

Genesis 4

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Date: 14 September 2025

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[0 : 00] Again to Genesis 4. If you are at Swansea, we are continuing our series.! If you weren't in Swansea, go ask someone in Swansea what they learnt.

! Genesis 4. A man named McAllister Hull. He was one of the American physicists who helped develop the atomic bomb that was eventually dropped over the Japanese city of Nagasaki in 1945. And when the bomb dropped and detonated, it killed around 40,000 people in an instant. And McAllister Hull, he was interviewed years later in 1995.

And he was asked, what was it like for you as soon as the bomb dropped? What are your reflections on that moment as soon as the bomb dropped?

And he said this in the interview. He said, immediately, both of us who knew the score began to think, okay, what have we done?

[1 : 11] What have we done? And it's that same thought, that same question, that is lingering in the air after Genesis 3.

Adam has just eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He severed mankind's relationship with God. He's brought sin and death into this world.

God has cursed this world and humanity, thrown Adam and Eve out of the garden, out of his presence, east of Eden, and shut the door. And now the question lingers in the air.

What have we done? What is the world like now? What is humanity like now? What's going to be the fallout of this bomb that Adam's detonated?

And Genesis 4 to 11, it's here to answer that question. What have we done? What is the world like now? As Adam and Eve are thrown out of the garden to the east of Eden, Genesis 4 onwards, it's here to show us what life is like east of Eden.

[2 : 19] What the world, what humanity is now like. And that is deeply relevant for us now. Because we are still east of Eden. And so these chapters are an insight into what we are now east of Eden.

What sin is like, what the world is like. And so if Adam detonated a sin bomb, then it's like this whole world has become radioactive.

And Genesis 4 to 11, it's like a guide showing you how to dodge the radiation of this world. And so as we go through these chapters over the next few weeks, I want you to be like a detective.

And I want you to get your magnifying glass out. And I want you to spot what these chapters have to say about sin. But that's not the only thing that we should look out for.

Radiation isn't the only thing we should expect after the fall. Because chapter 3, it ends with a promise. Look back to Genesis 3.15. Just Genesis 3.15.

[3 : 24] God, he promises something to the serpent, to Satan. He says, I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring.

He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. This is God's promise to Satan and to us that this world won't be completely consumed by sin.

Radiation won't completely wipe out this world. Humanity is not going to be completely abandoned by God. Yes, as we leave this garden and as we head east, yes, we go ahead into this world, into our lives with sin, but we also go with God's promise.

A promise that God will put enmity between Satan and the woman. A promise that they won't be friends. Instead, she's going to be friends with God.

And also, do you see, God promises that there'll be two families in this world. The offspring, the children of Satan, and the offspring, the children of Eve. Two families.

[4 : 39] And God promises that these two families are going to be at war. Do you see? I will put enmity between your offspring and her offspring.

Now, the offspring of Satan, this isn't talking about little demons running around this world. No, this is talking about humans who will follow Satan.

It's talking about unbelievers. That's what Jesus calls those who reject him. He says, you are of your father, the devil. And Paul says this in Ephesians.

Do you remember when we were in Ephesians? Before conversion, we are following the world, the flesh, and the devil. And here in Genesis 3.15, God promises that there will be a family, a group of people in this world, who in their unbelief will belong to Satan.

Which shouldn't be a surprise after the fall. But what is a surprise, is that God promises another family. The offspring of the woman.

[5 : 46] And that family, that group of people, will have enmity, opposition, against Satan's family. This is a promise that there will be believers in this world.

People who are friends with God. And that family is going to be at war with Satan's family. Two families at war in this world.

That this is the promise that God will build his church. And on top of that, God promises, did you see, that through Eve, through this believing family, there will come one offspring.

One child, one man, a son. And he will come to bruise Satan's head. To crush him. A son to end evil in this world.

He shall bruise your head, Satan. This is God's promise to have a people. And from that people, there will be a son. And that son will save the world.

[6 : 54] And so we leave Genesis 3 on a cliffhanger. Who is this son going to be? And when is he coming? And so, yes, we enter Genesis 4.

We head into the east of Eden, and asking, what have we done? But we also go out asking, but what is God about to do?

And so the story we're in now in Genesis, it's the story of sin and a son. We are to enter these chapters and head east with our magnifying glass out, looking for two things, sin and a son.

What have we done? What is sin like? And what is God about to do? Where is this son? So if you want to understand what this world is, who we are, what God is doing here in history, then listen closely to Genesis.

And so let's leave the gates of the Garden of Eden, head east, with our magnifying glasses out, looking out for those two things, and let's see what we find. And the first thing we come across is that God is doing just as he promised.

[8 : 12] God is creating two families. That's my first point today. God is creating two families. So we're expecting sin and a son.

And how does Genesis 4 begin? It's a promising start. There's a son, verse 1. Now Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain.

And Eve knows that this is no ordinary birth. She says, I've produced a man with the help of the Lord. She has this promise in her mind that this is a woman clinging to God's promise.

And as she holds her son, she knows God is keeping his promise. But there's also another son, verse 2, Abel. Two sons, Cain and Abel.

So if we have our magnifying glasses, and we're looking for a son, then this is a promising start east of Eden. Maybe, maybe the serpent crusher is here. But we see these brothers aren't alike.

[9 : 20] There's a deep difference between them. And that difference, it shows up in worship. So Cain, he's a fruit and vegetable farmer. And Abel, he's a shepherd.

He's got sheep. And we see, even from the beginning, humanity is worshipping God. These two sons bring offering sacrifices to the Lord.

Cain brings his fruits, and Abel brings the best of his sheep. But the Lord isn't happy with one of them, verse 4. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering.

But for Cain and his offering, he had no regard. The Lord delights in Abel, but Cain he isn't happy with. Now, we aren't told why here explicitly, but the New Testament, it gives us an insight.

The book of Hebrews says this, about Cain and Abel. It says, by faith, Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain.

[10 : 27] The difference is not that one brother is more impressive than the other. Abel isn't more likable than Cain in God's eyes. Abel hasn't earned God's favour in some way. No.

The difference, the key, is faith. One son trusts in the Lord, knows that God is worthy, knows that the Lord is to be feared and served, and the other son doesn't.

And you can even see that in their offerings. Did you notice, Abel, he offers his firstborn sheep, the most precious of his animals, the best of his meat, the fattest bits.

But look what it says Cain brings. It just says, an offering of the fruit of the ground. It's not the best he has. There's no mention of anything special here.

It's like Cain kind of rummages around in his stock, around just trying to find something. Oh yeah, here you go God, that there's something I've got. Yeah, there's a bit of fruit. And the Lord isn't happy.

[11 : 29] And not because God is happy with a leg of lamb, rather than with apples. No, it's because one son worships with faith, and the other doesn't. One loves the Lord, and thinks he's worthy of everything, and trusts in his God, and the other doesn't.

And the difference in their offerings, it just reflects that faith. And so, five verses in, and we see, God's promise is already coming true.

We see, God is creating two types of people here, two families, a family of faith, and a family of unbelief.

And this is how the world is divided east of Eden. There are those who know God is worthy, who know it is a good thing to serve him, who know God is so great, he demands my soul, my life, my all.

Abel knew that. And there are those who think, how they live before God, how they approach him, what they give to him, they think it doesn't matter.

[12 : 43] That God should be happy, with whatever we do, and however we live. Even if we just give him the scraps of our life, that's Cain.

And that's the unbelief of this world. People are existing before God, and thinking, God should be happy with them, just the way they are.

They don't think about him, or love him, or give him the time of day, but they give him scraps. And God isn't happy.

Because God doesn't want your scraps. He wants your heart. He wants you to have faith in him. God delights when you have faith in him.

And so it should make us think, am I giving God the best of my life? Or am I giving him my scraps? And how does Cain react to all this?

[13 : 48] Verse 5. He's fuming. He hates it. He hates that God isn't happy with him. He hates that he can't approach God how he wants.

He hates that God deserves so much. He hates that Abel's right with God, but he isn't. And he's fuming. He's filled with anger and jealousy.

And God asks him a piercing question. Why? Why are you so angry, Cain? Why are you so angry with me and with your believing brother?

Come on, if you just trusted me, you'll always be accepted. Why are you so angry? It's a probing question to unbelief. It's a bit like, have you heard this?

You know when an unbeliever gets so angry about the idea they're going to hell, even though they don't believe in it. It's like that. Why are you so angry? What's going on in your heart there?

[14 : 53] Well, God provides the answer to that. He tells Cain what's really going on inside of him. Verse 7. Sin is crouching at the door.

Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it. Why is Cain so angry, so angry with God? It's sin. And do you see the picture God gives? Sin is like a beast. Sin is like a monster. A crouching monster ready to pounce.

Ready to devour and tear apart. And it's crouching just by your front door. So if your life in your heart is like a home, the monster of sin, it's crouching just at the door, ready to sneak in and devour you.

And it's desire, it's appetite, is for you. And so in this world, east of Eden, this is what life is like now.

[16 : 01] That there is a powerful force. That there's a monster at play in this world. But it's not out there. It's not a talking serpent out there anymore.

No, it's in here. Sin is crouching at the door of each and every heart here. When Bethany and I lived in America, we went on holiday to the mountains in North Carolina.

And the one thing that we were told to watch out for is bears. If you're going hiking, watch out for bears. The one thing you do not mess with is a bear.

Well, this is like, God is telling us, as we head out of the garden, as we live east of Eden, this is the one thing you need to watch out for.

Sin is crouching at your door. And so God says, you must rule over sin. Otherwise, it will rule over you.

[17 : 06] Because when you let it in, look at Cain. It becomes anger and jealousy and bitterness and it devours you. And we can see that in our lives.

We saw it this morning with Naomi. You start grumbling. You open the door to a little bit of that grumbling and sin pounces in, devours you, and before you know it, your whole life becomes a life of complaining and bitterness and anger towards God.

You let one lustful thought in. You entertain that. You welcome that through the door. And it takes over your mind and it's all you can think about all day.

And so as we head east, what have we done? This is what we've done. This is the human heart now.

And so pick up your magnifying glass. We find a son, two sons. It's a promising start. But we also find a monster, sin. And that monster has devoured one of the sons.

[18 : 17] God has created two families, a family of faith and a family of unbelief. And as we go on, we find east of Eden, not only do these two families exist, but these two families are at war.

That's my second point today. These two families are at war. So remember, God promises conflicts between these two families. And this is what we see because what happens next, verse 8, Cain meets Abel in a field, rises up against Abel and kills him.

Sin really does devour, doesn't it? It began with an angry thought and it ends with blood spilled in a field. If you, kids, if you went to Holiday Bible Club, do you remember one of the lessons?

Wrong thoughts lead to wrong words and wrong actions. This is exactly what happened with Cain. From an angry thought to the first murder in human history.

And so, this is a stark warning to us. If you are angry with someone right now, if you are jealous, if a thought like that is lingering in your head, if sin is crouching, don't let it rule you.

[19 : 40] Confess that anger to the Lord right now. Put that anger to death. Because we can't think we're better than Cain. No. We all have the capacity to be like Cain.

This is why people get shot on campuses. This is why we have blood splatter analysis. This is life east of Eden now.

And so God asks Cain, he asks him, where is Abel, your brother? And does this question remind you of something? It's like God asking Adam, where are you?

after he ate the fruit. Sin always has a way of repeating itself. And how does Cain respond? Don't ask me. My brother's nothing to do with me.

Just like Adam, he tries to cover his tracks. But God knows our secret sins. Cain can't hide this body.

[20 : 42] And so God asks the question, still lingering in the air, Cain, what have you done? Cain, what have you done that the voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground?

It's like the wrongness, the injustice, the horror of Abel's murder. It's such an affront to God's creation, so heinous to the God of life.

It's like Abel's blood has seeped into the soil and you can put your ear to the soil and you can still hear the screams. Creation, it's like it's vibrating with injustice.

And so God is very clear about how he feels about murder. God hates murder. God cannot forget or ignore the blood spilled this side of Eden.

The blood on that Utah campus cries out to God. The blood on the streets of London cries out to God. The blood of the unborn cries out to God.

[21 : 54] And it cries, not just generally, it cries to God. And this, this is actually a great comfort for every family member of someone who's been murdered.

God hears those cries and it matters to him and he will answer those cries on judgment day. But remember, remember who this feud is between.

God has created two families and God promises these two families will be at war. God's family and Satan's family. And here is the war.

And so this is not only the murder of one human by another. No, this is an attack on God's people. that this is an act of persecution against the church.

This is spiritual warfare in action. But why? Why does there have to be a conflict like this? Why does Satan's family have to be against the family of faith?

[23 : 07] Well, remember, who is coming from this family of faith? The serpent crusher. So, if you were Satan and you knew the saviour is coming from God's family, what would you want to do?

You want to end that family. Kill it. End any hope of the serpent crusher coming. And that's what Satan is orchestrating here.

He's out to stop the son. He's out to end the church. So, not just blood, but the blood of martyrs particularly cries out to God.

God has promised that from the beginning. He's promised that God's people won't be welcome here east of Eden. We won't be at home.

The church, it's going to be at war with the world. Godliness is going to be opposed by evil. And it began here with Abel. It continues with Abraham.

[24 : 14] We saw it in Holiday Bible Club with Joseph, brother against brother. You see it with Israel and Babylon. And you see it with Christ on the cross.

The serpent crusher finally came and Satan's family had to kill him. And in fact, you see it before the cross. Think, who tried to kill Jesus as a baby?

Herod, a fellow Jew, his own brother. History is the story of these two families at war. So get your magnifying glass out.

East of Eden, there is sin and there is a son. But sin wants to destroy that son. And this is why the church faces such opposition today.

This is why being a Christian and actually standing up for godliness at work or at school, even within your own family, this is why it exists.

[25 : 22] Satan can't stop the serpent crusher anymore. And so he goes for the people. And he tries to scare us away from following this son.

And so realize, realize what's going on in your life and at school and at work. It really, it's a spiritual warfare out there. But we can take comfort that this isn't something new.

This isn't a surprise. Back in the garden, God promised you will belong to this family. family. And you will be at war. We might ask why.

Why is God creating his own family and then putting us through this? Well, I want to see that this war is actually a good thing. To feel persecution, it's actually a good sign because it means we aren't in Satan's family.

God has set you apart and brought you into his family. And so, to feel uncomfortable in this world, to be hated even by your own brother, it means you belong to something special.

[26 : 45] Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Abel died in a field, but he will rise again in a kingdom.

And brothers and sisters, so will we. But the drama isn't over. God spares Cain's life. God is merciful even to murderers.

But Cain, he isn't the promised son. This isn't the promised family. In fact, it looks like there's no family at all anymore. Like the promise has been killed.

It's died with Abel. Like Satan, he's won here in chapter 4. Like sin is too fierce a monster this side of Eden.

It often feels like that in persecution. It feels like that in life. And so how will God's promise win? Well, keep your magnifying glass out and keep looking for sin and a son.

[27 : 46] Because next, the final thing, the monster is big. God is bigger. It's the final point. The monster is big, but God is bigger. After Abel's murder, it looks like sin is one.

And then to pour salt in the wound, if you keep going, it looks like the problem, it's actually only got worse. We follow Cain's family line. And by the way, Adam and Eve had other daughters, and so if you're wondering who did Cain marry, there you go.

And so we follow the family tree, and we end up at Lamech. And Lamech seems to be even worse than Cain. And in verse 23, this is actually a song.

He sings a song about something he's done. What does he sing? I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. murder runs in the family.

But this time, look who he's killed, a young man. Well, the word, it actually means young boy. And he boasts about it at the end of the song. Cain got away with it, but I'm really going to get away with it.

[29 : 02] So he not only murders, he murders a boy, and then he boasts about it, and then sings a song about it. It's like the monster of sin.

It's grown even more just a few verses on. Adam hid when he sinned, but now Lamech is singing about it. This side of Eden, we make ourselves feel better about sin by boasting about it.

It's no coincidence pride is called pride. And sin really has become a giant monster. It started with a bite of fruit in the garden, and now it's already become this.

This is what we've done. And so it looks like this world is hopeless, like the promise has ended.

That's how we can feel. Like the monster is too big in this world to do anything.

Or the monster, it's just too big in my life. How can I rule over it? But look how this chapter ends, verse 25. And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son, and called his name Seth.

[30 : 15] For she said, God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him. Another son, Seth. And what family does he belong to?

Verse 26. At that time, people began to call upon the name of the Lord. it's a believing family. The church continues with Seth.

The gates of hell did not prevail. And so, east of Eden is dark. It's bloody. Sin is a big monster. But listen to this, God is bigger. His grace is brighter. And even through the blood and sin of this world, look what he does.

He brings a son. He brings a family. And this is what he can do with you. However hopeless life feels for you, however messy the family that you've come from, however big the monster inside of you may seem, you need to know God is bigger.

[31 : 26] And he can bring light into your darkness. There is hope east of Eden. And it's found in a son. It's found in his only begotten son. Because God promises, if you have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, sin will not, cannot rule over you.

Christ is the son to break the power of that monster inside of you. The monster of this world. And so Satan and sin, it seems like he's winning this side of Eden.

God's God's family. Satan can never win in your life. Satan tries to suffocate, to kill, to extinguish the church, but God is preserving his family.

The family of his son, the church. For those in Christ, he is preserving you right now. So let me ask, which family do you belong to?

Because at the end of the age, only one family will see victory in this war. So this side of Eden, yes, there is sin, but there is a son, and it's only in him that we have victory.

[32 : 47] Let's pray.