

Genesis 4:11-24

How To Have Peace

Europe is becoming a very secular place. General secretary of the United Reform Church in Britain said, "in western Europe, we are hanging on by our fingernails. Europe is no longer Christian." French political theorist Marcel Gauchet writes of recent European history as "Characterized by the collapse of what remained of the religious pillars of heteronomy (divine rule) and the triumph of the metaphysical principle of human independence."

In other words, "We got rid of God and now we run the show."

There was a long-term European Values Study (EVS) which highlighted the degree to which Europe has abandoned its Christian heritage. For one thing, few people go to church in Europe. A mere 21 percent of Europeans hold religion to be "very important." in France it's around 10 percent.

Not only do Europeans not go to church very often; only about 40 percent believe in heaven and only half that percentage in hell. Approximately 70 percent of Swedes reject the existence of sin.

Today the "civilized" nations of this world seem bent on becoming secular societies. All over our globe people are trying to live secular lives as if the only God that exists was man himself

Of course, this isn't a recent phenomena. The book of Genesis, which means beginnings, takes us all the way back to the place and time where this secular culture got its start.

Genesis 4 exposes this culture in its earliest forms and begins to trace the effects of sin on humanity.

The early chapters of Genesis are very logical and orderly. They include the account of God's creation of the heavens and the earth and Adam and Eve. After this we see Adam and his wife being tested and failing the test.

They fall into sin and so we are shown the effects of sin on them, and then the effects of sin on their offspring, and ultimately on the whole human race. That's really why chapter 4 has been written; to show us the consequences.

It's truly amazing how much our whole culture is influenced by humanity's desire to be free from God and His influence.

Julian Huxley, the famous biologist and evolutionist wrote a book entitled *Evolution in Action*. He states, "Without some knowledge of evolution one cannot hope to arrive at a true picture of human destiny."

And then he uses supposed evolutionary "facts" to show that man's only hope for the future is to recognize how biologically, socially, and mentally human beings have progressed and are progressing. He postulates an "evolutionary humanism" as he calls it.

A religion based upon the development of man.

He used the process of biological evolution as a pattern for humanity's cultural evolution. Huxley happened to be the Director General for the U.N. agency UNESCO for many years and tried to apply his principles to make the world a better place to live.

In trying to pull together the physical development and social development of man he first identified 3 stages of the physical evolution of man.

1. Pre-men: pre-human apes.
2. Proto-men bigger brains, fire, tools, clothing and some social rituals
3. The fully human phase: man in the proper sense of the word.

"This single group of individuals eventually gave rise to the whole of humanity, with its tribes and nations, its civilizations and empires. But it had to await its evolutionary opportunity."

In other words mankind developed when the time was right. And even though the biological side of evolution has seemed to stop, the social side is developing in its proper time.

Huxley then draws on all that to say there is hope for the human race. We just need to understand that our physical evolution had to have the proper circumstances and setting to take place and so does our social evolution.

As the "New Republic" said in their review of the book "He has brought renewed hope and faith that the frontiers are not all closed; that a new world does lie ahead."

“Man is part of a great development, a “self-transforming process, constantly building its future by transcending its past.”

And so Huxley closes by saying, “Any picture which leaves out the facts of evolution would be an incomplete and untrue picture, and will, sooner or later, lead us astray in our actions.”

Now, Huxley wrote *Evolution in Action* over 50 years ago. And unfortunately he wasn't just a lonely voice crying in the wilderness that no one listened to but his viewpoint has permeated our thinking.

And even though most people haven't thought it through to the extent Huxley has, they live with the idea that the human race has developed and progressed for the better and so societies' hope lies in human development. Just give us the right time. Just give us the right circumstances and we will overcome every obstacle.

The Book of Genesis shows us that just the opposite is true. In fact, we couldn't possibly have two more conflicting viewpoints on human nature.

The truth of human nature and our hope lies in understanding that we're a creation of God. It lies in understanding how we're fallen, not how we've evolved.

Our failure to deal with our most pressing problems is rooted back in these opening chapters of Genesis. It is only here that we can grasp what has shaped and influenced human beings.

Open your Bible to Genesis 4

The final half of Genesis 4 along with chapter 5 gives us an intriguing picture of the antediluvian world; the world before the flood. This is almost the only information we have about that first human civilization, which was later so completely destroyed by the great flood that practically nothing remained to tell us about it.

Archeology deals almost entirely with post flood era deposits. What happened before and what the world was like has to be learned through the pen of Moses.

The little bit we are told leaves no doubt that things were very different than they are today. We saw how in the original creation much of the earth's waters were stored

above the atmosphere in the form of a vast blanket of water vapor, which acted as a huge greenhouse for the earth.

This produced a relatively mild, uniform climate everywhere, all year long with no wind or rainstorms. There was more land area than today and it was covered with lush vegetation.

The climate, along with the radiation filtering effect of the water canopy, added to the purity of the original human genetic system and the absence of disease producing organisms, enabled people to live for several hundred years.

We are told in Chapter 5 that Adam lived to be 930 years old. One writer has estimated that if during the several hundred years that Adam lived only half of the children that would normally be born grew up (and probably they all would have), and if only half of those who grew up got married (and probably they would all marry) and if only half of those who married had children (and probably they would all have children), that even at that half, half, half, rate Adam would have lived to see more than 1,100,000 of his own descendants.

In order to get this process of multiplication started of course, at least one of Adam's sons had to marry one of Adam's daughters.

Probably in that first generation they were brother and sister marriages. In that early time, there were no mutant genes in the genetic systems of any of these children, so that no genetic problems would have resulted from close marriages.

2500 years later, during the time of Moses those genetic mutations had accumulated to the point where those unions were very dangerous and so God outlawed them.

You know, when your up in the mountains you can often drink from a stream but by the time the water gets down to the Magothy or the Severn it's too polluted to drink.

Human beings, in their original condition, would have been uncontaminated. Very different than today.

Now as we begin to study the second half of Genesis 4 we need to realize that people who are intelligent, creations of God, multiplying and beginning to fill the earth, is what God is describing.

The story of Cain and Abel began this chapter.

Abel had come to God offering the sacrifice of blood that God had requested. God wanted a sacrifice to show his hatred for sin, to show the fact that sin's wage is death, and to show that a substitute could pay the price.

Cain tried to come to God with his own works, the beautiful fruit of the field which he had grown and arranged to present to God.

God rejected that offering because it wasn't what He had asked for. It was a false approach to worship. Cain became angry at his brother because God had accepted his brother's sacrifice and he committed the first murder. Cain killed his brother Abel.

I. God Pronounced Judgment on Cain

We can be so deluded we think that there's no consequences to our sin. Cain found out the hard way about consequences.

Read 11,12

Actually, God was being lenient at this point. His judgment certainly could have been a lot harsher.

But notice Cain's reaction in verse 13. **Read 13**

There was no remorse, no sorrow for taking the life of his own brother, no desire to give the right sacrifice. All he says is "God, this is too tough." He pitied himself and blamed God. 'God, I can't believe you're doing this to me!'"

In verse 14 Cain continues... **Read 14**

Cain was sad but he wasn't repentant. He felt bad about being caught and suffering God's judgment but he didn't see his sin as God saw it.

Read vs 15

In grace to Cain, and as a warning to others, God set his mark on Can.

I. God Pronounced Judgment on Cain

II. Cain Willingly Left The Presence Of The Lord

Read verse 16

Our pride can be a powerful force in our life. God gave Cain one chance after another to come back to him in faith. The opportunity to offer the proper sacrifice and to claim God's forgiveness was there right to the very end. But Cain, who never would admit to his own sin, willingly renounced God and God's ways. He was content to forego the privileges of forgiveness, rather than humble himself and admit that he was wrong.

He walked away from Adam's family and the altar and any semblance of the fear of God.

Cain willingly went out from the presence of God and we never read that he came into it again.

When you know Jesus Christ as Savior and all the joy that comes from having peace with God it is hard to imagine anyone walking away from his mercy and yet we all know people and have heard the truth and then willingly gone out from the presence of the Lord.

II Thessalonians 1:9 says that hell is *everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord*. It's a perpetual banishment from God's mercy and comfort. That is the choice of everyone who rejects God's plan of salvation. That's the choice that Cain made.

The stress that I see in God's pronouncement against Cain is found in the idea of being a wanderer. He and Abel offered their sacrifices somewhere near the Garden of Eden. Now he was to leave Eden altogether.

Cain traveled eastward to the land of Nod and interestingly the name Nod is derived from a Hebrew root that means, "to wander to and fro."

Cain had rejected God. He left his only source of true peace and was condemned to restlessness.

Adam and Eve suffered something similar, when they were cut off from Eden. But their source of peace was still God. They remained close to the presence of God.

It was a lot different for Cain. He had rejected God and therefore was restless and had no peace in his life.

It has been said that God created man with a “God shaped” vacuum inside and nothing else can fill that void.

Cain was to be a wanderer and a vagabond. He was a man who couldn’t find rest. He was condemned to a perpetual search for peace, but he didn't want anything to do with God.

When you don’t want God in your life you cut yourself off from the only thing that can bring real peace.

But now all this sounds very contemporary doesn't it? If there was ever a day in which civilization was trying to form itself without God, it is the day in which we live. We have lots of churches in this country and people who say they believe in God but all too often they’re only paying homage to a god of their own invention.

But at this same time never has restlessness been more evident.

People grasp at one thing after another to try and find peace. But our peace comes from God, and if we won't have God, we are condemned to restlessness.

Maybe that’s why our western civilization is always so busy. People have to have every moment filled up with all kinds of activity, always on the go to mask that lack of peace, and that loss of purpose in life.

Well in verse 16 we see Cain willingly going along with the part of God's judgment he thought he liked; leaving God's presence.

But, in verse 17 we find him trying to oppose the part of God's judgment that he didn't like; the wandering loneliness.

I. God Pronounced Judgment on Cain

II. Cain Willingly Left The Presence Of The Lord

III. Cain Tried to Oppose God’s Judgment

Read Verse 17

The age old question from the skeptic is “Where did Cain get his wife?” The answer, as we have already seen is, he married a sister or a niece. The population was growing at this time, and we are not told how much time had elapsed between the events of verse 17 and what went before.

I think it is significant that as Cain goes out as this restless wonderer he has a child and builds a city. He is going to end his loneliness by surrounding himself with people.

He's going to defy God's judgment and find peace by staking his claim in this world. He chose a settlement in this world as his rest forever.

He tried to stop that restless feeling by getting busy and by investing himself in a house and family.

There was an article in the Washington Post magazine that reminds me so much of Cain's futile search for peace.

It was about families in our area that put their small children in day care centers and then husbands and wives work one, sometimes several jobs, knocking themselves out to buy a big house and the things they think they want. And the comments of the parents just struck me as so empty.

People striving to have what they think will make them happy and then getting those things only to find they don't give the peace they had hoped for.

I can just see Cain laboring away to divert his thoughts from considering his misery and to drown out the voice of his guilty conscience with the sounds of axes and hammers.

It is interesting to note that the word translated “built,” in verse 17, is actually indefinite and means, “was building.” A number of commentators have taken from that that even though Cain was busy trying to defy God and oppose his judgment of wandering, he eventually moved on without ever completing the job.

We don't know for sure but maybe he left his son Enoch there to complete the job of building.

It is interesting that one of the identifying marks which evolutionary anthropologists use to designate the emergence of a “stone aged” culture into a civilized society is the development of cities.

According to God's word, the first city (however small and simple it might have been) was built in the very first generation after Adam.

There was no million year development, people carrying clubs, and grunting and pulling their women around by the hair. Originally man was intelligent and very capable of doing many things.

I. God Pronounced Judgment on Cain

II. Cain Willingly Left The Presence Of The Lord

III. Cain Tried to Oppose God's Judgment

IV. Cain's Descendants Follow In His Footsteps

Read Verse 18

When God gives a genealogy in the Bible, He only includes the people that are in the line leading to someone important. Certainly each of these men had other children but we are only told about those leading to this guy Lamech, who seems to epitomize Cain's attitude of open rebellion. He seems to represent the secular society of his day.

It's significant that two of the names in verse 18 Mehujael and Methushael contain the word for “God” in them. The ending “el” is the singular of “elohim.” It shows that they were still aware of God's existence but kind of like Cain was with his sacrifice. He recognized God but wanted things his way not God's way. Like a church today that might have beautiful liturgies, words and music, but no promised of forgiveness, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Well, Lamech is really the center of things here and in verse 19 we read...

Read verse 19

We're hearing a whole lot about polygamy in the news these days. We have polygamy in Islam. We have polygamy in cultic offshoots of Christianity.

God had established the principle of monogamy in Chapter 2. *A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.* It is clear that

that was to be God's ordained principle of marriage.

Lamech was the first polygamist in history.

His wives names are interesting. Adah means “to ornament or deck oneself out.”
Zillah means “to be or grow dark, shade”

Then Lamech had some children.

Read verse 20 - 22

Even though Lamech sinned by taking two wives he was able to have children by both and his children turned out to be famous in their generation. Not for their holiness or their love for God, but for their ingenuity.

Certainly nothing these guys came up with was sinful or wrong in and of itself. In fact, the use of the arts and manufacturing and so on are vitally important. But you'll notice a striking difference between this genealogy of Cain's descendants and the ones that name men like Enoch who walked with God, or Noah the righteous servant of God.

Here was a father of shepherds and a father of musicians but not a father of the faithful. Here was one who could teach about working with brass and iron, but no one taught the knowledge and truth of God. There's no mention of fearing God. There's no mention of serving God.

Now, clearly there is nothing wrong with Christians participating in art and music. The truth is, Christians have abandoned the arts and we're reaping the results.

We just added Creative Paradox to our missionary family. Creative Paradox is a ministry to artists. Darien Heather will be speaking on June 22 about some of the unique ways that Christians are using the arts to speak to this generation.

The problem comes when people enjoy the gifts but ignore the giver, or want to worship and serve the creation more than the Creator.

It was this reversal of values that characterized Cain's civilization. This was truly a secular society. Again notice these weren't some kind of “pre-men” living in the bush

and walking on their knuckles. These were intelligent human beings who used their brains to make a better life for themselves in the world.

If there is one word that seems to capture the underlying attitude of this first secular society it is pride.

We saw what pride did to Cain. He refused to come God's way. He refused to accept the fact that he needed a sacrifice. He refused to admit that his little brother was right in his offering and in the end he was too proud to admit that he had done wrong in murdering Abel.

Now we're given a genealogy that lists Cain's descendants and most of it is taken up telling us about Lamech, a man full of hateful pride.

Read verses 23 & 24

Lamech was a murderer just like Cain, only he went a step farther. Cain denied he was responsible for his crime, Lamech arrogantly defended his crime. In fact, he even bragged using poetry. You don't pick up the poetical aspect easily in English but actually this is the first Hebrew poetry we find in the Bible.

Lamech is boasting about his violence in killing a man who merely wounded him.

And what he's saying in verse 24 is that he's better able to take care of himself by murdering others, than God was able to take care of Cain.

Donald Barnhouse, in his book entitled "God's Grace" describes Lamech as saying: "I have been offended and I have judged that offence as a mortal one, punishable by death.

Because the God of the universe, who is supposed to be running things, didn't run them my way, but permitted someone to offend me, I have erased that offender from the face of the earth. And no one can call me into account. God put a mark on Grandfather Cain in order to protect him, but I am perfectly able to take care of myself."

See Lamech says in effect, "Listen, if God promised a 7 fold vengeance on anyone killing Cain, I guarantee a 77 fold retribution on anyone who ever touches me."

Cain's descendants lived in a truly humanistic culture without God.

Barnhouse also wrote: "Ponder the white space between verses 24 and 25. The story of Cain's family ceases abruptly and verse 25 announces the birth to Adam of another son whose line is to forward the purposes of God. Lamech and his civilized but lawless family are never heard of again. In the space that follows his song of the sword, we must see the rising waters of the flood which destroyed them all."

"They were ungodly and their ungodliness brought the just recompense of its reward. They were blotted out from under heaven in order to teach us that the day will come when the judgment fires of God will do the same for the entire creation."

"God's evaluation of the godlessness in this period is found in Genesis 6:5 where we are told that man's wickedness had become "very great" and that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

"And yet we need to remember that the white space between the two verses points to more than just judgment. It also begins to list the names of those who didn't merely adapt the names of God in their names in an empty religious way, but who truly loved God and "called upon the name of the Lord for salvation."

"Their history began with righteous Abel and Seth and all those listed in Genesis chapter 5. It continues down through godly Noah and his descendants. It was lost from sight for a while, but it surfaced again in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

"You can see it in the godly in the history of Israel, at times there was a large number, at other times just a few."

"At the time of the birth of Christ that line of history was still moving on. There was Mary & Joseph, Zechariah and Elizabeth, Simeon and Anna, and those who were "looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem."

"Today it is seen in millions of people who have turned in faith to Jesus Christ as Savior."

Our hope isn't found in our secular society.

We can't pull ourselves up by our own boot straps because at our very best we're like Lamech's family able to handle the environment but not able to handle life itself.

We're able to advance technologically, but not able to deal with our own spiritual and moral shortcomings.

There is a place of peace for men and women boys and girls. It is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Only God is able to meet the restless longing of man's heart.

Do you now Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?

Jesus died so that the wages of sin might be paid. Jesus rose from the dead to give life to all who call upon Him. He lives today so that we would find rest and peace in our troubled world.