

Series: God & Cain #1010

Title: Genesis 4.1

Cain's Parents

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. Welcome back to our walk through Genesis 4 with the apt title, *God and Cain*. We begin now in Genesis 4, verse 1 by meeting again Cain's father and mother. They are Adam and Eve. I am reading Genesis 4, verse 1, "**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 pause the reading here so that we can discover, right at the start of the chapter, something that's very practical and applicable to our lives here and now. On *God Is* I believe it is important to draw out of the Scripture that which speaks directly to the context in which we live. And this one verse holds two truths that are appropriate for our instruction.

And by "our" I do not only mean Christians. I do not only mean those of us who love and serve Christ and believe and practice what the Bible says. By "our instruction" I am referring to everyone. That is, Genesis 4, verse 1 speaks loudly and clearly to our whole society and to every person therein. I understand this broadcast and podcast is not going to be heard by the general public, nevertheless what is said here is the content everyone desperately needs to both receive and believe. That is not because *I* am the one saying it, but rather because *God* is the One saying it, through His written Word.

So, the audience for this message goes beyond those of you who will quickly and fervently agree with what is said. God's Word is for *everyone* and the two truths we are highlighting now are essential for *everyone*. You will see what I mean as we move along.

To get at these two truths, let me give you a sneak preview of what is coming in this story of God and Cain. And this is not really a secret because we've read the text a couple of times this week already. What we will find is that God requires something from Cain. Cain then gives God something, but what he gives is not what God required. And when the Lord tells Cain that this is unacceptable, Cain gets mad. He gets angry *with God!*

God then urges the repentance of Cain. He tries to persuade Cain to change his ways, to return and do what God commanded. But Cain does not repent. He does not change his ways. And so God judges him. The Lord penalizes the man Cain. Well, well, well... if we think Cain is the only one who responds to the Living God this way, we do not understand others *and* we do not understand ourselves.

In Genesis 4, verse 1 we encounter two requirements that God makes of us, but that by far the majority of people within our modern culture reject. And when God says that our rejection of His requirements is unacceptable, we get mad. We have the audacity to get angry *with God!* And God then urges our repentance. We do not repent. And so God judges us. The Lord penalizes us. This is history repeating, sadly. And remember by "us" and "we" I am speaking of people in general, certainly not for those of us who do what God commands.

And what are God's requirements found in verse 1? The first is that sexual intercourse always be only in the context of marriage between one man and one woman. The second is that human life begins at conception. The very instant a baby is conceived in the mother's womb, that baby is *a person that lives*. And we will talk about this next week.

Both sex in the context of marriage and human life at conception are written about in Genesis chapter 4 and verse 1. We will explore. Let's look at sex within marriage first. The chapter begins, "**...The man had relations with his wife Eve...**" Simply put Adam and Eve engaged in sexual intercourse. We know this from the context, of course, but initially from the Hebrew word used here, the translation of which is "had relations with." And the word used here means, "to know." Or, we could translate it "to become aware of."

Adam knew Eve. Adam became aware of Eve. This is fitting. They are, after all, husband and wife. And, from the very beginning until the very end of all time, God's will is that husband and wife enjoy the good pleasures of sex and as a result sometimes there is a pregnancy. You may remember Genesis 1, verse 28?

“²⁸ God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth...’” If Adam and Eve are going to fulfill God’s command, then sex will need to be a part of their marriage. And so, here in chapter 4 Moses tells us plainly, “...The man had relations with his wife Eve...”

Is this the first time they made love? We do not know. I will say the Hebrew does not necessarily indicate this was the first. They could have enjoyed sex in the Garden. That’s certainly possible. There was nothing prohibiting them from doing so. All we know is that this is the first time Moses mentions it.

By the way, this Hebrew word is used again in Genesis 4 (twice). Genesis 4.17 reads, “¹⁷ **Cain had relations with his wife and she conceived.**” And Genesis 4.25 reads, “²⁵ **Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son.**” “Had relations,” as the New American Standard Bible translates it means sex.

You say, “OK, we got it.” Yes, but now I want to say three things about this. First, please note this Hebrew word is used *only* in reference to sex within marriage between a man and a woman. You heard that in the three instances given within Genesis 4. Genesis 4.1, Adam and his wife Eve had relations; Genesis 4.17 Cain and his wife had relations; and Genesis 4.25, Adam and his wife Eve had relations again. All three times this word is used in reference to sex within marriage.

Second, this word is only used in the case of sex between human beings. This will not be the word used for sex between animals. That tells us something important. Sex between husband and wife is not only a physical act; it is also a conscious act. For animals sex is only physical, but not so for humans. Listen to what a pastor and author of a very insightful commentary on Genesis says. This is Robert Harbach (quote), “The word ‘to know’ indicates a personal, free act of the will, and not the work of blind, natural impulse or instinct. It is an act based on moral self-decision, that is, on intelligent, conscious choice (*Studies in the Book of Genesis*, 97).”

Sex between man and woman is very different than sex between animals, at least according to God’s design. But that is lost today in a culture that demands sex be on impulse or instinct among people. Sex is on demand, and whenever one wants it, one gets it – *however* one wants sexual fulfillment, one gets sexual fulfillment. That is the context in which we now live. People really are behaving like the animals. And I am not laughing as I say that, because it’s not a laughing matter. This is completely contradictory to the will of God. And I will say more about this in a moment.

But let me get this third insight on your mind. The sex between Adam and Eve was monogamous. Adam enjoyed sex with his wife, Eve, and only with his wife. The verse is explicit. Let me read it again. Genesis 4, verse 1, “Now the man had relations with *his wife* Eve...” *His wife* is emphasized. Friends, sexual intercourse is always to be only in the context of marriage between one man and one woman. We see this from the very beginning, with Adam and Eve. And we believe this still holds true today.

But we live in a culture in which God’s command regarding sex is repudiated. The majority of people, amongst whom we live, reject what God says about this. Pre-marital sex (that is, sex before marriage) and extra-marital sex (that is, sex outside of marriage) is beyond permissible. It is assumed. It is encouraged. It is “normal.” And that’s just sex between a man and a woman, which these days sounds very antiquated.

I have more I want to say about this, and then we will get to when human life begins, but the clock demands that we do that after the weekend. So, when you return on Monday I want to pick-up on how sex and sexual identity has been redefined by the demanding and very angry voices of the sexual revolution that’s tearing across not only America, but the whole wide world.

This is tragic, because the people who practice and promote what we’ll discuss on Monday are living in outright rebellion against *God*. And, as with Cain, that rebellion has a dire consequence: God’s judgment. Oh, we just lost some listeners there, with that word, judgment. We don’t like it. It makes us cringe. It is not popular; even many Christians kicked that word out of the vocabulary a long time ago. Ah, but that is the word we want. To find out why, join us again on Monday.

This is the story of God and Cain from Genesis 4, and it continues next time on *God Is*.

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