

## Prayer

### Prayer

Dear Jesus, take away from us that tiredness of faith which descends upon God's servants as they seek to serve. Invigorate us with the exciting and fruitful prospects of all You have in store for us from day to day and week to week. Let us praise Your name with the joy that comes from true happiness of spirit, and may we bless You through all we do; AMEN

### Other Prayer Suggestions

#### Weekly Theme: Local Services

*Pray today for postal workers and others who deliver goods and services to our homes. Ask the Lord to bless them in their work and also to keep them safe on our streets.*

#### On-going prayers

- *Pray for school teachers across the world and the work they do*
- *Pray for world leaders as they try to deal with global recession*
- *Give thanks for those who are working to find peace in the world*

## Meditation

You call me ever onwards Lord Jesus Christ, my Saviour!

If I must change, may I do so but remain firm in my faith:

If I have sinned, may I repent and return to Your side:

If I need to act, may I do so with wisdom that is Yours:

If I must speak, may I declare Your prophetic Word boldly:

If I have been silent, may I feel free to open up my heart:

If I need to listen, may I truly hear Your Word of Life:

If I must challenge, may I speak Your truth rather than mine:

If I have to show courage, may I be humbled by Your grace

If I need to wait, may I be patient with all around me:

You call me ever onwards, Lord Jesus Christ.

## Bible Study - Genesis 4:17-26

<sup>17</sup> *Cain made love with his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. He built a city, and named it after his son Enoch.* <sup>18</sup> *To Enoch was born Irad; and Irad was the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael the father of Methushael, and Methushael the father of Lamech.*

<sup>19</sup> *Lamech took two wives; the name of the first was Adah, and the name of the second, Zillah.* <sup>20</sup> *Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the ancestor of tent-dwelling herdsmen.* <sup>21</sup> *His brother's name was Jubal; he was the ancestor of all those who play the lyre and pipe.* <sup>22</sup> *Zillah bore Tubal-cain, who made all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.*

<sup>23</sup> *Lamech said to his wives: 'Adah and Zillah, listen to me; you wives of Lamech, hear my words: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young boy for striking me. <sup>24</sup> If Cain is avenged sevenfold, then Lamech, seventy-sevenfold.'*

<sup>25</sup> *Adam made love with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth. She said, 'God has allowed me another child instead of Abel, because Cain killed him.'* <sup>26</sup> *A son was also born to Seth, and he named him Enosh. At that time people began to call on the name of the LORD.*

## Review

The fascinating stories of the first chapters of Genesis come to an end today, and we find ourselves reading lists of names. Most people today find these lists difficult to comprehend and somewhat boring, so why are they in scripture? Our passage begins with a list of names, which make up Cain's 'family tree' (4:17-24). After this, verse 25 and 26 describe the birth of Seth, the child who would form a new and significant family tree, providing an alternative descent from Adam and Eve. In the rest of scripture, we hear no more of Cain's descendants, and after this beginning, the next chapter, Genesis 5, describes the further descent from Seth, up to the time of Noah.

If we read about Cain's descendants, we discover some fascinating things, however, once we get past our natural difficulties in reading and pronouncing the complex Hebrew names (e.g. 'Methushael' - v18). With a little care, we can dig some fascinating issues out of this text. To start with, Cain's family line contains an inheritance of sin, for after he murdered Abel, sin was passed down in his family line. We can see this in particular within the description of Lamech, whose poem praises his own callous murder of a boy for striking him (4:23,24). This poem uses an odd word-play on the number seven, which connects with God's pronouncement on his four-times-great Grandfather Cain, after his murder of Abel; and incidentally, Lamech was also the seventh ancestor of Adam!

**Dynasties** The work and occupations of Cain and his descendents are fascinating, and indicate the development of human life. Cain builds cities (4:17), Jabal prefers the nomadic lifestyle (4:20), Jubal creates music (4:21), and Tubal-cain begins technology with the working of bronze and iron (4:22). Finally, the evil Lamech contributes his remarkably crafted poem with rhythmic patterns which almost translate into English directly from Hebrew (4:23,24)! However, these developments are tinged with the sins of Cain, and many have concluded that human endeavour along the lines of building, technology and science (the distant cousins of these trades and occupations) are tinged with Cain's sin. This may be a little prosaic, but we can all observe that the consequences of human endeavour in these fields has always been capable of being used for either good or ill, and where some use scientific and technological advance for good, others will certainly use it all for evil.

So it is that Adam and Eve begin a new dynasty with the birth of their third son Seth. Scripture enigmatically records 'at that time people began to call on the name of the Lord' (4:26); and this is a way of saying that the true worship of God began at the time of, and amongst, this new generation of Adam and Eve's descendents. The future of these generations would not prove to be easy, but as far as scripture was concerned, Seth's line was the one that God blessed for the future of humanity.

**Cain's wife!** Before we finish this brief study, we must, however, address the thorny issue of where Cain found his wife (4:17)! The issue is simple. If Adam and Eve were the first people on earth, where did Cain find a woman to marry? This question has been put by some with the purpose of undermining people's belief in the creation stories of Genesis 1 and 2, but this need not be so, for scripture presents us with this conundrum whether we

like it or not! Sometimes we are faced with issues like this, and we cannot explain them. They seem to cut across the whole understanding of scripture we have developed, and force some into saying that Genesis does not tell us the 'truth', but perhaps only a 'myth'. We do not have to respond to the challenge of 4:17 in this way, however, and there is an alternative explanation of this conundrum. There is no room within this brief study to give a complete explanation of this theory, but I will summarise it. The download version of this brief study has a fuller explanation appended to the text.

**The alternative explanation** If you have followed these studies you will be aware that I suggested that modern archaeology (controversially) suggests we can identify the Garden of Eden (see notes on 2:10-14). The same archaeologists indicate the possibility of real people called Adam, Eve and Cain (etc) living around 6,000 BC in the 'Garden of Eden', but with other peoples in physical existence who look like people (also made by God but not 'god-breathed' as in Gen 2:7). The theory I suggest is that if this is so, then when God breathed His Spirit into Adam and Eve to create spiritual people as now find ourselves (Gen 2:7) then this explains two things. Firstly, Adam and Eve can indeed be called the first true spiritual 'people' of historical civilisation as we know it; and secondly, when Cain needed a wife, there were other women around, but not those who had been 'god-breathed' in the manner of his own parents. You may have many questions about what this could mean for our understanding of Genesis and all human civilisations, and I can assure you that you are not the only one who feels this! However, it is an avenue worth pursuing for those who feel that the traditional antipathy between creationism and evolutionism has become a fruitless and unworthy debate for both Christians and scientists.

## Questions *(for use in groups)*

1. As you read this text today, what do you find that makes clear sense to you, if at all?
2. What problems can you see within the alternative suggestion about creation, which explains the existence of Cain's wife?
3. Is science and technology a good thing or a bad thing, and can we always know the difference?

## Discipleship

### **Personal comment:**

*Today, I ask you to consider your own beliefs about the Creation of the World, about Genesis, and the modern world of science and archaeology. Debates about this have never been easy, and few have been resolved, yet it is important that we each answer the questions posed by the text of scripture when it speaks about Cain's wife. The question is put to anyone who believes that 'God made the world in seven days', and it does need a reasonable answer. People in general wish to know what Christians believe, and how we justify our insistence that God made the world. They ask the awkward question 'How?' and we need to be able to answer, though it is always important to affirm that sin was part of the world 'from the beginning', and that in Christ we have a Saviour.*

### **Ideas for discipleship programme**

- *It should not be too difficult to explore the subjects raised in this study further by use of the internet or by getting hold of some of the relevant books (by D Rohl). Pursue what you find and see if God will lead you to a new and consistent understanding of His Word.*

- *Pray for those who find it hard to deal with the intellectual side of Christian things, such as searching for the meaning of Adam and Eve, and Cain's wife! Pray that these things will be taught by pastors and preachers in ways that people can understand and not feel patronised.*

## Final Prayer

Bring this day to its proper end, Father of all Grace, by forgiving my sins, releasing me from worry, assuring me of Your presence and removing all evil from my heart. May I find rest at its end in the knowledge that I have placed myself in the hands of the One who truly cares for my soul. AMEN

### ***An alternative study of archaeology, with respect to Cain's wife and other issues.***

What I have just said may well be intriguing to some and anathema to others, but do bear with me; for it is my intent to explore new ways of understanding Genesis exactly as it is whilst remaining true to the text of scripture. I much prefer to do this instead of going along the route of making minor changes to the text of the Bible which is a centuries old habit of scholars to try and rid us of such problems. Also, I hope you will read what I have to say with the same degree of caution that I write; I simply present what I find to be fascinating possibilities which future generations will resolve. I am not entirely sure that anyone either has or will ever have a monopoly on God's truth in Genesis, and the essential belief that God is our loving Creator and capable of all things is something that should bind His people together rather than divide them. The exact 'scientific' nature of what we think scripture says about Creation may be very significant, but it is certainly of secondary importance to this fundamental truth.

Today's study is largely about some interesting new archaeological discoveries and their interpretation, and I will conclude by summarising other details of today's passage. It is also my purpose to give you hope that despite the apparently boring reputation of genealogies and lists in the Bible, they sometimes hide things of the greatest of importance!

#### ***Ancient Sumerian King lists, Genesis and some new light ...***

If you were able to get hold of David Rohl's book '*Legend, the Genesis of Civilisation*' (London, Century 1998), then you would be able to read in full what I now present to you in a highly condensed form. I cannot discuss all of his logic or the science of his archaeology, for much of it is highly technical. His work is also controversial, particularly amongst theological academics who dismiss his work out of hand, rarely addressing the issues he presents or engaging with his analysis. The reason is simple; if his science is correct, then it runs entirely contrary to modern liberal theology which largely presents Genesis as myth and legend, created by Jews in the six or fifth century BC as a means of opposing

Babylonian beliefs about creation encountered by the Israelites at the time of the 'Exile' and the Prophets. David Rohl's work and that of his associates is of interest to more evangelical Christians like myself who feel that Genesis has far more of God's ancient truth in it than much modern theology allows, but do not wish to press the idea of six earthly 'days' of Creation too far as a literal scheme of things with which to fight battles with either 'science' or 'theology'.

In chapter six of his book, David Rohl describes the development of the most ancient languages we know about, which arise from civilisations within the ancient Near East including the regions within which Rohl 'discovered' the Garden of Eden. These scripts are the earliest forms of complex grammatical language we know of, and understanding them profoundly effects the study of all ancient languages including Hebrew. Rohl exposes the flaws in the way these ancient Sumerian and Akkadian cuneiform scripts have been interpreted, with errors concerning their pronunciation and indeed their literal 'spelling'. These have persisted from the earliest attempts to decipher them more than 150 years ago to the present day.

#### ***Ancient lists of kings – and Adam!***

The most ancient of these texts are lists of kings going back in time, and the results of Rohl's assessment show some remarkable features. Having adjusted the ancient texts using current analysis he observes that different king lists from different parts of the ancient world all have remarkably similar structures and names. Further, the ancient king lists he reconstructs are astonishingly similar to our text today (Gen4:17-20) and also Genesis chapter 5! You will object that these two lists of names are different, and come from Cain and Seth respectively; but Rohl shows how Biblical scholars are too literal in their assumptions about the spelling of ancient names, and, for example, the names Irad (4:18) and Jared (5:15-18) are equivalent, also Methushael (4:18) and Methuselah (5:25-27). He also explains how the order of the names comes to be different, due to misunderstandings about the way in which ancient texts were read (up, down, sideways etc!). The main feature of all this research is that one name appears at the head of them all; Biblical and non-Biblical king lists alike; the name of Adam!

His theory, backed by far more research on Sumerian texts than I can quote is that Adam was a real person living in the region of Eden (near the borders of modern Armenia, Turkey and Iran) who led a tribe living in the beautiful 'Garden' region to the East of Lake Urmia around the Adji Chay river. There was a tribal allegiance cemented by a marriage between Adam and someone called 'Hawwah' (Hebrew for Eve) which led to the movement of people eastwards towards the Caspian Sea (the land of Nod) and from which discoveries were made which started what we call the 'Bronze Age' due to the mineral wealth of the region (mentioned in Genesis 2:11,12). He regards Adam as the first 'man' of what we call 'civilisation'.

This seems almost too good to be true! If you believe as I do, that God's creation of people was due to the infilling of physical humanity with God's Spirit (Gen 1:26,27; Gen 2:7), then we now appear to have a real candidate for Adam, and his wife, Eve! These theories of Rohl do also explain why Cain and other relatives find wives, and go on to explain other details of the scriptural text, but they do not help those who wish to take a more literal view of Genesis1.

I will add to the interesting possibilities by telling you that I believe there are realistic reasons to tie together the physical and spiritual ancestry of all people alive today to the ancient people we have been talking about; but that is a discussion for another day, and involves other sciences; those of statistics and genetics.