

## Chapter 6: The Offspring of the Woman

*Genesis 4:17–5:32*

In everything that we have read thus far, we have only met the first generation after Adam and Eve. Our next passage, however, will stretch across hundreds of years, spanning several generations. First, we will read about the genealogy of the line of Cain in Genesis 4. Then, we will meet the line of Cain's brother, Seth, who is born after Abel's murder. Although we do not typically find genealogies to be interesting reading material, these passages have something important to teach us about the future of humanity as a whole, and about God's people in particular. Specifically, the narrative of Genesis is in significant tension at this juncture. God's creation began so well, but everything has gone so poorly. From here on out, the situation on earth could go in so many different directions. Will humanity embrace the depravity of Cain, or will God still raise up a faithful remnant?

### **Generational Sins (Gen. 4:17–24)**

As we saw in the previous chapter, Cain stubbornly refuses to repent. At the end of the previous passage, we discussed the way in which Cain's movement "east of Eden" (Gen. 4:16) carries theological significance. Throughout the book of Genesis, moving east means rebelling from Yahweh, who dwells in Eden in the west. By his exile, Cain continues to rebel further against Yahweh. More than that, we also discover that Cain builds a city and names it after his son, Enoch (Gen. 4:17). By building this city, Cain defies Yahweh's punishment, since Yahweh condemned Cain to a life as a "fugitive and a wanderer on the earth" (Gen. 4:12).<sup>1</sup>

Still, it is difficult to believe that Cain would go to all the trouble of building a city if his only intention were only to spite his Creator. More likely, Cain builds this city in order to defend himself. Cain lives with the guilt and fear of having committed the first act of murder, and much more, fratricide. The consequences of that sin weigh heavily on his conscience and fears, as John Calvin insightfully explains:

It is, however, probable, that the man, oppressed by an accusing conscience, and not thinking himself safe within the walls of his own house, had contrived a new kind of defense: for Adam and the rest live dispersed through the fields for no other reason, than that they are less afraid. Wherefore, it is a sign of an agitated and guilty mind, that Cain thought of building a city for the purpose of separating himself from the rest of men; yet that pride was mixed with his diffidence and anxiety, appears, from his having called the city after his son. Thus different affections often contend with each other in the hearts of the wicked. Fear, the fruit of his iniquity, drives him within the walls of a city, that he may fortify himself in a manner before unknown; and, on the other hand, supercilious vanity breaks forth. Certainly

he ought rather to have chosen that his name should be buried for ever; for how could his memory be transmitted, except to be held in execration? Yet, ambition impels him to erect a monument to his race in the name of his city.<sup>2</sup>

Through a mixture of guilt and pride, fear and vanity, anxiety and ambition, Cain builds the city despite Yahweh's prohibition. Yahweh promised to protect him (Gen. 4:15), but the word of Yahweh provides no comfort to a man who does not believe in it. We do not read that Yahweh punishes Cain for violating the terms of his sentencing; however, if Calvin correctly perceives the torment behind Cain's construction project, then perhaps Cain is receiving his punishment in full.

Tragically, Cain's choices further alienate him from Yahweh and from his surviving brothers and sisters on the earth. Yahweh cursed Cain to be a fugitive and a wanderer, but Cain might have received a very different fate if he had humbled himself in repentance. Where Adam and Eve responded in faith to the oracles of judgment that they received after their own sin (Gen. 3:20; 4:1), Cain only complains about his punishment (Gen. 4:13) and violates his restrictions (Gen. 4:17).

### Yahweh's Ongoing Grace

Even though Cain continues in his rebellion against Yahweh and his anxious distrust of everyone around him, Yahweh nevertheless continues to extend him common grace. True to his word, Yahweh protects Cain from annihilation by those who may seek to kill him (Gen. 4:15). Cain survives, and he even bears children after "knowing" his wife (Gen. 4:17) in the same way that he himself had been conceived after his father "knew" his mother (Gen. 4:1). Cain is cursed directly (Gen. 4:11), but Yahweh preserves the blessing of offspring for Cain. Moreover, Cain's offspring is fruitful to multiply to several generations.

Additionally, Genesis 4:17–22 ascribes several cultural and technological achievements to Cain and Cain's descendants. Cain builds the first city, an important cultural achievement. While cities can be a source of great evil, they are not always so. Indeed, God chooses a city as the primary image to describe the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 21:2). Then, in the eighth generation removed from Adam, Cain's descendants take several more progressive steps. The text of Genesis identifies the three children of Lamech as pioneers of innovation, beginning with the first nomadic livestock keeper, Jabal, "the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock"; Gen. 4:20).<sup>3</sup> Second, Jubal becomes the first musician: "the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe" (Gen. 4:21). Third, Tubal-cain becomes the first metalworker: "the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron" (Gen. 4:22). The people of God stand indebted to this day for these contributions from the offspring of Cain.

These developments also give significant advantages to the line of Cain. In the ancient world, livestock functioned as wealth, so that Jabal enhanced the riches of Cain's line by developing the art and science of keeping livestock. Jubal developed the artistic, cultural sensibilities of the line of Cain, creating beauty through his music. Tubal-cain built tools and weapons to put the line of Cain on the cutting edge, expanding the effectiveness in their toiling work, increasing their comfort, and defending them from enemies. These are forward-thinking, progressive, advanced people, building a technologically advanced and highly cultured society.

## Lamech, the Greater Cain

Nevertheless, the descendants of Cain inherit their forefather's spiritual bankruptcy. The generations of Cain are creative, but they do not love Yahweh any more than Cain did. Cain is the first offspring of the serpent, and his biological offspring also become his spiritual offspring: they too are the offspring of the serpent. The narrative reveals this spiritual reality through its spotlight not on the cultural achievements of the *eighth* generation after Adam through Cain's line, but on the wickedness of Lamech in the *seventh* generation.<sup>4</sup> First, Lamech takes for himself two wives, Adah and Zillah (Gen. 4:19), violating the original marital principle of one-flesh union between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24).<sup>5</sup> In the rest of the book of Genesis, this perversion of marriage will become a serious problem plaguing not only pagan families (e.g., Gen. 6:2), but even the families of Yahweh's chosen patriarchs (e.g., Gen. 16:3; 29:21–30).<sup>6</sup>

Second, Lamech inherits and expands upon the violence of Cain by killing someone who had merely struck him. More, Lamech boasts that he has killed a "young man" (Gen. 4:23), suggesting that he murdered this young man without mercy or remorse, despite a clear advantage of strength.<sup>7</sup> Lamech continues, taunting that Cain expected sevenfold protection, so that Lamech now expects seventy-sevenfold protection (Gen. 4:24). This is a breathtaking sense of entitlement and a shocking exploitation of Yahweh's grace after Cain's sin.<sup>8</sup> Even the poetry itself emphasizes Lamech's "cruel egotism" through the ongoing rhyming of many words that "end with or include the vowel *î*, 'my, me.'" Where Cain may have been tormented to the point of building a city despite Yahweh's prohibition, "Lamech feels he is his own security."<sup>10</sup> Lamech makes the wickedness of Cain look tame, carrying forward the spiritual heritage of Cain as the offspring of the serpent to new depths of depravity.

## Generational Sins

In sum, Cain's line features a mixture of positive cultural contributions alongside wicked moral perversions. How, then, should we evaluate this? To begin, Cain's line should receive proper credit for their cultural and technological achievements. As Derek Kidner points out, "A biased account would have ascribed nothing good to Cain. The truth was more complex."<sup>11</sup> Yahweh blesses not only the family of Cain through their innovations, but also the whole world through them. In the same way, we should not be surprised when some of the greatest advances in art, medicine, philosophy, technology, commerce, science, or any other field arises out of the work of thoroughgoing pagans. The fact that someone does not know and love Jesus Christ does not diminish or taint their worldly achievements, and we should not hesitate to celebrate what they accomplish. The people of God can and should enjoy these gifts of common grace. Regardless of the person whom God uses to bring those gifts into the world, the ultimate source of common grace is God himself. All truth, beauty, and goodness come from God.

At the same time, we should keep in mind that not all innovations are for the good. God's ideal plan for marriage has always been for one man to leave his father and mother and to cleave to his one wife for life (Gen. 2:24). Not only polygamy, but also adultery, fornication, divorce, incest, same-sex relations, pornography, and even lust are all wicked departures from God's good design. Our culture tries to lump Lamech's sexual innovations together with the cultural and technological progress of Lamech's three sons. If cultural innovations are good, then why not sexual innovations? Should we

not consider both to be *progress*? The logic of this argument is compelling, but ultimately flawed, since it does not take into account the instructions God has given by his word. God has commanded us to exercise dominion over creation (Gen. 1:28), but he has restricted sexual relationships to a life-long marriage covenant between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24). One kind of innovation is obedient to God's mandate in the world, and the other disobedient. To discern the good from the bad, we must steep our minds in what God teaches us in his word.

Third, this genealogy underscores the serious foothold that generational sins can establish. Patterns of abuse, violence, substance addictions, sexual sins, and ungodliness of all forms shape the next generation to degrees that are difficult to quantify. One generation's active rebellion becomes the next generation's baseline, making it difficult to shepherd someone toward a brighter future in the gospel until we account for their family history. Even so, our histories do not control our destinies, for the power of God through the gospel of Jesus Christ can transform even the vilest of sinners.

### **Generational Virtues (Gen. 4:25–26)**

If the book of Genesis ended with the taunting song of Lamech, very little hope for the future of the human race would remain. Abel may have once been the offspring of the woman, motivated by faith and sincere love for Yahweh; however, Abel is now dead, murdered at the hand of his own brother. The only human beings left to fill the planet now descend from the line of Cain, a liar and a murderer, the firstborn of the spiritual offspring of the serpent. Worse, Cain's descendants become more depraved with each new generation. Even the cultural and technological progress that this line should raise the concern of how they might use these innovations in the future. Their spiritual bankruptcy makes it more likely that they will wield these progressive achievements to advance their lust and violence rather than to obey God's commandments.

#### Another Offspring

Genesis 4:25, then, is another pivotal moment in the first chapters of human history: "And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, 'God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.'" Eve's words reflect clear pain from losing Abel, but her words also contain several hopeful elements. To start, we now know that Adam and Eve will continue to bear children beyond Cain and Abel. Adam again "knows" his wife (cf. Gen. 4:1), and she bears another son. We had a hint that Adam and Eve must have had other children, since Cain has a wife (Gen. 4:17) who must be his sister, or perhaps a niece. And toward that end, we will find confirmation that Adam and Eve bear "other sons and daughters" over the course of their lives in Genesis 5:4. Adam and Eve continue to be fruitful and multiply.

Seth however, isn't just one more son born to Adam and Eve. Instead, Eve identifies him as "another offspring instead of Abel." By calling him "another offspring," Eve classifies only Abel (not Cain) as the "offspring" whom Seth replaces. This word for "offspring" (lit. "seed") is the same word that Yahweh had used back in Genesis 3:15 to describe the offspring of the woman who would experience enmity with the offspring of the serpent. By identifying Seth as "another offspring instead of Abel," Eve is acknowledging that both Abel and Seth are her offspring according to promise. Even the word "appointed" in this verse carries an echo of Genesis 3:15, since the word also

might be translated “placed” or “put.” This is the same word Yahweh used, saying, “I will *put* enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring...”<sup>12</sup> In contrast, it is interesting to note that Eve originally identified Cain as a “man” (Gen. 4:1) and not as an “offspring,” as she does here regarding Abel and Seth.

While we still have many unanswered questions, here is what we know so far: despite the fact that Cain, Abel, and Seth are *biological* brothers, the narrative of Genesis teaches that these three men belong to different *spiritual* families. Cain is the first offspring of the serpent, and Seth is the offspring of the woman who rises up to replace Abel. The offspring of the serpent drew first blood, but the woman has not given up. More importantly, *Yahweh* has not abandoned his promise, despite the violence of Cain. Eve continues to look in faith for Yahweh to provide her the promised offspring who will undo the curse of sin that entered the world through her and through her husband.<sup>13</sup> The story, in fact, is only beginning, for just as Cain has his offspring, so also will Seth have his offspring, beginning with his son Enosh (Gen. 4:26).

### True Worshipers

The line of Cain contributed cultural and technological innovations to the world. By contrast, the line of Seth contributes something very different: *true worship*. The narrative continues, telling us that “At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD” (Gen. 4:26). Fittingly, we do not read that any individual person became the “father of” calling upon the name of Yahweh (cf. Gen. 4:20–21), for true worship does not belong to any man, but to Yahweh. What, then, does this expression describe? At first, “calling upon the name of Yahweh” sounds like prayer, but further study points us in a different direction. Allen Ross writes:

The verb *qārā*, “call,” can be used for naming (cf. 4:17, 25), reading, proclaiming, summoning, and praying. Usage of this expression in the Pentateuch supports the idea of proclamation more than praying (cf. Gen. 12:8; Exod. 34:6; Lev. 1:1). The meaning of *šēm*, “name,” also requires interpretation, since the word is actually followed by the name itself. The word “name” often refers to characteristics or attributes (see Isa. 9:6). The idea of this line is that people began to make proclamation about the nature of the Lord (“began to make proclamation of the Lord by name”).<sup>14</sup>

In contrast to the line of Cain, which only grew more self-sufficient, more violent, and more technologically advanced (largely to support their self-sufficiency and their violence!), the line of Seth will be characterized by proclaiming the goodness of the character of Yahweh. Later, Seth’s descendant Abram will carry on this noble, generational virtue after Yahweh calls him out of the land of Ur of the Chaldeans: “[Abram] built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD” (Gen. 12:8).

We should keep in mind that it was in the context of worship where the distinction between Cain and Abel surfaced. As they offered sacrifices, Yahweh had regard for Abel and his offering, but no regard for Cain and his offering (Gen. 4:4–5). The defining characteristic of all the offspring of the woman—whether Abel, Seth or Seth’s descendants—is the true worship of Yahweh by faith. The worship that Abel offered (for which he was murdered) is now carried forward by Seth’s worship, who is “another offspring instead of Abel.”

The necessity of true worship extends all the way to today. Jesus tells the Samaritan woman at the well that “the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:23–24). When the Samaritan woman tries to play up the differences they have because of their genealogical descent, Jesus insists that a person’s true worship is the only thing that matters. This conversation stands in contrast to the conversation from John 8 that we looked at in the last chapter, where Jesus insists that the Jews are the children of the devil since they reject him, despite their biological descent from Abraham (John 8:31–47).

### Generational Virtues

This principle helps us to distinguish the difference between genealogical heredity and spiritual heredity. Cain, Abel, and Seth are all *biological* brothers. Even so, they are members of different, warring *spiritual* families. No one’s family determines their spiritual fate, either for good or for evil. We are saved or condemned not on the basis of our biological parents, but on the basis of our *spiritual* parents. That is, each individual is saved not by his family, but by his worship. Cain worships his own self-righteous pride and is condemned, while both Abel and Seth worship Yahweh and are blessed. God can break off unbelieving branches from a godly family tree (Rom. 11:17–24), and God can raise up true worshipers from dead stones (Matt. 3:9).

Even so, families do pass down a spiritual heritage, whether for good or for evil. Cain’s lineage passes down evil (Gen. 4:17–24), while Seth’s lineage, as we will see, passes down godliness (Gen. 5:1–32). In fact, God says that his primary purpose for creating the institution of the family is for families to raise up godly offspring (Mal. 2:15). This principle of passing down a spiritual heritage in families continues even under the new covenant: “For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy” (1 Cor. 7:14). The unbelieving spouse and the children of an unbelieving parent are *made holy* merely by the presence and influence of a believing family member. We will return to this idea at the end of this chapter.

### Generational Worship (Gen. 5:1–32)

The author of Genesis explicitly sets the genealogies of Cain and Seth side by side as a contrast. In the line of Cain, we see the spiritual heritage of the offspring of the serpent passed down, generation by generation. In the line of Seth, however, we see the spiritual heritage of the offspring of the woman handed down by promise. The genealogy of Genesis 5 is highly repetitive, but we find clues for interpreting it wherever the repetition breaks. So, the introduction (Gen. 5:1–2) is important, as well as the two major deviations from the genealogical pattern in the record of Enoch (Gen. 5:21–24) and the concluding section about Noah (Gen. 5:28–32). These three sections develop an overarching contrast between the wicked line of Cain to demonstrate the godliness of the line of Seth.

### The Likeness and Image of Adam

Genesis 5:1 begins with another *tôledôt* phrase regarding the “generations of Adam” (Gen. 5:1). The first *tôledôt* phrase narrated the generations of the heaven and the earth to tell about the creation

of Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:4–25), and now the second *tôledôt* phrase will narrate the generations extending down from Adam and Eve through the line of Seth. Here, the narrator tells us again that, when God created “man” (*ādam*), God “made him in the likeness of God” (Gen. 5:1), an echo of Genesis 1:26. Then, the narrator paraphrases Genesis 1:27–28, writing “Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created” (Gen. 5:2). The narrator’s purpose in repeating this information is to connect the way God creates Adam with the way that Adam “fathers” a son in *his* own likeness, after *his* image, whom he names Seth (Gen. 5:3). This suggests that Adam and Eve did not completely lose the image and likeness of God at the Fall, since they now pass that image and likeness on to their children after them.<sup>15</sup>

This genealogy does not include Cain or Abel, but only Seth as the next generation after Adam. While the narrator acknowledges that Adam fathers other sons and daughters (Gen. 5:4), this genealogy only names one descendant per generation in order to move quickly through each generation.<sup>16</sup> Still, this factor underscores the theme that Seth alone serves as the offspring of the woman, as we saw at the end of Genesis 4. We will see the same phenomenon when we consider the true offspring of Abram (not Ishmael, but Isaac; Gen. 17:18–21; 21:12; Rom. 9:6–9) and the true offspring of Isaac (not Esau, but Jacob; Gen. 25:23; 27:27–29; 28:12–16; Mal. 1:2–3; Rom. 9:10–12). The Apostle Paul explains, “This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring” (Rom. 9:8).

As stated earlier, this section thrives on a repeated formula to describe each generation, “When *A* had lived *X* years, he fathered *B*. *A* lived after he fathered *B* *Y* years and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of *A* were *Z* years, and he died.”<sup>17</sup> In this repetition, the prominence falls on the last phrase, “and he died,” a single word in Hebrew that punctuates the end of each generation. Although Yahweh is gracious to continue multiplying his people fruitfully to fill the earth, we see that “death reigned” (Rom. 5:17) as a result of Adam’s sin.<sup>18</sup> Life continues, but it is cut short at every generation by the curse of death.

### Walking with God

The first major deviation comes in the story of Enoch (Gen. 5:21–24). In Enoch, we see the promise of life beyond the reach of the curse. So, we come to the end of his story, expecting to hear again the bell tolling, “and he died,” but that word of doom never comes. Why? The break from the repetition explains Enoch’s escape from death. Where we might expect, “Enoch *lived* after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters,” we instead read, “Enoch *walked with God* after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters” (Gen. 5:22). The word “walk” is in the Hithpael stem. We discussed this form of the verb walk in our discussion of Genesis 3:8, where Yahweh God “walked” (Hithpael) in the Garden as a way of demonstrating his possession of it. In the same way, Enoch walks with God as an expression of his possession of God himself.<sup>19</sup> Enoch is a true worshiper of Yahweh who loves and delights in his intimate knowledge of and communion with God above all other things.<sup>20</sup> Enoch only lives for 365 years (500–600 years shorter than the other people in this genealogy), but we do not read the refrain “And he died” in relation to Enoch. Rather, we read that “he was not,” or, literally, “there was not him,” since God took him (Gen. 5:24).

The wicked line of Cain is exemplified by ultra-wicked Lamech (Gen. 4:23–24). Similarly, the godly line of Seth is exemplified by ultra-righteous Enoch, who walks with God his entire life until

God simply takes him in some way apart from death. Both Lamech and Enoch are the seventh generation from Adam, although through very different lines. The wicked Lamech is the seventh in the line of Cain (the offspring of the serpent), and the godly Enoch is the seventh in the line of Seth (the offspring of the woman). Biblical genealogies often place special emphasis on the seventh generation.<sup>21</sup> In this case, we see the culmination of evil and righteousness in the seventh from Adam through Cain and the seven from Adam through Seth, respectively.

Enoch's story provides us another angle on what we had read about the beginnings of the worship of Yahweh in Genesis 4:26: "At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD." This description follows immediately after the description of Seth's birth, and the birth of Enosh to Seth, suggesting that this worship of Yahweh flows through the line of Seth. If we saw the fruition of Cain's violence emerging in the bloodthirsty depiction of Lamech, we now see the fruition of Seth's worship emerging in Enoch, who walks with God in perfect intimacy until God simply takes him to be with him, apart from death. If worship exposed Cain's self-righteous faithlessness, worship now exposes what is in Enoch's heart too: deep, rich, personal intimacy with and love for God. "Walking with God" is simply another name for "worship." Enoch demonstrates that he is the heir of the promises to the offspring of the woman because of his *worship*.

### Relief from the Curse

The second major deviation to the repetition through this genealogy arises when Lamech fathers Noah (Gen. 5:28–31). Importantly, this is a different Lamech from the Lamech in the line of Cain (cf. Gen. 4:18–19, 23–24). Here, for the first time in this list, a father assigns a significance to his son. Lamech proclaims that Noah represents relief from the effects of the judgment delivered to the man, where the ground was cursed to make his word hard and painful (Gen. 3:17–19). Enoch's being "taken" to avoid the curse of death altogether is not repeated, for Methuselah and Lamech die after Enoch (Gen. 5:27, 31). Lamech's statement about Noah, then, points forward in faith toward the hope that one day, through Noah, Yahweh will bring the curse to an end. Lamech's words about Noah are true, but things will get far worse before they get any better.

Finally, we read the names of not just one son, but of the three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Gen. 5:32). Just as the genealogy of Cain ended with the three sons of Lamech (Gen. 4:20–22), so the genealogy of Seth ends with the three sons of Noah. These three will play an important role in the transition into the world after the Flood, both for carrying forward Yahweh's promise to the offspring of the woman, but also, as we will see, the curse of the offspring of the serpent.

### Godly Offspring

How, then, do we evaluate the overall significance of Seth's line? In contrast with the line of Cain, the line of Seth does not contribute any cultural or technological advancements to the world. Rather, each patriarch's "greatest contribution is his role in affecting the promised blessing through the birth of a descendant."<sup>22</sup> In light of the worship that arises in the days of Seth and Seth's son, Enosh (Gen. 4:26), we see the purpose for *biological* offspring: passing down a heritage of worship to *spiritual* offspring. Those born into the line of Seth are heirs to the worship of Yahweh that their parents hand down to them (culminating in Enoch), while those born into the line of Cain inherit violence and lust (culminating in Lamech).

Biological descent, then, is important for the sake of passing down a spiritual heritage of true



worship. God states very clearly elsewhere that his purpose in ordaining marriage is to raise up “godly offspring” (Mal. 2:15). This text, then, does not teach that the children of believers will be saved simply *because* they are the children of believers, for individuals are saved only because of spiritual realities, not biological realities. Unless worship reveals *faith* in your heart (like Abel and Enoch, and unlike Cain), then you have not been saved.

But this text also affirms that biological descent is important. There are distinct advantages enjoyed by the children of believers, who grow up in a home and a context of faith and worship. Paul, for example, expressly rejects the notion that the Jews would be saved because of their descent, since “no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly” (Rom. 2:28). Neither biological genealogy traced back to Abraham himself, nor strict observance to the rite of circumcision on its own could save someone. Nevertheless, Paul also insists that the advantages of the Jews were “much in every way” (Rom. 3:2) because of their unique access to the oracles of God (Rom. 3:2) as well as to “the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises” (Rom. 9:4).

Quite simply, God wants his people to raise up godly offspring in the next generation. This passage, then, is not a proof-text for infant baptism. Still, the theology of this passage forms the background for our practice of infant baptism. We do not baptize infants because we believe that baptizing, on its own, saves children. Furthermore, we do not baptize infants because we believe they will be saved on the basis of *our* faith as their parents. Only Christ saves, and only through an individual’s faith (i.e., *true worship*) in him. Nevertheless, we do recognize that God chooses to work *generationally* (Ex. 34:6–7), through families. The promises of the gospel are not only for the first generation of believers, but explicitly for their children as well (Acts 2:38–39), so that the early church commonly baptized entire households (Acts 16:33–34; 1 Cor. 1:16; cf. Gen. 17:9–14). According to the command of Jesus, we baptize as a part of the overall commission to make disciples (Matt. 28:19) as we pray that our offspring after us will call upon the name of the Lord just as we have done. No one will be saved by being the child of a Christian; however, every child of a Christian is *made holy*, receiving the privileges and responsibilities of the generational virtue of worship.

God willing, our children grow up walking with the Lord, never remembering a day when they did not love Jesus. Beyond baptism, then, we must seek out every opportunity to raise our children up in the fear and admonition of the Lord, teaching them to worship in public, in our families, and in private while they are in our homes. Our prayer is that they would then raise up the next generation after them to be God-worshippers as well. We are not merely called to *reproduce*, but to pass down a heritage of *worship* to our children and our children’s children after us. The promises are for our children (Acts 2:39), and God promises to be faithful to a thousand generations of those who love him (Ex. 34:6–7).

## Discussion Questions

1. How do you interact with cultural and technological advances in the world? In what ways do you appreciate innovations of art, philosophy, politics, business, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics? In what ways do you view such innovations with a critical eye? How can we appreciate *and* critique common grace progress?

2. What generational sins have been passed down through your family history? In what ways do you see yourself walking in those generational sins? What strategies do you have for breaking those generational sins, by the grace of God? How do you seek to avoid passing generational sins to your children after you?

3. What generational virtues have been passed down through your family history? In what ways do you see yourself walking in those generational virtues? What strategies do you have for carrying on those generational virtues in your own life, by the grace of God? How do you seek to pass down generational virtues to your children after you?

4. If God is seeking “godly offspring” (Mal. 2:15) from marriages, how does that affect our view of parenting? How do we train our children in the true worship of God from early ages? How do help them to know their Bibles and what the Bible teaches? How should we include them in corporate worship so that they walk with God all the days of their lives?

## Notes

1. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11*, 285.

2. Calvin, *Genesis*, 216. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom01.x.i.html>>

3. “Yabal [Jabal] is thus the father of the Bedouin life-style. He did not merely reestablish Abel’s pastoral work. Abel shepherded **צֹאן** ‘sheep and goats,’ but Yabal tended **מִקְנֵה** ‘herds’: that term covers all animals that are herded—sheep, goats, cattle, asses, or camels (47:16–17; Exod 9:3). Whereas Abel merely lived off his flocks, Yabal could trade with his beasts of burden, and this represents cultural advance....” (Wenham, *Genesis 1–15, Volume 1*, 113.)

4. “Unusually full details about Lamek [sic], the seventh generation from Adam (18–24, may illustrate another convention associated with biblical genealogies, a tendency to draw attention to the seventh generation.” (Wenham, *Genesis 1–15, Volume 1*, 96.)

5. Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 168.

6. “The attempt to improve on God’s marriage ordinance (19; cf. 2:24) set a disastrous precedent, on which the rest of Genesis is comment enough.” (Kidner, *Genesis*, 83.)

7. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11*, 289.

8. Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 168.

9. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15, Volume 1*, 114.

10. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, 241.

11. Kidner, *Genesis*, 83.

12. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15, Volume 1*, 115.

13. Kenneth Mathews contrasts Genesis 4:1 with 4:25, noting that, just as Eve replaces “offspring” for “man,” she also replaces “God” for “Yahweh.” From this, he writes, “...the name [God] must be an echo of the dialogue between the serpent and Eve (3:1–5), which is the other place in the garden *tōlēdōt* where ‘God’ alone occurs. There it is found in the setting of deception and distrust, but now it appears to be Eve’s deliberate, though late, rejoinder to the serpent’s cynicism toward God’s goodness.” (Mathews, *Genesis 1–11*, 290.)

14. Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 169.

15. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15, Volume 1*, 127.

16. This is a “linear” genealogy, in contrast to a “segmented” genealogy. See Mathews, *Genesis 1–11*, 297–

99.

17. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15, Volume 1*, 121.18. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11*, 296.

19. Grammatically, the Hithpael “walked” should here be classified as an iterative (“walked back and forth”) or as a durative (“walked continually”). See Waltke and O’Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew*, 426–29. Although this is the same grammatical form that we observed in Genesis 3:8 as a description of Yahweh God’s sovereignty over the garden to judge the trespass that had been committed within its boundaries, by his creatures, the nuance is obviously not the same, for in no way should we infer that Enoch sovereignly reigned over God all his life. Instead, we may imagine the way that a child “walks continually” in his father’s home; although the child does not own the home, he nevertheless possesses it with the same status, rights, and privileges in the home as though he did own it. In the same way, God graciously and generously gives himself to his people to possess (cf. Josh. 13:33), even though this possession in no way entails dominion or authority in this case.

20. “Twice we are told (vv. 22, 24) that Enoch walked with God,...a description applied also to Noah in 6:9. This expression may be compared to [‘walking before’], which indicates the service of a loyal servant, who goes before his master (sometimes human but mostly divine), paving the way, or who stands before his master ready to serve. Thus, Hezekiah walked before God (2 K. 20:3 par. Isa. 38:3), as did the patriarchs (Gen. 17:1; 24:40; 48:15). A bit more intimacy seems to be suggested by ‘walking with’ as over against ‘walking before.’ ‘Walk with’ captures an emphasis on communion and fellowship. In a number of passages, all addressed to a king or his dynasty, “to walk before God” strongly suggests obedience and subordination (1 K. 2:4; 3:6; 8:23, 25; 9:4), rather than worship and communion.” (Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, 258.)

21. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15, Volume 1*, 127.22. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11*, 308.