

In the previous chapter, we considered the possibility that Lamech might have been worried that the curse of Cain would befall the generation after him, the seventh. Though this is speculative and perhaps not the simplest explanation, it is certainly plausible. Given this potential, we now delve further into this seventh generation. Interestingly, we are provided more details about this generation of Cain than any other.

THE FIRST POLYGAMY

In Genesis 4:19, we encounter the first recorded instance of polygamy. Lamech, a descendant of Cain, takes two wives: Adah and Zillah. However, beyond the names of their children and a recorded conversation with their husband, Lamech, the Bible tells us very little about these two women. Furthermore, there is scant tradition or additional information about them.

Polygamy in the Bible is a somewhat complex topic. While the practice is seen in various instances, it is often portrayed in a negative light. It is found both in royalty, for political purposes, but also in non-royalty, like Abraham and Jacob.

While the Bible doesn't explicitly condemn polygamy, it does indicate that the original design for marriage as outlined in Genesis 2:24 is monogamy, stating that "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife."

By the era of the New Testament, polygamy appears to have faded, although it's unclear when or why this change occurred. By the time of Apostle Paul, monogamy had become the norm. Church leaders like Apostle Paul advised that church leaders should have only one wife (1 Timothy 3:2). However, it's likely that this advice was more related to divorce than polygamy.

MY THREE SONS...AND A DAUGHTER

Adah, one of Lamech's wives, gave birth to two sons: Jabal and Jubal. Jabal is named the father of those who dwell in tents and raise livestock. Her second child, Jubal, is known as the father of all who play the harp and the organ.

Zillah, the second wife of Lamech, bore Tubalcain, known as a forger of bronze and iron tools. As such, he is often considered the progenitor of all metalworkers.

In addition to Tubalcain, Zillah also had a daughter named Naamah. We will discuss Naamah in more detail later in this chapter.

It's important to emphasize that none of these professions - dwelling in tents, raising livestock, playing the harp and organ, and forging bronze and iron tools - are portrayed as ungodly or questionable. This challenges the often unspoken assumption that "Cain is the father of evil humanity." These professions are, in fact, crucial and valued aspects of society. The term "Jubilant" even derives from Jubal, known as the father of the harp and organ. Therefore, we should interpret the story of Cain and his descendants without assuming their inherent wickedness based solely on their lineage.

Yet, when studying Genesis 6:1-2, there is a fairly widespread belief that the "daughters of men" refers to the lineage of Cain. Such an interpretation is not only unfounded in the text, making it an instance of eisegesis (the process of interpreting a text in such a way that it introduces one's own presuppositions, agendas, or biases), but also fails to allow Scripture to be its own dictionary. This is particularly evident in the case of the "sons of God," also mentioned in

the passage. It is important to interpret these terms within their original context, instead of assigning them meanings based on later theological developments or personal biases.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

You've probably recognized the similarity of the names. Jabal, Jubal, Tubalcain. This is not only interesting, but it could also be revealing something important about what's going on. What is interesting and important is that all three of these names are related phonetically to *Huval*, which is translated as Abel.

It's worth remembering that *Huval* means "worthless". Our interpretation has been that Cain, whose name means "gotten", killed his brother Abel because he couldn't bear that God accepted the sacrifice of the "worthless" one but not his own. Now, in the seventh generation, fearing that God might avenge Abel's death, Lamech attempts to honor "the worthless". He does this by transforming the perception of the name from "worthless" to incredibly productive and useful in all facets of society - from raising livestock, to music, to metalworking. This could be seen as a form of redemption or reclamation, an attempt to right the wrongs of the past and reshape the legacy of Abel.

While it's important to note that there is no explicit textual evidence to confirm this interpretation, it provides an intriguing and meaningful perspective on the narrative. The alternative would be to consider the detailed focus on the seventh generation, which comprises half of the verses about Cain's descendants, as merely incidental or devoid of deeper significance. This counterargument seems less plausible, given the emphasis placed on this generation and the significant societal contributions of the three sons. The narrative appears to underscore that something of great importance is unfolding in this generation. Could it be that the importance is the seventh generation is Lamech's attempt to "redeem" the name and memory of Abel, even if done out of fear? It is certainly a plausible argument.

As we discussed in chapter 4, the perception of Lamech as a violent individual largely stems from common English translations of Genesis 4:23-24, which suggest that Lamech is bragging about two murders. However, the original text is less certain, leaving substantial room for interpretation. Even the King James Version, renowned for its traditional and literal interpretation of the scriptures, includes a marginal note questioning this interpretation. E.W. Bullinger, in the Companion Bible, proposes an alternative translation: "I can kill a man for wounding me, and a young man for hurting me." While Bullinger's interpretation differs from what I propose, his note emphasizes the verse's ambiguity. It's not a clear admission of guilt. Therefore, though Lamech might have been violent, the text doesn't definitively confirm this. It's feasible to interpret Lamech's words differently, especially considering the broader narrative context and the original Hebrew text's ambiguities.

WHAT ABOUT THAT DAUGHTER?

Following the introduction of Tubalcain, the text shares an intriguing detail: "the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah" (v. 22). This brief mention might be overlooked due to its brevity, but it presents a significant milestone – Naamah is the first named daughter in the Bible. The inclusion of her name suggests a level of familiarity or significance, as if to say, "Everyone knows her, so we should mention her." Her name translates to "pleasant" or "beautiful," adding to her intrigue. But who is she? The text never mentions her again, leaving her identity and significance largely a mystery. For a devoted student of the Scripture, this sparks curiosity and invites further exploration.

Naamah, the first named daughter in the Bible, has been the subject of various legends and interpretations. Among these, one that stands out comes from Zoroastrianism, where a figure named Naamah is portrayed as a demon. Some have speculated that this could be the same Naamah mentioned in the Bible. However, it's worth noting that 'Naamah' is a common name in ancient Semitic cultures, and the demonic figure from Zoroastrianism could be an entirely different individual. The connection between the two figures might not extend beyond a shared name. Yet, it remains a fascinating topic of discussion, particularly if one is interested in tracing the possible cultural and religious intersections in ancient times.

What intrigues me more is that there is a fairly consistent interpretation among Judaism that Naamah is the wife of Noah. This is not uniform among Jewish sages, but is common enough to make one curious.

However, what is even more enticing to me as a theory is that Naamah is not the wife of Noah, but, through a mix-up of thinking over the centuries, she was incorrectly attributed to Noah because she *WAS* one of the wives on the ark. However, she was not Noah's wife, but the wife of one of Noah's sons, namely Ham. This view was suggested by John Gill, famed Baptist theologian of the 18th Century, who mentions it as being taught by a "Bishop Cumberland."¹

WHY SPECULATE?

Some might question the benefit of such speculation. It could appear as a wild goose chase, especially since there is no definitive way to arrive at a conclusive answer. However, there are a few points to consider:

1. In 2 Timothy 3:16, we are reminded that "All Scripture is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness". This reinforces the value of each passage within the scripture, including the accounts of Lamech's wives, sons, and the named daughter. There must be some significance to these individuals, and understanding their roles can deepen our knowledge of the text and provide insights into the historical and cultural context.
2. We must wonder why God breaks the pattern, both with Lamech's family and with Naamah? It is unusual to offer such detail, and it's unprecedented to mention a daughter in the genealogy. This deviation from the norm could indicate that there's more to the story.
3. Later on, we encounter the "giants" of Genesis 6, often referred to by their Hebrew name, Nephilim. We're told that they existed both before and after the Flood, and that they were the offspring of "the sons of God [who] saw the daughters of men that they were fair" (Genesis 6:2). We have an understanding of how they came about before the Flood, but Genesis 6:4 states, "There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that." It's this "also after that" that piques our curiosity. Just how did the Nephilim come to be on the earth after the Flood?

Could it be that the reason there is a curse on Ham's child is because Naamah, Ham's wife and of Cain's lineage, entered the ark carrying a Nephilim in her womb? Could this be indicated by the child's name itself? We shall learn this and more in Chapter 6.

¹ John Gill, "Exposition of the Entire Bible: Genesis: Genesis Chapter 4," Sacred Texts, accessed May 4, 2024, <https://sacred-texts.com/bib/cmt/gill/gen004.htm>.