

**Series: God & Cain #1017**

**Title: Genesis 4.1**  
**Cain's Name**

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. We return now to the first Book of the Bible, Genesis. We are still in verse one of Genesis chapter 4. And thus far we have had an introduction to the text, finding that God is the Storyteller. And then we have talked about two eternal truths that pop out of the verse and speak directly to our context as Bible believing Christians in this world. The first is that *the sole* context for sexual intercourse is marriage between one man and one woman. The second is that human life begins at conception.

Genesis 4, verse 1 begins, **“Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain...”** There it is: sexual intercourse (the man had relations with his wife Eve) and life at conception (and she conceived). Notice the uninterrupted flow: there is marriage, then there is sex, that is followed by conception of human life, which is then followed by birth. I believe this is the pattern, designed by God, the pattern that is to be repeated forever. That is, in this very early chapter of the Bible we find the will of God for the rest of Scripture and beyond Bible times right into this very day. And this is God’s will for all people, not only for those of us who believe in His Son Jesus. Marriage, sex, conception of human life and birth, in that order, applies to all people for all time.

By the way, this is what happens when we read the Bible systematically, taking it as it is written, in the order in which it is written and preserved for our instruction. This is why I think preachers ought to preach the Word chapter-by-chapter and verse-by-verse, word-for-word. And not by topic. Because when we preach or teach and learn the Bible in this way then the Spirit of God has a way of drawing out of the text practical matters pertinent to what is going on in the society around us, and yes, in our churches and in our personal lives as well.

When I set out to study Genesis chapter 4 and Cain’s life with God, I did not realize I would spend the first couple of weeks dealing with sex and sexuality and life that begins at conception, abortion, and the like. But then as we got into the words, it became apparent that this is exactly what the Holy Spirit was drawing to our attention. And these “topics,” if you will are where we placed our application. So, I encourage you: read and study in the Bible in a systematic, orderly way and encourage your pastor, minister, and teachers to do the same. If we will, as we have seen, there will be plenty that speaks to minds, hearts and souls in our time.

Speaking of which, we are not done with verse 1 yet. You will notice this if you have your Bible there with you and/or when you look at it later. Let me read Genesis 4.1 again in its entirety and then highlight what we will talk about beginning today. **“Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, ‘I have gotten a manchild with *the help of the Lord.*’”**

Let’s begin with the name Cain. What does Cain mean? The consensus among scholars is this: possession, to get, to have gotten, to acquire, and to gain. Cain is Eve’s possession. Eve got Cain from the Lord. She acquired her son, she gained her new born son. And this relates to what she then says, “I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord.” Therein you hear the word “gotten,” which relates back to the boy’s name meaning to get, to have gotten, to possess, to acquire, and to gain. That is what the name Cain means.

The name Cain was given to him by his mother most likely at the time of his birth. And it is common for a child to be named in accordance with an emotion felt at the time of an event. There are several examples of this in Genesis. I thought it might interest you to highlight a few of these to demonstrate how mothers and fathers, from the beginning, named their children. I know that sometimes this is a source of debate and even conflict in families. And in some cultures names matter more than in other cultures.

We have friends who did not name their first child for *months* because they could not decide on a name! And that little girl is now going off to university this fall and we still tease her about this. However, her name fits her just right. So, here is some encouragement for those parents listening in who wonder how to name your babies.

Over in Genesis chapter 17 God said this about Sarah (Abraham's wife, who was ninety years old), in verse 16 God said, "**16 I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her.**" Old Abraham found this downright funny, and verse 17 of Genesis 17 says, "**17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, 'Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?'**" Now listen to verse 19. This is Genesis chapter 17 and verse 19, "**19 But God said, '...Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.'**" And Isaac means, "he laughs." "He laughs."

In this case God named Isaac, the name God chose, in direct relation to his father Abraham's laughter. The name fit the emotion at the time of the event of God revealing His plan to Abraham.

By the way, while we are still in Genesis 17, you may remember that God changed Abraham's name as an adult. In Genesis 17, verse 5, God said, "**No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.**" The name Abram meant "exalted father," but the name Abraham means "father of a multitude." See what the Lord did there? He names according to what will take place in the life of Abraham (the upcoming events of his life).

Let's do one more. If you turn all the way over to Genesis chapter 41 and find your way to verses 51 and 52, you will read this in Genesis 41, verses 51 and 52, "**51 Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, 'For,' he said, 'God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household.'** **52 He named the second Ephraim, 'For,' he said, 'God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.'**" And any good Bible will have a note there that tells us Manasseh means, "making to forget." The name Manasseh, meaning making to forget, corresponds to the emotion and the events of how God made Joseph forget all his trouble!

And the name Ephraim means, "fruitfulness." The name Ephraim, meaning fruitfulness, corresponds to the emotion and the events of how God made Joseph fruitful in the land of what was his affliction.

In the Bible it is common for a child to be named in accordance with an emotion felt at the time of an event. There are several examples of this. We've looked at some – just some – in the Genesis. Out of Eve's experience of giving birth to Cain she so named him that because she now possessed him, she had gotten, she acquired, and she gained. Hence, that is what Cain's name means. And I hope this is clear to you.

The text, in Genesis 4, verse 1 is complete when Eve says this, "**I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord.**" This is an important phrase for us to understand. And so let's save this for tomorrow and take it up then. Be with us.

With the time we have remaining today, I just want to share some encouraging emails that I have recently received from some of you. I have responded to each one, but I thought these will be an encouragement to all of us, as we hear how God is using, well, how God is using *God Is*. Charlie has written asking for the series we did on the providence and sovereignty of God, and then he adds, "Thanks again for your teaching God's word and your ministry." Thank you, Charlie. What a wonderful encouragement this is to me. And I hope you benefit from hearing more about the providence of God.

Linda emailed me to say, "Just a quick note to let you know that I enjoy listening to your program. I appreciate your teaching style. Very simple, but at the same time, very in depth." Thank you, Linda. That may give new listeners, just trying out *God Is* a feel for how you have received the teaching that I provide, by God's grace, each weekday.

Cynthia also sent me an uplifting email saying, "I wanted to say thank you for your show. I enjoy listening to you read the word of GOD." You might hear what Cynthia said and think, "That's it?" Let me tell you something, friends, what Cynthia said so succinctly was a great motivation for me, that very day, to continue to press through on my work preparing this broadcast and podcast for her and for you.

When you write, you do not need to use a lot of words. Something brief, by email or letter, is just fine. If you want to say more, you can, but what Charlie, Linda, and Cynthia shared was so very uplifting. And that reminds me, have you written to me yet? I would like to hear from you. Is this ministry a blessing in your life? Write, and tell me how. Then join me again tomorrow for God Is.

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