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We're ready to resume now in Genesis chapter 4. We're tracing the lineage of Cain. And lineage is significant in the Bible. God orchestrates lineage.

Why is it that God can say what he says with regard to the three generation curse? Are you just out of luck if your father and grandfather were reprobates and you might have wanted to go a different way, but you're stuck in this three generation curse thing and it's just circumstances beyond your control. It's the sovereignty of God. That is not it at all.

We know that the seed principle that God stated when he was talking to Adam and Eve in the garden I will put enmitieship literally between you serpent and the woman and between your seed and her seed. That concept of seed and offspring and lineage carries all through the Bible, doesn't it? God makes an issue out of Abraham's seed. It is a part of the promise that through Abraham and his descendants who will be as numerous as the sands of the sea, all the world will be blessed.

How can God say that it's going to be Abraham's seed and that it's not going to be a Chinaman that springs up a couple hundred years hence who's just roaring on fire for God and becomes a great apostle to the Chinese and that the Chinese are the evangelists and get a worship system and covenant promises and land and so forth. Why is it that these things in fact come about through the seed or the lineage that God foretells? Well, there are two ways that this could come about. It is either that God dictates the choices of men's hearts or it is also equally and I think exceedingly more likely that God in His foreknowledge arranges the time and place of birth for people who are going to be those who seek His face, those who accept Him for salvation and especially those who pursue Him after their salvation.

Now at first this sounds like a little bit of a weird idea and we're not talking about pre-existence of souls or anything like that. All we're saying is that God is omniscient and a part of His omniscience in knowing everything is knowing ahead of time how someone will choose. His knowledge is not determinative.

It does not mean that because God knows something that makes it happen. God's knowledge is not the cause of an act. God knew that at some point Lucifer would rebel and fall and take a third of the angels with him.

But because God knew that, it didn't cause it to take place. God is not like King Midas. You remember the story of King Midas? Something happened, I forget how the first part of the story goes, but somebody put a spell on him so that everything he touched turned to gold.

I think he asked for that maybe. He thought, wouldn't it be great? But the problem is

everything that he touched turned to gold. His bed turned to gold, his food turned to gold.

He was a victim of this touch. Sometimes people picture God's foreknowledge or God's omniscience sort of like the Midas touch, that if God knows something, that decrees it. That makes it certain, and that is the cause of that thing happening because God knows it.

It can happen no other way. What it does is make God a victim and a prisoner of His own supposed character or His own supposed attributes. It's not that way at all.

God is far greater. God can know something without having anything to do with it. That is specifically true of sin and rebellion.

God may know ahead of time that a people or a group of people are going to accept Him. A people or a group of people are going to reject Him. God is free in His sovereignty, which is a legitimate divine attribute, to decide when and where those people are going to enter human history, what country they're going to live in, what continent they're going to live in, what historical age they are going to be a part of.

And that decision does not affect their volition in any way. Someone who is positive toward God and accepts God would have done the same in any age, in any clime, in any environment because that's one of the points God is making in human history is that environment is not a factor in the volitional choice. It does not matter if you come from a bad home with evil influences.

It doesn't matter if you come from a wonderful home with a spiritual silver spoon in your mouth. There are just as many people born in wonderful homes and trained up who reject God as there are people who come out of horrible, abusive environments and come to God. And that's one of the things God demonstrates in history is that environment is not a factor.

We are self-determining. We choose. It is a delegated part of the image of God.

And God holds us accountable for that choice. The demonstration in human history is the argument, if you will, or the demonstration of the basis of the condemnation of Lucifer and the angels who have followed him. Because they too cannot blame environment.

They can't argue that an alternative universe in which they are free to live apart from God is viable. God demonstrates in human history, anytime someone separates themselves from God, it results in decay, degeneration, and trends toward death and destruction. There is no life apart from God.

And that is demonstrated in human history. And the argument that says, why can't God just leave us alone? Why can't he just let us do our own thing? This is Satan's argument.

I will be like the Most High.

We'll just have a little separate universe over here where I will be the policymaker. And why can't we do that? This is a part of Satan's argument, I believe, in what has been called the angelic conflict, or the issue between God and the fallen angels. Why do we have to be subject to you? Why do we have to follow your plan? Why can't you just turn us loose and let us do our own thing over here? The reason is, as is demonstrated in human history, is anytime you sever a connection to God, you sever a connection to life.

You sever a connection to righteousness and goodness. And without that connection, you will inevitably degenerate and die. And the ultimate or second death is being permanently cut off from God, pictured in the lake of fire.

So I say pictured in, I don't mean the lake of fire is not literal, but that's the picture that we have of ultimate separation from God. So Cain here, we have seen in Genesis 4.16, has gone out from the presence of the Lord. He's following the seed principle, the seed of the serpent.

This, by the way, does not bear on his eternal salvation. It is generally assumed that Cain is an unbeliever and is a hellbound flaming reprobate. I don't think so.

And there are reasons, both Old Testament and New, that we have gone over in the past. But God converses with Cain. God makes an issue of works with Cain.

There is no works issue with unbelievers. The issue is faith. God says to Cain, if you do well, is there not a lifting up? A lifting up of your countenance, a lifting up of sin, a restoration to function and fellowship.

And if you do not do well, the croucher is at the door. His desire is for you, but you must master it. And this is an issue for believers.

What are you going to do in your life? Are you going to do well or are you not going to do well? Are you going to acknowledge sin and receive the restoration and cleansing that God provides in grace or not? Cain chooses not. And as a result, he goes out from the presence of the Lord. You don't have very many examples that you can point to in Scripture of unbelievers in the presence of God.

Pretty difficult to not believe in God when you are in his presence having a conversation with him, isn't it? This is not a matter of eternal salvation. This is a matter of obedience. And Cain, as the older son, as the heir of Adam, rejecting his birthright and his heritage, and the younger son, Abel, who dies and is in a sense resurrected in the form of Seth, pictures the church.

And this idea of reversal, the elder shall serve the younger, is repeated throughout Scripture. The last shall be first. And you see it in the broad scope of history with Israel

and the church.

Israel is the firstborn son. Israel is heir of the covenant promises, the presence of God, and so forth. But Israel sells its inheritance for a mess of pottage, as it were.

And so now the younger son, the church, is heir to all things through Christ. Israel is going to catch up. And in our study of the parables, we've seen that in the millennial kingdom, these covenant promises are going to be fulfilled.

And as it says in, I can't remember if it's Romans or Hebrews, where the author says that those Old Testament saints without us are not made complete. I think it's Hebrews 11. But here we are tracing the lineage of Cain.

And the whole point in saying that, turn with me to Acts chapter 17. This idea of the seed. Why is it that you have Methusael and Methushael and Lamech all being descendants of Cain? Is there something hereditary about negative volition? Is there something hereditary or family related? Or is God, in fact, placing people? Wouldn't it be an awful thing to be off in the land of Nod, and in these far off places where all the Cainites live, and be a positive person, someone who wants to seek after God? The logistics are not going to be there.

You'd have to travel a great distance and try to get back to the cousins over on the other side of the land there, head west, and try to find the descendants of Seth, to find nourishment in the Word of God and understanding of sacrifice and worship and so forth. Especially in these early days of history, it's a lot easier for God to organize the believers into one seed and organize the unbelievers into another seed. It's not causative, it's just based on God's foreknowledge, and He can provide knowledge and worship, provision, sacrifice, all of these things, for people whom He knows ahead of time are going to be looking for it.

Wouldn't it be a terrible thing if God said, well, I'm not going to act based on what I know, and we might have believers popping up in China or India or South America someplace in early history. Now you're going to have to try to fire a missionary halfway around the world, before planes and before ships and anything else, to try to get the promised provision of God to those who seek Him, to this person in a far off land. So in the early days of history, God puts them where He needs to.

Look at Acts chapter 17. It's not an often mentioned concept, but it is explicitly stated here in Acts chapter 17, Paul's sermon at the Areopagus. It's a wonderful thing.

I, through a happy accident of military orders, wound up actually standing at this spot in Greece. Paul is up on the Areopagus, sees the monument to the unknown God, and launches a sermon based on it. Verse 24 of Acts 17.

God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth,

does not dwell in temples made with hands, nor is He worshipped with men's hands as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, and so forth.

But it's explicitly stated that God has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings. So, you could think of it in terms of convenience for God. Look at the national life of Israel.

Where is the presence of God? Where is the communication of the truth of God? It's in the ritual service of the priests and the Levites. It's in the law of Moses. And why not, without determining choice, arrange for the birth of those who are going to be interested in God in a place where they can have that desire satisfied? So, this is something to keep in mind when you look at the concept of seed.

Why is there enemyship between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent? Because those are the places, the pre-appointed times and places, where people who care about God and people who do not are found. We have the three sons of Lamech, as we resume now, in Genesis chapter 4, verse 20. Ada bore Jabal, he is the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock.

Jubal, he is the father of those who play the harp and flute. Zillah bears two-ball cane, an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron. Some people have thrown rocks at this because in ancient history they didn't know about iron yet.

But they have found very ancient iron working. Before they knew how to smelt iron, before they knew how to get iron out of ferrite ore and so forth, they would discover meteoric iron. There would be chunks of meteors laying around on the ground that they would take and cold forge.

They would beat it into blades and axes and one thing and another, hammerheads. This is very ancient. Even the men who only believe in the caveman stone age theory of human development recognize that iron has been understood and used and made into things from exceedingly ancient times.

It's very interesting to look at the little hammer that is embedded in rock. What's-his-name has down there at Glen Rose at the Museum of Creation Research or whatever it is. We've got a little video in there from the Ancient Secrets of the Bible series or something where he is talking about the fact that the flood accounts for a lot of archaeological evidence that is found.

The fact that this hammer, which has a wooden handle and I believe it's an iron head or maybe a bronze head, is embedded in solid rock. They say, well, you know, these rocks were all formed millions of years ago and before man was around and yet here's a man-made object embedded in solid rock. So it kind of puts the whole secular theory of history on its head.

You don't find anybody that will talk about that hammer because they don't know what to do with it. Anyway, it's very interesting to look at because it's probably pre-flood. A lot of the geology that we observe today was brought about by the flood, Grand Canyon and some of these other things.

Anyway, you have Tubal Cain, the teacher or instructor of those who are metal workers. As I said earlier, jbal, jubal, and tubal are all variations on the word yabul, which means to produce or to be the originator of something. And this is what comes from the line of Cain.

People have come and said, now see, that sinful rock music, that all originated back there with Jubal, the son of Cain. That sinful music, you just go back there and find out that's a thing from Cain. It's wicked and evil.

Interestingly, jubal or yubal in Hebrew is formed from the same consonants as yobel. Remember the O-E pattern that indicates a participle. Well, yobel in Hebrew is the word for the ram's horn, the shofar, that's blown for holy convocations and so forth.

So obviously God didn't think music was too bad because the sounding of the ram's horn is indicated by yobel. Very interesting also, there are three sons here. He has these two wives, and each of these wives have two children.

So Lamech is the man of twos. Two wives, each wife has two children. Ada has two sons.

Zillah has a son and a daughter. And there is an ancient Jewish tradition. There's nothing in the scripture to support this, but I will just make you aware of it.

Jewish tradition says that the mention of Amah here, the daughter, is there because she was Noah's wife. I don't know. I have no earthly idea.

But ancient tradition going back thousands of years in Israel says that Amah was Noah's wife. But you have these three sons who then perpetuate the race. And this is sort of the sign of the ending of a particular period.

This is where the lineage of Cain drops off at this point. And this is a pattern seen elsewhere in scripture to sort of mark the end of a period. You find this also with Noah in Genesis 5.32. Noah's three sons, Ham, Shem, and Japheth.

You have the end of an era there with Noah and the beginning of another one. You also

have it with the sons of Tira in Genesis 11.26. Three sons, and of course from there you start the story of Abraham. So this splitting of a line, you have son, son, son, son, and then you have three sons, is a sort of a marker.

And we have that here. Then we have this very fascinating speech by Lamech. Lamech says to his wives, Ada and Zillah, hear my voice.

Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech. For I have killed a man for wounding me, and a young man for hurting me. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.

Most commentators who study this think that this is the restating of one murder. In verse 23, a man for wounding me, a young man for hurting me. There's two different words for man there.

The second one, young man, is yeled, which can be used for actually anybody up to the age of 40, if you trace its usage in the later Old Testament. But I think that this, contrary to all of the interpreters, is talking about two different killings. Part of the reason is that Lamech is the man of twos.

He has two wives, each of whom have two sons. And the other thing is verse 24. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.

And I think that statement implies that he is a double murderer. It's also interesting that in verse 23, when he says, I've killed a man for wounding me, the word there is literally bruising me. Remember back, he will bruise or crush your head, and you will bruise or crush his heel.

Well, here, Lamech doesn't like being bruised, and so he retaliates with murder. Remember what happened in the contact between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, Cain and Abel, where Cain, following after the croucher at the door, murders his brother Abel. Here, Lamech feels like he has been bruised, and so he commits a murder.

And then this young man is murdered for hurting me, and this is literally the word for hitting. And these same two verbs for bruising and hitting are explicitly mentioned in the Law of Talion, over in, I hope I wrote that down, I believe it is in Exodus. I'll find it here in my scattered notes in a moment.

But you remember when it says, we'll come back to that. Wherever it is, it talks about bruising and hitting. Those same two words are used in the expression of the Law of Talion that goes on to say, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life.

And so I think that there are two murders here, and this is why Lamech is proud of his multiplying, if you will, of his Cainite heritage. He knows his history, doesn't he? He

knows his lineage, and he's proud of it. And it's interesting that of all the statements that God makes to Cain, there are many that try to turn him and try to get him to acknowledge his error and repent.

But the only statement that Lamech chooses to quote is the protection of God. God said he wouldn't hurt Cain, that he would avenge anyone who killed Cain. And that's the only part of what God said that Lamech is interested in.

If Cain will be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech 77-fold. He doesn't choose to remember that because of the murder that Cain committed, he was banished, he was made a fugitive and a vagabond, he had to go out from the presence of the Lord, he had to go eastward in the evil direction, he is hidden from God's face, cut off from his people, and so forth. Lamech doesn't choose to think about any of that.

He just remembers the one good part, the one saving grace, if you will, that God would avenge anyone who came after him for that murder. The avenger of blood idea was implemented. God said he would avenge Cain sevenfold.

So Lamech says, well, I've done two murders, so I guess that means God will avenge me 77-fold. A very arrogant and rebellious twisting of the word of God. And this is the culmination, if you will, of this line of Cain.

You have then, in verse 25, a more positive note. Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son, and named him Seth. And this is she named him Seth.

And her quote on this occasion, very common practice to make a statement or a justification for a name at birth. For God has appointed another seed for me, instead of Abel, whom Cain killed. We've already talked about the concept of the seed, and the statements of God about the seed of the woman.

You remember back in chapter 4, verse 1, Eve comes across as a different attitude when she bears Cain, her firstborn. She says, I have acquired a man, the sign of Yahweh. I have acquired a man.

This time, she says, God has appointed another seed for me. The emphasis is less on her acquisition of a man or a seed, the sign of Yahweh, and more on the appointing of God. God has appointed, God has set.

The word for set in Hebrew is very similar to Seth. So there's a word play there as well. God has appointed another seed for me, instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.

And Seth, literally in Hebrew means substitute. And you have a wonderful picture here. You may remember in the passage in Leviticus chapter 14, where the ritual for the cleansing of a leper is pictured.

We've studied that a couple of times in connection with Jesus' healing of a leper, cleansing a leper. And he instructs the leper to go to the priest. He says, go.

In fact, the Greek is very strong. Jesus basically pushes him up against the wall and gets up in his face and says, you go see the priest and perform the sacrifice that Moses commands. Well, the man is so excited at what Jesus has done.

And Jesus says, don't tell anyone what I have done for you. Go show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifice that Moses commanded. But the man is jubilant and he goes and tells everybody what Jesus has done and apparently never goes to the priest.

Well, under the law, which is what they're under at the time of Christ, you're not clean until the priest says you're clean. You may be cleansed, but you're not clean and you're not qualified to rejoin the fellowship until you go and offer the sacrifice of Leviticus 14. And there's a ritual that takes place over a couple of week period of cleansing and the sacrifice.

Two doves are brought out by the priest and one is killed and is broken open and its blood is poured into a bowl of fresh water, living water. And then hyssop is dipped into that water-blood mixture and that mixture is sprinkled on the living bird. And then the living bird is set free.

And those two birds are a picture of death and resurrection. They represent one bird that dies and is brought back to life. And in connection with cleansing and so forth.

It's a beautiful picture. This is what that leper had the opportunity. There probably hadn't been a cleansed leper in Israel in hundreds of years.

Not since the time of the prophets had there been a cleansed leper. This man could have gone down and at the temple with the priest demonstrated a wonderful truth about Jesus Christ. But instead, he thought he had a better way.

He would just go tell everybody what Jesus had done and it actually didn't serve God's purpose. Except as it's recorded in scripture for our benefit. But you have that idea of the two birds representing one thing.

Here you have two sons and it's a foreshadowing of the concept of resurrection. Abel is slain. Abel is the faithful son and he apparently dies for his trouble.

He's the one that offers the lamb sacrifice and brings the fat to God. He's the worthy son. He's the son that ought to be the heir because of his obedience.

And yet he is cut off. He dies. But Eve recognizes in the birth of Seth that there is a sense in which Abel has been brought back to life.

Seth is the substitute. Not for Cain who died by his own volition and is banished. She

doesn't say this is the substitute for Cain.

She says this is the substitute for Abel. Why does she say that? She understands that Abel is the seed of the woman. That Abel represents the concept of obedience and faith and seeking after God.

God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel. So she has changed her mind from chapter 4 verse 1 where she thought that Cain would be the sign of God. Cain becomes a sign, alright.

God puts that sign or oath on his head. But Seth, to him also a son is born. And interestingly enough, his son's name is Enosh.

Enosh is another Hebrew word for man. It's a virtual synonym for Adam. And instead of Cain, which has the implication of strength and so forth, here Enosh, when it's used in the Hebrew scriptures, represents man in his weakness.

Man in his lack of strength relative to God. You can see uses of it, for example, in Psalm 103.15, Psalm 33.12, and Psalm 33.26. Normally we would go to those passages, and since this is normal we will. Turn to Psalm 103.15. As for man, his days are like grass, as a flower of the field, so he flourishes.

For the wind passes over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, on those who fear him. And his righteousness to children's children, to such as keep his covenant, and to those who remember his commandments, to do them.

But the word there in verse 15, as for man, it's Enosh. So there is a recognition, even in the naming of the son that Seth has, that it's not man in his strength. It's not like Lamech names his son and says, these men are capable, they can produce.

And look at what they've done. They're the originators of music. They're the originators of the Bedouin lifestyle of herding flocks and sheep and trading with them and engaging in commerce.

And here's my third son Tubal, and he's the big metal worker, and he can take hard objects and hammer them into something that's useful. Seth has a completely different frame of mind, and he says, I know that we are Enosh. We are man that is weak and that has a need for God.

So Enosh is the grandson of Adam through Seth, and it says that in his time, men began to call on the name of the Lord. Why is that? What does it mean that men began to call on the name of the Lord? Well, there are many passages that use this phrase. Beginning in Genesis 12.8, it is a characteristic of the patriarchs.

It's a characteristic of the line of promise to call on the name of the Lord. It talks about Abram who moves to the land of Canaan, and he goes to the mountain east of Bethel in Genesis 12.8, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord.

It's a synonym for worship. It's a synonym for prayer and sacrifice. In the days of Enosh, apparently the personal visitation or personal presence of God became a far more rare thing.

You remember God used to walk in the garden every day and talk with Adam and Eve, and once they were expelled from the garden, that was a less frequent opportunity. He comes and talks to Cain. Evidently there was some communication from God to explain the concept of worship and sacrifice and so forth, but as history rolls on, God recedes, and his personal presence is no longer a direct manifestation to man except on rare and special occasions.

So to communicate with God, to commune with God, and to worship God, rather than standing in his personal presence, you now call on the name of the Lord. It's an indication of the beginning of formal worship as a means of approach versus enjoying personal visitation from God. You can see this used again just a page over in 13.4. Abram went up from Egypt, rich in livestock, silver and gold.

He goes to Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning between Bethel and Ai, to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the Lord. If you have a software package or something that lets you do a concordance search on a phrase, you'll find that phrase, call on the name of the Lord, many places.

Genesis 21.33, Genesis 26.25, are other uses in the book of Genesis. 21.33 and 26.5. What is the point of all of this? What difference does it make to us? It tells us that there is a choice that faces us after salvation. And the issue is not just are you saved or are you lost.

The issue is are you taking advantage of the calling and the opportunity to be the seed of promise, to be an inheritor, to be an heir. In this age, an heir with Christ. It's a choice that we make.

And many of the circumstances of our lives have been worked out in advance by God based on the fact that He knew who and what we would be. He didn't determine it. He is not responsible for it in a causative sense.

But He has made provision for it. We are blessed by being born in the day and age that we have been. Our particular calling in this age is based on our position in Christ, which is unique.

We are part of those that have been given to Christ as a gift, the bride of Christ. When Jesus says, all those who the Father have given me will come to me, He is talking about His receiving of a gift from the Father. And we are a part of that gift.

And we have the opportunity as believers to be aware of that and to condition our lives and our priorities on it. God endeavors to turn us. God will challenge us.

God will confront us and say, if you do well, there is a lifting up. If you do not do well, the croucher is at the door. And in contrasting the line of Cain with its overt rebellious attitude and lack of interest in God and the things of God, with the line of Seth, which will move down through Noah and Abraham, and ultimately issue in the twelve tribes of Israel, there is a contrast and there is an expectation there that we will respond to the manifestations of God's grace in a positive way.

The last issue we want to cover here, and I despair of finishing it but will make a start, is the idea introduced here by Lamech of polygamy. Polygamy is an interesting question in the Bible. Like slavery, it is nowhere explicitly condemned.

It is nowhere prohibited except by implication. In the case of a king, for example, in Deuteronomy 17.17, Moses warns Israel that in the future when they have a king, he says, beware lest he take to himself many wives and start building up his armies and conscripting and skimming off the cream of the land for his own gain. He says the king should not multiply to himself many wives.

It is not explicitly forbidden. This gets back to what we opened our worship with this morning over in Hebrews. When we as believers pursue an understanding of the truth, there are things that we become aware of that are not necessarily prescribed or proscribed.

They are not necessarily chapter and verse proof text issues. These are things that we come to an understanding of because we are asking and seeking and knocking. This is one of those issues.

How would people have known whether or not polygamy was a good idea or a bad idea? Remember Paul says in Romans that from Adam to Moses there was no law. There wasn't these hard and fast rules. People were expected to figure this out on their own based on what God communicated.

What is the communication that God has given that tells them that polygamy is a bad idea? Well, it's pretty simple. Go back to the garden. How many helpmeets did God make? He didn't say, not good that the man should be alone and make a little harem out of the dust, did he? Or out of the rib.

He didn't take three or four ribs and make three or four wives. He made one. So it's a clear pattern.

The man is no longer alone. Now everything is good because he's got one mate. But the rebellious side of the line here in the person of Lamech is the first side to reject that pattern and that implicit communication from God.

And polygamy throughout the scripture never issues in positive things. We won't look at all of the examples. You can think about Abraham with Sarah and her handmaid Hagar.

And by involving himself with Hagar, Abraham brings a curse on himself that's going to last for many, many hundreds of years. You look at Jacob. He winds up having four different mothers for his children.

He marries Leah and then Rachel and then their handmaids Bilhah and Zilpah. It's interesting, which of those, you know, we have this idea of right man, right woman. Which one of the four was Jacob's real wife, so to speak? Well, it's interesting to look at the offspring.

You know, there are 12 tribes. Some of them come from each of the four. But Leah, the first person that Jacob marries, the four sons are Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah.

Who winds up running the worship life in Israel? It's Levi. Who winds up wielding the scepter and from whom is Jesus Christ descended? Judah. And those are sons of Jacob by his first wife, Leah.

Bilhah, you have Dan and Naphtali. She's Rachel's handmaid. Zilpah, you have Gad and Asher.

Zilpah, of course, is Leah's handmaid. From Rachel herself, you have Joseph and Benjamin. But from Leah, you have Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah.

Then you have several of these others show up. And then you have Issachar, Zebulun, and the daughter Dinah. So over half of the children that Jacob has and all of the ones that are significant in Israel's later history in terms of priesthood and rulership come from Leah.

You can see a similar pattern when you look at David. And David has got wives all over Israel from all different places. You can tell a lot of them are political alliance types of things.

He marries the daughter of the king of Geshur. And he marries a Jezreelite gal to make peace with the region of Jezreel and so forth. But you trace out all of the sons and daughters from those unions.

It boils down to where does Christ come from? Christ is descended from David. Well, Mary is descended on her side from Nathan, the son of David. He has no issue with Michael, his first wife, Saul's daughter.

Maakah, the daughter of the king of Geshur is where Absalom comes from. You know what happened with Absalom. Ahinoam gives Amnon.

He's the one that commits the rape and then is murdered by Absalom. With Abigail, he has Kiliab. We don't know what happened to Kiliab.

Hagith gives him the son Adonijah. He's the one that tries to unseat Solomon and winds up dying for his trouble. Abital, he has Shephethiah.

And Eglam, he has Ithriam. But he eventually has the son Nathan. And he is the great-great-grandfather of Mary, who is the mother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Joseph, who is Jesus' stepfather in a sense, is descended from Solomon through Coniah or Jeconiah. And if you go to Jeremiah 22, you find the Coniah curse because of the intense evil of that king. God promises that his line will not sit on the throne anymore.

And it's fulfilled when you get to Joseph because Joseph is not the actual father of Jesus Christ. And so in a sense, that line is cut off. And it's illustrated in the fact that Joseph is there but is not the actual father.

So once again, the multiplicity of wives that David has does not bode well for him or his kingdom. And it all goes back to discerning the will of God by asking and seeking and knocking. There's not always going to be an explicit statement of God's will.

But by continuing to pursue an understanding of the plan, purpose, and character of God, these things will become evident to us. We will have our senses exercised to discern good and evil, as the author of Hebrews says in verse 5. So it's an encouragement to us. The promise is there.

It's available. And it depends on our choice. We don't want to be the seed of the serpent.

We want to be the seed of promise. We want to inherit those blessings that God so much wants to give us through His Son, Jesus Christ. Let's close in prayer.

We thank you, Father, for the illustration of so many wonderful truths in your word. We thank you for the example that is given us in the Old Testament Scriptures and the instruction and correction that it provides for us. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will use these things in our souls to conform us more closely to the image and example of our Savior.

We pray that as a result we will be a worthy part of the bride without spot or wrinkle, any such thing, but holy and without blemish on the day when Christ returns and claims us and we enter into the eternal future with Him. We thank you again for the fellowship we enjoy through your word. We pray your blessing on each of us as we go forth to another week of opportunities and challenges.

We thank you again in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen.