Cain's Ungodly Line and Seth's Godly Line
Genesis 4:16-5:20

A period of some 1,500 years lies between the Fall and the Flood. Jesus, Himself, commented on this period “as the days of Noah were” (Matthew 24:37), so would be the days prior to His return.

Two ancestral lines are traced in Genesis 4 and 5. The line of Cain is described first, the line of the ungodly; that of Seth, the line of the godly, is reviewed next.
-The writer pauses with the seventh from Adam in both lines to give a view of how things have been developing.

It has been noted that “without God, the more power we have the sooner we destroy ourselves; without God, the richer we are, the sooner we rot.”

I. The Cainites: The Ungodly Line – 4:16-24

Notice: This is the Cainite civilization; not the Canaanite civilization.

After he murdered Abel, Cain was sentenced by God to restlessly wander the earth. So when Cain went out from the Lord's presence to live in the land of Nod (Nod means “wandering) east of Eden, his head was “bloody but unbowed.”
-He bore the gracious mark of protection, no one could kill him, but he would live forever with his guilty conscience, never feeling at home, never feeling entirely safe. He couldn't work the ground with success and he would not die for a long time.
-Cain is now running from the Lord! What will he do? Where will he go? He will begin a secular society; a society that lived apart from God and in the Absence of His guidance.

What happens to society when it rebels against God? Answer: It prospers! See Psalm 73 for more details. The prosperity of the wicked has troubled God's people since the beginning. Why do some people ignore God, mistreat others, commit overt acts of sin, and seem to prosper anyway? And why do those who love the Lord seem to take it on the chin?

Cain's ungodly line is marked by their Indifference to God and their Independence of God.
-This whole section shows the ever-widening divide between the two lines- believers and unbelievers. And it helps us see how we should live in a culture that has largely turned its back on God.

Let me give you some marks of secular society:

A. Construction – 4:17-18
Cain's response to his punishment by God is threefold: (1) He builds a family, (2) he builds a city, (3) he builds a legacy.

He builds a family: Let's stop and answer a familiar question: Where did Cain get his wife”? The answer is fairly simple. Since the human race descended from Adam and Eve, he must have married one of his sisters or one of his nieces. Later on, God would forbid marriage between close relatives (Lev. 18:7-17). But at this early date, no sin was involved.

He builds a city: Rapid growth in population took place. This was a self-protection measure since he lived in fear. At a deeper level, the desire to build a city is an act of rebellion against God, who sentenced him to wander the earth. Now Cain will defy the Lord and settle down with his own people and build his own city. 

-Cain was the first city-planner and the first real estate developer. The early days of the human race were marked by growth, expansion, and continual construction of roads, homes, and buildings.

B. Corruption – 4:19

Lamech decided to marry two women and introduced a “new morality.” He “jumped the fence” of God's original design for marriage and became the first polygamist. Now instead of one man with one woman for life, sexual desire overrules God's design and anything goes. 

-The names of his wives suggest that he was motivated by sensual impulses. Adah means “beauty” or “ornamental” and Zillah means “tinkling” or “seductress”.


And the worse of it is that we are no longer shocked at these things. In some cases, we tolerate these sins.

C. Culture – 4:20-22

There is a positive progress in human culture in the line of Cain. There was some marvelous discoveries.

• Jabal
  From Jabal comes agriculture. He adapted to cattle ranching. He developed animal husbandry.
• Jubal
  His contribution was music – string instruments and wind instruments. It was entertainment. From Jubal came the fine arts.
• Tubal – Cain
  He introduced an industrial revolution into the ancient world. He discovered smelting and forging of brass (copper) and iron. He would make instruments for farming, but also for war.
The three of them founded an age of discovery and were the innovators of prosperity, pleasure, and power.

It is a mistake to read Genesis 4 and conclude that human culture is a bad thing or that unbelievers cannot produce works of enormous value. To the contrary, the entire world has benefited by modern agriculture, the flourishing of the arts, and by the incredible progress of technology in the last century. These things are possible because even sinful men and women still possess the image of God that allows them to think, to create, to grow, to develop, to experiment, to dream, and to explore new territory. As Christians, we ought to be thankful for the creature comforts we have because of the mind and skill given by the Lord even to the ungodly.

D. Crime – 4:23-24

This is the oldest song in the Bible. Lamech composes a little ditty in honor of himself for killing a young man who injured him. Like a typical thug, he believes no one dares to bring him to justice. He even thinks that he will get revenge seventy-seven times if anyone tries to attack him. -Lamech's boast stands in sharp contrast with our Lord's teaching on forgiveness, to forgive seventy times seven.

II. The Sethites: The Godly Line – 4:25-26

The narrative now goes back to Adam. Eve's faith is seen because “another offspring” is literally “another seed”, which references the promise of 3:15 about how her seed would crush the serpent's head.
- Seth's firstborn and successors “call upon the name of the Lord.” They worshiped God and proclaimed the Lord to others. This is the distinctive of God's people. They proclaim the character of the Lord and sing His praises.
- Believers went public with their faith “in those days”. God never leaves Himself without a witness. Saintly men lived in the world with the ungodly. In the days of Cain and his descendants, the Sethites openly confessed their faith while Lamech boasted of his sin, while men followed sensual pursuits, and while society began to spiral downward. In that day of growing darkness, the godly banded together openly and publicly to declare the name of the Lord. When the ungodly grow bold, it is time for the godly to be even bolder.

When you put Cain's family tree next to that of Seth (Chapter 5), you can't help but notice the similarity in names. You have Enoch and Enosh (v.6) and Enoch (v.18), Mehujael and Mahalael (v.12), Methushael and Methuselah (v.21), and Lamech and Lamech (v.25).
- What does this similarity in names mean? Perhaps it's God's way of telling us that the godless line of Cain (which is still with us) does its best to imitate the godly line of Seth. There is an Enoch in both genealogies, but Cain's Enoch didn't walk with God.

Notice that it is recorded that the Sethites died. The narrative is significantly silent about the death of the Cainites. Heaven had no interest in their deaths. As their lives were empty, hollow, meaningless sham, so their deaths were an everlasting shame. But God took note of the death of the Sethites. The death of each saint was jubilee day in heaven (Ps. 116:15). Death for them was not the end, but the beginning.
The genealogy of Cain gives no ages, since his line, being cursed by God, would have no eternal history. But Seth's genealogy not only gives the age of each patriarch at the time of the firstborn (by whom the line would be continued), but the number of years he lived after the birth, and then the total years of life. Each individual is important to God's eternal economy.

Genesis 5 has been called “The Bible's Graveyard.” Adam was 930 years of age when he died (5:5). It took that long for the death sentence of Eden to catch up with him. Only one other person's death had been recorded so far – that of Able the martyr. Thus, the first two people to die went to heaven. The third person to leave the scene would be Enoch, and he did not even die. God began to populate heaven before Satan began to populate hell.