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A HOUSE DIVIDED, Part Two

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There seem to be few things we can talk about as facts without adding in our own opinions about how to interpret those facts. Almost all of our public life is ruled by opinion. I mean, hardly a day goes by without hearing some new poll of public opinion. In truth, I think the polls are really a way of *directing* or *influencing* public opinion more than they are a real *reflection* of public opinion. See? *I just gave you my opinion!* The truth is, though, that we are human, and as humans, we are opinionated. I thought you might find some of these quotes amusing:

The world is not run by thought, nor by imagination, but by opinion.
- Elizabeth Drew

It is not truth, but opinion that can travel the world without a passport.
- Walter Raleigh

The foolish and the dead alone never change their opinions.
- James Russell Lowell

The right to be heard does not automatically include the right to be taken seriously.
- Hubert Humphrey

When I want your opinion I'll give it to you.
- Laurence J. Peter¹

Some people feel so strongly about the *relativity of truth* that they are of the opinion that there is no truth--only opinions. That belief is *in itself* an opinion. It's a way of shirking our obligation to truth. When I was a teacher, I found out that one of my students was encouraging others to illegally download files from the Internet. I explained to her that those files were protected by copyright laws, and that downloading them was an act of theft under the law. She said to me, "Well, that's you're opinion!" No, it wasn't my opinion; it was the law. She just didn't want the responsibility that came with truth, so she called *truth* an *opinion*.

We tend to unite with people who are of similar opinions, and reject, admonish, ignore, patronize, or even demonize those who hold opposing opinions. We see this in the everything from sports rivalries, as we discussed last week, to politics. We sometimes carry this strong-headedness into church business. The great thing about the Bible is that it gives us a proper foundation for our opinions. As we accept the truth of God's Word and we build our lives upon it, we can be sure that we are building on a firm foundation. Opinions change, but God's Word does not change. I want my opinions to be as close as possible to God's revealed will.

You see, Cain's opinion was that his own way was better than God's way. He substituted his own

¹ Famous Quotes and Authors.com, "Opinion Quotes." Available at http://www.famousquotesandauthors.com/topics/opinion_quotes.html.

reasoning in place of God's revelation--and this is still the temptation for all of us today.

The book of Genesis here gives a very brief look at the early generations that descended from Cain. Let's look now at Genesis 4 once again. The Bible has already disclosed to us that Cain had a son named Enoch. Verses 18-22 continue the line of descent:

18 And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.

19 And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

20 And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle.

21 And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.

22 And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah.

What we have here is a brief record of Adam's descendants through Cain up to the seventh generation. Obviously the list is abbreviated, since only one son each is listed for several generations. The biblical recorder lists only the immediate sons in the line between Cain and Lamech, because he has a message to give about Lamech which is instructive to us regarding this ancient civilization.

We notice that one man and his family are given special attention. This section gives us insight to the technological and cultural state of Cain's descendants in the seventh and eighth generation from Adam. Lamech is the first described polygamist in history, thus breaking God's pattern of one man and one woman, married for life. In other words, Lamech does not regard God in his life. He is shown to be selfish and self absorbed. The women's incentive for entering this union are unstated, and therefore we don't know whether it was family pressure, Lamech's social standing, or whatever else accounted for their agreeing to such an arrangement. It may also be that the practice of polygamy had already been accepted up to that point; but I think (*my opinion*) is that the biblical writer included this as a significant indicator of both Lamech's character and of the declining morality of his generation, of which he apparently was a man of renown and leadership.

The next thing we observe about this family is three noteworthy sons. Just as the ungodly line of Cain recorded here concludes with three named sons, so also does the godly line of Seth conclude with three sons, as we shall see.

These three sons, though, make their own remarkable achievements. The first, Jabal, makes a distinct break from settled agriculture and instead becomes a nomadic herdsman. He was not alone, either: his descendants after him continued in his ways. Remember, up to this point men had been given a vegetarian diet by God in Genesis 1:29:

Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

The account does not say that Jabal bred animals for their meat; but it does seem very likely that he did. Again, I believe the author is showing us the advancement of secular civilization and an increasing

separation from God. God does remove the prohibition against eating meat a few chapters after this (and I'm very glad He did!)

We may think that a nomadic lifestyle is relatively simple, but it is not. A nomad's life and livelihood consists of all kinds of knowledge, from geography to astronomy to herbalism to tool making to veterinarian skills. It's not rocket science perhaps, but it does require certain knowledge and skills.

Next is Jubal. Jubal is noted as the father of musical instruments. I don't call him the "father of music" because I'm sure people already knew how to sing; furthermore, there is only one Father of Music, who caused the morning stars to sing together at creation (Job 38:7)! But God imparted His gifts to men, and one of those gifts is music. Jubal made instruments to release his inner music.

The thing that I find so frustrating about music is that it's all based on mathematics. I can work out most things mathematically, given enough time, but I'm slow at doing so, and even slower at grasping new mathematical concepts. I do know this, though: musical instruments have to be made to very precise mathematical specifications, or the result is--well, not very musical!

In addition, we should note that it's one thing to conceive of an instrument, and quite another to actually manufacture it to precise specifications. Archaeologists today acknowledge mankind's ancient, persistent, worldwide love of music and musical instruments. It's hard to account for that from an evolutionary standpoint, because music seems to have sprung up instantly along with other aspects of advanced culture in whatever ancient civilization we study.

The final son mentioned is Tubalcain. The passage here refers to him as the first advanced metallurgist. Mining ores, processing them properly, creating enough sustained heat, providing fresh oxygen over extended periods of time, removing impurities, mixing metals such as tin and copper to make brass--all of these concepts are conveyed by this one statement. He not only worked the tin and copper into brass, but also refined iron.

This is astounding because humans actually *lost* the technology to refine iron until much later in history, in the centuries before the time of King David. This has caused some to doubt and ridicule the Word of God here; but the same crowd has doubted many other things attested by the Word, citing a lack of evidence, only to find out later that the Word was correct all along. For example, during the time of King David, the Bible says that the Israelites had to go to the Philistines for their iron needs, because the Philistines had the secret of refining iron. The Bible also notes a number of Hittites, including Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba. Secular scholars for many years ridiculed the Bible, saying that there were never *any* Hittites and that the Bible therefore was wrong.

However, the Bible has long since been vindicated. It turns out that the Hittites held the secret of iron, and that because of this secret, they had built a mighty empire in the ancient world. They vied for power with the Egyptians until both sides were worn down. Enter the "Sea Peoples." Their exact origin is unknown, but apparently a large group of them moved, by wagon train on land and by ships at sea, over from Greece, across Asia Minor, and down into Palestine, conquering everyone along their path, including the weakened Hittites. They wrested the secret of forging iron from the Hittites at that time. They continued moving down the Palestine coast into Egypt, where they were defeated--but only just! The Egyptians narrowly won the day. The Sea People's advance halted in Palestine, where they settled down...and we know them as the Philistines, who suddenly appeared in Israelite territories just before

the crowning of King Saul. What's more, the Egyptians recorded the battle and drew, in typical Egyptian form, pictures of their captives. It turns out the the Sea Peoples--the Philistines--were actually very tall people. Isn't that interesting when you consider the story of Goliath, who was a giant even among the Philistines?

I believe the biblical record. If we believe the Bible in its entirety, then we shall shortly see, within a few chapters, why the technology for forging iron was lost, only to be rediscovered later. The bottom line is that we can neither prove or disprove that Tubalcain was able to work iron; we simply believe the Bible's record, or we don't. There is no evidence outside of the Bible either way; so we either accept it by faith, or reject it by faith, but in either case, our opinion is based on faith.

The narrative continues in verses 23 and 24 as Lamech relates an incident to his wives in poetic form:

And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.

If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

Lamech, in an early instance of poetry, brags to his wife about murdering a young man. The younger man had injured Lamech, and Lamech retaliated by murdering him. The essence of his boast is that while God might have promised a seven fold penalty against anyone who harmed Cain, Lamech himself would deal a seventy-seven fold punishment to anyone who even hurt him. Lamech doesn't need God's protection; in fact, Lamech can take care of himself so well that people should be more afraid of the punishment they'll receive by harming Lamech than they ever would if they harmed Cain! What an audacious thing to say! It's inclusion here is meant to be a reflection on secular society at the time. There was knowledge of God, of Cain, of God's dealings with humanity, but many people, like Lamech, would not bow to God. They were intelligent, self-reliant, and immensely proud. *In Lamech's opinion, he didn't need God.*

In contrast to the growing wickedness of Cain's line, we have the beginning of the record of Seth's godly line in the last verses of chapter 4:

And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.

And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

The content here is repeated and expanded in the next chapter, and I believe there is a very specific reason for that which we will cover next week. Here, though, we have the story of the third named son of Adam and Eve. It's apparent that this son was born after the murder of Abel. We do not know when Adam and Eve's other children were born (Gen 5:4). The special significance of this son is that, up to this point, the promise of a Redeemer given in Genesis 3:15 could have come through any human; but here is the first narrowing of that promise.

Seth, as we shall see, became the foundation of the godly line of humanity. We see this line fleshed out in more detail in the next chapter. The really interesting thing about these verses is that in the time of Seth's son, as the human population grew, something happened religiously: men began to band together to call upon the name of the Lord. Corporate worship sprang up. Instead of each man individually

coming to God, men (plural) began to call upon the name of the Lord. Incidentally, the verb *call upon* could very well be translated *proclaim*. There is the concept of praying and preaching here. We know from revelation in the New Testament that there were preachers in the earth during these days of increasing moral decline. Again, we will discuss such things in more detail when we come to them; but it is important to realize that true worship of the true God was carried by a line of men who called upon or proclaimed the name of the Lord. God did not leave Himself without a witness.

In other words, there were those who believed and relied upon God's revealed truth rather than upon their own opinions. Truly there were, and are, two humanities. As we discussed before, Cain and his descendants followed their own opinions, while Abel, Seth, Enos, and others came to God in God's prescribed way.

Therefore, since Cain, everyone in the world stands either in the place of Cain or the place of Abel. From this point on in the flow of history there are two humanities. The one humanity says there is no God, or it makes gods in its own imagination, or it tries to come to the true God in its own way. The other humanity comes to the true God in God's way. There is no neutral ground.²

Where do you stand today? Will you take the opinion of Cain and his descendants, or will you call upon the name of the Lord? God's Word is a rock; our opinions are shifting sand. I close with the words of Jesus:

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it (Matthew 7:24-27).

2 Francis Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 115.