealogy of Christ all the way back to Adam. And this is what he says, the son of Enish, Jesus is the son of Enish, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

So, it's going to be through Seth that the Messiah will come. And I believe Eve recognized that. And God had appointed me another son in the place of Abel.

And then, again, when we get to chapter 5, we're going to be through with Cain, through with that line, and we're going to take up Seth, and the rest of the Bible, the rest of the Old Testament, on into the New, is the unfolding of God's redemptive plan that will ultimately culminate with Jesus. And it starts with Seth and moves on to Jesus. Alright, so these are the first recorded children born to Adam and Eve. The second thing I want us to see tonight, and we'll get into the really sinful stuff next Wednesday night.

[26:22] The second thing is, not only the first children recorded on planet Earth, but now the first record of worship on planet Earth. let's begin with Cain.

We'll just take all three of these guys and see what the Bible says about their worship. And we'll learn something pretty important about it. First of all, Cain, what does the Bible tell us about Cain's worship?

Well, verses 3, and then again in 5, just follow along there, and in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord.

That's verse 3, and then skip to verse 5, but he did not, that is the Lord, did not respect Cain and his offering, and Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

Alright, so here is Cain offering his worship to Yahweh God, but God rejects both Cain and his worship.

[27:24] It's important that you note that. It's very clear in the text. He did not respect Cain and his worship. He rejects Cain and his worship, his offering, and why?

Well, pretty obvious really, and we all ought to know the reason why on this side of the cross now, especially. Cain should have known too though.

First of all, Cain offered only the best of his efforts. And I'm sure they were the best.

I'm sure that what he laid out for the Lord there, it probably looked like a county fair. You know, you've got all the produce there. He probably would have won blue ribbons on all the things he laid out there.

It wasn't that it was a mediocre kind of offering. Quite the opposite. What he brought to the Lord in the way of worship was the very best of his own efforts, his own works, his own labors.

[28:33] Add to that, secondly, that what Cain brought was bloodless. And that is the most significant problem with what he brought.

But the two go together. He brought his own efforts, his own works, and what he brought was blood. bloodless. Cain's worship of Yahweh demonstrated that he saw no need for an innocent substitute to atone for his sins.

He saw no need for that. He just brought the best of what he could do. And God did not accept it. In fact, God rejected it. Now, Cain's offering was what in the Hebrew is called a minka.

A minka, an unbloody sacrifice or offering. And you find this throughout the Old Testament because a minka, by itself or in itself, is a perfectly good gift to give in itself.

An unbloody sacrifice. Nothing wrong with it in and of itself. In fact, a little bit later in the Bible, you're going to find God's people, that God expected his people to give these kind of gifts.

[29:50] Minkas, unbloody offerings. And yet, a minka was not something given or dedicated exclusively to God.

Never used in that way. I'll give you a few instances. In Genesis 32, verses 13 and 20, Jacob gave his brother Esau a minka to appease him, try to make peace between them.

And it was expected of him to do it. So there's nothing wrong with a gift like that, an offering like that. Jacob also gave the Egyptian official in Genesis 43, 11, he gave him a minka.

When Saul was king, he was elected king, certain of his subjects refused to honor him with a minka. And they got a lot of trouble. That's 1 Samuel 10, 27.

Moabites and Syrians honored David with minka. Philistines gave Jehoshaphat minkas. The Amorites did that for king Uzziah.

[30:55] So you find unbloody offerings given, and they were expected and God expected them to be given. And that's fine. And so the problem is this, in king's thinking, his bloodless offering was really little more than just an act of respect.

toward a superior. Because that's how the minka was used throughout the Old Testament. It was an honor or an act of respect for your better or for your authority or your superior.

And that's what came in his thinking. That's what came brought. What he thought he should have done. And the problem is that was not the need of the hour.

God expected. That's not what this was about. Because you see, Cain stood alienated from God because of his sin. And he did not need to appease God.

That's what a lot of people think they need to do is to appease God and please God with things to do and so forth. And maybe if I just show respect to God, then I'll be okay with him.

[32:11] that's not what he needed. Cain needed to be reconciled to God because he was alienated from him. And the only way to do that was through an atoning sacrifice.

An acceptable substitute was what was required. Innocent blood had to be shed in order for Cain to be reconciled to God and that has not changed down through the ages.

This is what God expects. Without the shedding of blood, there's no forgiveness of sin. And so, a gift of his labors, no matter how hard he worked for this, I'm sure he did work hard, a gift of the fruit of the ground, which, by the way, was cursed by God.

These kind of gifts, no matter how good and no matter how noble, these kind of gifts could never serve as a substitutionary sacrifice for sin.

Now, the point is, Cain should have known this. In fact, I maintain that he did know this. He did know this. And how do we know that?

[33:25] Well, God implies this in his response to Cain. Remember, well, in fact, look there, verses 6 and 7, I read it early on, but God said to Cain, he said, why are you angry?

Remember, Cain brought his offering. God did not accept it. The Bible says he became angry and his countenance was fallen and God is saying, you have no reason to be angry.

Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? Why are you in a stupor, a state of depression? Why? He says, if you do well, that is, if you do the right thing, you will be accepted. Implication being that Cain knew the right thing. God would not have said it that way. He knew the right thing, he knew what God required, and he did not do it, did not obey.

He knew it. You say, how did he know it? Well, God had given clear instruction concerning the type of sacrifice that he would accept. He had already given instruction about that.

[34:38] He had given Cain's parents, Adam and Eve, a graphic object lesson of what God required when he slaughtered those animals.

Again, I think they were lambs. And made skins covering for Adam and Eve's sin. I think, again, Adam and Eve were witness to this and saw this. They had a graphic illustration of it.

And he showed Adam and Eve that their fig leaves, the works of their hands, were not adequate, not an adequate covering for their sin.

He showed Adam and Eve this and surely Adam and Eve had taught their sons the proper way to approach God. Cain didn't get it or he refused to get it.

But we know he had it. his brother Abel knew. And so that leads us to Abel. What does the Bible tell us about Abel's worship? Well, verse 4, Abel also brought the firstborn of his flock, lambs, brought a lamb, or lambs, and of their fat.

[35:50] And the Lord respected Abel and his offering. Let me just point out a couple of things about this. The Bible says that God accepted Abel and his offering and that he rejected Cain and his offering.

Now, the separation is made there, but it's not intended to make some kind of separation. It's intended to point out that the two go together that a person's offering, a person's worship, is, and, excuse me, the person, the condition of the heart of the person and the offering that person gives to the Lord, the worship, those two are inseparable.

They go together, and even still today, you know, when we gather for worship in the corporate sense, you can't worship if your heart's not right before God.

And what you offer may look good and look like everybody else's worship, but it's really just the works of your own hands, the fabrication of your own intellect, or whatever it is, but if your heart's not right, see, God puts the two together, the person and the offering, they're inseparable.

Hebrews 11.4 tells us why Abel's worship was accepted. Do you remember what it says there? The first key word in that verse is faith.

[37:31] By faith, Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. That is a sacrifice that was acceptable.

Now, how was Abel, I started to say, how was Abel able to do that? By faith. What kind of faith was it?

An obedient faith. He was obeying God and his sacrifice was accepted because it was more excellent, more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous.

He bore witness to the reality of his heart. And God testifying of his gifts and through it being dead still speaks. In fact, remember God said to Cain, the blood of Abel speaks.

It's still speaking, but it's still speaking today concerning the acceptable sacrifice, the more excellent sacrifice. And so his faith was an obedient faith.

[38:34] Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. By the word of God. Third thing that I would say about Abel and his worship, that when the two brothers came to worship Yahweh, Abel's standing before God was exactly the same as Cain's.

They were both alienated. Both were offsprings of Adam, and therefore fallen. Both then stood alienated before God because of their sin, but only Abel responded with obedient faith, and Cain did not.

I'll show you just a couple of passages in the New Testament that speak of Cain, and in distinction with Abel. In 1 John chapter 3, and verse 12, not, I'll start with verse 11, but this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain, who was of the wicked one, that says something pretty stark about Cain, of the wicked one, and murdered his brother, and why did he murder him?

Because his works were evil, and his brothers righteous. Abel's works were righteous. Now what do we know about their works?

The Bible only tells us one thing about their works, their worship. Cain's worship then, the implication is, Cain's worship was evil, because of the work of his own hands, his own efforts.

[40:15] Abel's works, his worship was righteous, because he offered a more excellent sacrifice, the one that God had prescribed.

I read one other passage to you, in Jude, verses 10 and 11, that these speak evil of whatever they do not know, and whatever they know naturally, like blue beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.

Woe to them, for they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

Now, the point of that verse is that Cain's numbered with Balaam and Korah, and so the pronouncement on Cain is quite clear.

Thank you.