

His Faithfulness to the Woman's Seed

Gn 4 (Text)

14 March 2021, Reformed Church of Wainuiomata 10:30

(Put together by Pieter van Huyssteen with due acknowledgement)¹

Intro

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Many a Christian has often expressed their fear that the church might one day no longer exist – that there will come a time when there won't be any Christians left.

You see, people have looked at the secularisation of Europe, the USA – even of Australia and New Zealand. They look at these parts of the world and see empty churches and the decay of Christian values in society.

They also see the spread of Islam – even the fact that some church buildings in Europe have been changed into mosques.

Yes, God's people sees all these things – including the persecution of many Christians worldwide – and then they conclude in fear that the church is dying; that God has forgotten His covenant people – His loved ones; that there might come a time when even the individual Christian (you & I or our believing children) will experience total neglect – even rejection – from God!

Well, thankfully that's not the message of God's Word; neither the message of our text!

You see, our Bible passage shows that God is faithful in maintaining His church (upholding the faith of His loved ones & giving them strength to the measure) right through human history – and that He will do so until our Lord Jesus Christ works the final victory.

The sermon has three points:

- The serpent's seed
- The woman's seed
- THE Seed!

Point 1: The Serpent's Seed

My brother & sister, remember how in Gn 3:15 God promised that from the seed of the woman someone would come to crush the serpent's head, i.e., a human being would come to destroy satan!

Well, when Eve's first son was born, all indications are she thought that *he* was this seed who was going to destroy the serpent and the serpent's seed!

You see, in v. 1 we read *Adam knew² his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain.*

¹ With much appreciation for the wonderful work of GREIDANUS, Sidney. 2007. Preaching Christ from Genesis: foundations for expository sermons. Grand Rapids, MI : William B Eerdmans. p. 86-100

² Literally "knew." In Hebrew יָדָעַ = Qal perfect 3 masculine singular of יָדָעַ "know."

Then, having a wordplay on the name *Cain*, which means *gain/acquisition*,³ Eve said, “***I have gained⁴ a man with the help of the LORD.***”

Indeed, it seems Eve was thinking, “Aha, here in my firstborn son I have an asset/gain, a *man*!! Certainly, *he* is the one God has promised!”

And next?

Well, next she had a second son whom she called Abel – in Hebrew *Hevel*,⁵ which is exactly the same word which in Ecclesiastes means “Meaningless/Vanity/Puff of breath!”⁶ Remember Eccl 1:2 ***Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity*** (ESV)?⁷

Thus, Eve was thinking by herself, “This is the weak one!” “He counts nothing!” “He is worthless!” “Abel is nothing!” “Cain is everything!”

But then, as so often, we see the LORD chooses differently! Here is how God’s choosing became known... (So, let’s “zoom in” to have a closer look at the smaller picture).

Cain was an agricultural farmer. Of course, in itself there’s nothing wrong with being an agricultural farmer.

And *Abel* farmed with livestock.

One day, Abel brought an offering from his livestock.

Well, many years later as the Hebrews read what exactly Abel brought as an offering to God, they had no doubt that Abel’s offering was coming from his heart, i.e., that Abel loved God, for look what Abel gave as an offering – only the best of the best! You see Abel ***brought of the firstborn⁸ of his flock and of their fat portions⁹*** (v.4), exactly as God would later on prescribe.¹⁰

So, Abel gave the choicest offering – not just the firstborn animal, but even the fat – because he was prompted by an immense love for God.¹¹

Beautiful!

My brother & sister, I pray that all of us will know that wonderful experience when, whatever we have given to the Lord or the least of His loved-ones, we have given with cheerfulness¹² and deep love for the Lord & His people!

³ In Hebrew קָיַן from קָנָה “get, acquire, gain.”

Also cf. Keil & Delitzsch who comment, “At the birth of the first son Eve exclaimed with joy, “*I have gotten* (קָנִיתִי) *a man with Jehovah;*” wherefore the child received the name *Cain* (קַיִן from קָיַן = קָנָה, κτάσθαι)” (Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (1996). *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Vol. 1, p. 68). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.)

⁴ קָנִיתִי Qal perf. 1 sing. of קָנָה “get, acquire, gain.” The Septuagint reads Ἐκτησάμην “I have acquired,” Aorist deponent/middle ind. 1 sing. of κτάσμαι “to procure for oneself, get, gain, acquire.”

⁵ הֶבֶל

⁶ הֶבֶל “vapour, breath; fig. vanity.

⁷ הֶבֶל הֶבֶלִים אֶמַר קִהְלֵת הֶבֶל הֶבֶלִים הִפֵּל הֶבֶל

⁸ מִבְּכֹרֹת from בְּכֹר “first-born”

⁹ וּמִחֵלְבֵהֶן from חֵלֵב “fat”

¹⁰ Also cf. Ex 13:2, 12 ***Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine... you shall set apart to the Lord all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the Lord’s.***

Lev 3:16 ***And the priest shall burn them on the altar as a food offering with a pleasing aroma. All fat is the Lord’s.***

Also cf. Lev 22:17-25; Lev 27:26; Deut 12:6

¹¹ Cf. Heb 11:4 ***By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.***

¹² Cf. 2 Cor 9:7

Well, Abel's gift was in proportion to his love for God – not out of external compulsion!
Beautiful!

But look at Cain!

Cain came and brought of his produce – though not of the first-fruits of his produce! You see, the word *first-fruits* (as was later on prescribed by God's law)¹³ is not even mentioned!

Why?

Because there was no willing/loving heart in Cain's offering! His was *not* a cheerful giving!

So, (as v.4 says) God looked favourably at (regarded)¹⁴ Abel's offer but not Cain's!

Then, what do we see? Cain got *very angry*¹⁵ and his face fell!¹⁶

Next, we see God in His kindness even giving Cain a timely warning! Yes, in v.7 God told him: "Cain, sin is lying/lurking/crouching¹⁷ at your door!" "Sin's desire is to have you, but you must master it!"¹⁸

Yet, what did Cain do?

He invited his brother out into the field (v.8).¹⁹

My brother & sister, if a Hebrew would hear this "out-in-the-field" thing, he would immediately understand only one thing – *big trouble*, because, you see, if someone is killed far away in the field, his screams for help will be muffled, and there will be no witnesses. That's why God's Word considered a crime committed in the field as premeditated!²⁰

¹³ For this requirement cf. Ex 23:19 **Bring the best of the firstfruits of your soil to the house of the Lord your God...**

Also cf. Ex 34:26; Lev 2:14; 23:9-14

¹⁴ וַיִּשְׁעַי Qal imperfect waw consecutive (apocopate form) 3 masculine singular of נִשְׁעַי "gaze" (gaze steadily, with interest) (BDB).

¹⁵ v. 5 וַיִּחַר לְלֵב: מְאֹד

¹⁶ וַיִּפְּלוּ פָּנָיו:

¹⁷ וַיִּצָּב Qal participle active masculine singular of יָצָב "stretch oneself out; lie down; lie stretched out" (BDB)

¹⁸ In other words, "Cain, as your God & Maker, I can see what's coming! Be careful now how you deal with your disappointment and anger!"

My brother & sister, imagine God says to you – imagine you have the privilege that Cain had; yes that God says to you personally and in kindness as a forewarning, "Sin is crouching at your door!" "Be careful how you're going to deal with it now!" "You must be master over it!"

Well, we don't have to imagine this, for it's still a valid saying for you & me – every minute of the day, for, although saved, you & I are sinful people living in a sin-marred world in which satan is *very* busy.

So, when, at work or at home or on holiday, sin is crouching at your/my door, are you/I going to, out of love for Jesus Christ – for who He is & what He has done for us – are we going *not* to let sin reign over us (Rm 6:12)? Are we going to be sin's master, or are we going to succumb to our sinful, knee-jerk, emotion?

God kindly forewarned Cain, "Sin is crouching at your door!" "Be careful now!" "Be master over it!"

¹⁹ The NIV has a footnote which reads: "Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Masoretic Text does not have 'Let's go out to the field.'"

Indeed, the Septuagint reads v. 8 as: καὶ εἶπεν Καὶ πρὸς Ἀβελ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ Διέλθωμεν εἰς τὸ πεδίον (Let's go out into the field). καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ καὶ ἀνέστη Καὶ ἐπὶ Ἀβελ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπέκτεινεν αὐτόν.

²⁰ cf. Deut 22:25-27

Well, v.8 tells us that, out there in the field, Cain grabbed Abel and killed him!²¹ Abel's blood spilled onto the ground!²²

So, let's now "zoom" again out from this detailed scene so that we can see the bigger picture – the whole "forest" so to speak. And let's start by asking a question:

By these actions of Cain, *what has now become clear?*

Well, is it not clear now from which seed Cain comes? Is it not clear that, spiritually, he is from the serpent's seed; that, despite his mother's high thoughts²³ and the name she gave him, he is *not* the promised seed from the woman who would come to crush the serpents head?

Just hear what Cain says next!

Next, when God asks Cain where his brother was, he answers with a *lie*, "I don't know!"

So, he gives a clear indication that he belongs to the father of *lies* – satan!²⁴

Indeed, Cain is of the serpent's seed who fights against the woman's seed! (And we still see this among human beings today – in the shape of false religions, atheism, and agnosticism who all try to smother the church!)

Well, now, something quite intriguing happens: God does something to Cain which He did not do to even Adam & Eve after their Fall – God curses Cain! "***Cursed are you from the ground,²⁵ which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.***"

Wow!

Yet, we see God's *mercy* even over the one He has just cursed. You see, God gave Cain a protective sign on his forehead so that if anyone should kill him, Cain would be revenged sevenfold!

But look, then our text continues to describe Cain's offspring – yes, the serpent's seed – down to 7 generations from Adam; how they became craftsmen, skilled people, and people of culture, yet *not acknowledging God*.

Here's a qualifier, though, for you see, there's nothing wrong with skills – with culture – with inventing tools to work the God-cursed land.

Indeed, it was not Cain's offspring's *culture* and *skill* which were the problem, but their *rejection of God!*

And their rejection of God reaches a climax in Lamech, the 7th from Adam in Cain's line, and it started off by Lamech not taking for himself just *one* wife, but *two!*

And whereas Christ would later on teach that we should *forgive* someone seven times, Lamech proclaimed the opposite, i.e., Lamech would *revenge* himself not just sevenfold, like Cain, but seventy-sevenfold – indefinitely!

See? See picture of the *serpent's seed!*? (Point 1)

Here is point 2...

Point 2: The Woman's Seed

²¹וַיַּהַרְגֵהוּ! Qal imperfect waw consecutive 3 masculine singular with pronominal suffix 3 masculine singular, from הָרַג "kill, slay."

²² cf. v.10b "...***the voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground.***"

²³ Remember how she even said, "***With God's help I have acquired a man***" (Gn 4:1)!

²⁴ cf. Jn 8:44 ***You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.***

²⁵ וְעַתָּה אֶרְוֹר אֶתָּה מִן־הָאֲדָמָה!

Well, Cain was not of the woman's seed. He clearly showed that with his actions, which revealed his heart!

What's more, Abel, the only other son Eve had – yes, the only one who was from the woman's seed, as was seen from his actions – *he* is now dead!

Well, here is where God's faithfulness to His promise is seen – His faithfulness to the woman's seed; yes, His faithfulness to the church!

So, God gives Adam & Eve another son, a third one whom Eve called Seth, which means "Appointed One,"²⁶ for, said Eve (in v.25), "***God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him***" (ESV).

Seth = Appointed One, by God appointed!

My brother & sister, have you also noticed another very important word in Eve's sentence? Have you noticed how she said, "***God has appointed for me another offspring...***"? The Hebrew literally says "seed."²⁷ "***God has appointed for me another seed...***"²⁸

See how Eve is using the exact same word which God had used when He promised (in Gn 3:15), "***I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel***"?

"God has appointed for me another seed!"

After Abel's death, Seth is now first in that long line of the woman's seed!

Then, what do we see? Well, that in time also Seth became a father – a father to Enosh.

And what does *Enosh* mean?

Quite significantly, it means "Weak, frail."²⁹

In other words, unlike Cain's seed which displayed pride and arrogance, Seth's seed displayed their feeling and knowledge of human weakness and frailty.

And so beautiful: this feeling of human weakness & frailty – yes, this humble approach – led them to God, so that we read about Enosh and his contemporaries in v.26, "***At that time people began to call upon the name of the Lord***" (ESV).

One commentator says it well: *Cain's firstborn and successors pioneer cities and civilized arts, but Seth's firstborn and successors pioneer worship of God!*³⁰

My brother & sister, see the line of the seed of the woman?

It's about this seed that the Apostle John writes in 1 Jn 3:8-9 ***He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning.....⁹ No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.*** (NIV '84).

My brother & sister, greatly blessed are you if you love the Lord Jesus!

Greatly blessed are you if you do what Seth's offspring did – humbling yourself before God & calling upon His Name!

Blessed are you if you, out of love for Jesus Christ, do not let sin reign (be master) over you!

Blessed are you, for that means you are of the woman's seed – you are of the Church of Christ; you are His loved one!

²⁶ Cf. Keil & Delitzsch (ibid) for "After Abel's death a third son was born to Adam, to whom his mother gave the name of Seth (שֵׁט, from שֵׁיט, a present participle, the appointed one, the compensation); 'for,' she said, 'God hath appointed me another seed (descendant) for Abel, because Cain slew him.'"

²⁷ זָרַע

²⁸ כִּי שֵׁט-לִי אֱלֹהִים זָרַע אַחֵר

²⁹ cf. Keil & Delitzsch (ibid) "...from אָנַשׁ to be weak, faint, frail, designates man from his frail and mortal condition (Ps. 8:4; 90:3; 103:15, etc.)."

³⁰ cf. Ken Matthews (apud Greidanus, ibid:99)

Now, are you worried that a time will come when God might forever neglect/forget the seed of the woman – His church; yes, His loved ones?

Well, looking at our text, no worry is needed!

You see, if God wanted to be unfaithful to the seed of the woman – to His church – He would already have done it at the death of Abel!

But God raised up (appointed) Seth and his descendants to continue His people on earth! And although the seed of the serpent has *also* been continuing on earth and continuing in killing God’s loved ones (striking the woman’s seed in the heel), God has always been faithful to the woman’s seed – protecting again & again His people; His loved ones; His church!

Thus, despite Cain’s killing of Abel, God, in faithfulness, raised Seth!

Despite the Egyptians drowning the Israelite boys in the river Nile, God raised up Moses. Despite Jezebel killing so many prophets of the LORD that even Elijah was in despair, God made sure that there were still 7,000 who did not bow the knee to Baal.³¹

Despite Islam now being predominant in the regions where Paul once planted many Christian churches, God cared for it that there are still at least nine churches in Izmir (ancient Ephesus) – some of them even Protestant churches.³²

And so did God continue to preserve³³ His saints until His faithfulness to the woman’s seed (His church) blossomed in *THE Seed* from the woman, which brings us to the last point in the sermon...

Point 3: THE Seed

My brother & sister, in the genealogical list of our Lord Jesus in Lk 3, the list of names starts off by saying, “Jesus was... the son of Joseph; Joseph was the son of Heli; Heli the son of Matthat...”³⁴

Then, many names later, upwards from the name of Jesus, we read, “...Kenan the son of Enosh the son of Seth the son of Adam.”³⁵

Thus, above all saints and the whole church – yes, above all the seeds of the woman – our Lord Jesus is THE seed of the woman!

Indeed, right from providing *Seth* for murdered *Abel* to providing *Abram* & barren *Sarai* with *Isaac*, to providing *Isaac* and barren *Rebekah* with a son; yes, right from calling *Israel* out of Egypt to bringing back a *remnant* from *the Babylonian exile*, God sent His very own Son – Jesus Christ as THE seed from the woman (THE Appointed One)!

Now, you & I remember how the serpent struck at THE Seed’s heel; yes, how satan tempted our Lord when He was at His human weakest (Mt 4).

Yet, Jesus withstood Satan’s temptations.

But Satan still had that poisonous bite so he struck again at the heel of the woman’s Seed.

Yes, at Satan’s instigation the people killed Jesus. And it looked like a defeat for the Seed of the woman, for the Seed died!

Yes, just like Abel’s blood, also our Lord’s blood, too, fell on the ground!

³¹ Cf. 1 Ki 19:18 ***Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him.***

³² Cf. e.g., <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=christian+churches+in+izmir+turkey>

³³ See the doctrine of the *Perseverance/Preserve of the Saints?* (The P in T.U.L.I.P.)

³⁴ cf. Lk 3:23-24

³⁵ cf. Lk 3:37-38

But there's a difference. You see, Heb 12:23 says about Jesus' blood that it "*speaks better than the blood of Abel.*"³⁶

Why?

Because the serpent's seeming victory turned into his defeat, for in Christ's self-sacrificial death He had just finished *atonement for the sins* of all His loved ones! Jesus, THE seed of the woman, had just paid for the sins of God's loved ones! So, His blood speaks better than the blood of Abel, the first seed of the woman!

Question: satan's killing of Christ – was that the last time that the serpent or the serpent's seed would persecute the woman's seed?

No, my brother & sister, until our Lord returns, you & I (and all the rest of the seed of the woman; yes the whole church) can expect attacks from the serpent's seed!

Did our Lord Himself not warn: "*I am sending you like sheep into the midst of wolves... You will be hated by all because of My name... A disciple is not above the teacher*" (Mt 10:16, 22, 24)?

And have we not *seen* this...

- when the mob stoned Stephen;
- when Herod Agrippa killed James;
- when the Romans killed Peter & Paul;
- when the early church suffered great persecution and many Christians became martyrs!?

Was God then unfaithful to His church – the woman's seeds?

No, He upheld their faith and granted them strength to the measure!³⁷

Thus, God has provided for the continued existence of the seed of the woman to this very day despite the fact that *more* Christians were martyred in the 20th century than in all other centuries combined!³⁸

Regarding the world's hatred for the woman's seed, the Apostle John writes (in 1 Jn 3:12-13), "***We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother*** (i.e., one of the woman's seeds)..... ¹³ ***Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you***" (ESV).

Yet, hear also the following comforting word from John (1 Jn 4:4), "***Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world***" (ESV).

My brother & sister – child of God, seed of the woman – because of His own dear Son, God will never be unfaithful to His promises re the church.

Look is this not why Rm 8 assures us...

³⁶ cf. Heb 12:22-24 ***But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³ and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel*** (ESV).

³⁷ cf. Paul's words of 1 Cor 10:13 ***No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it*** (ESV).

³⁸ <http://www.seekingtruth.co.uk/persecution.htm>

Also cf. Greidanus (ibid:100)

If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? (Rm 8:31-32)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? (Rm 8:35)

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Rm 8:37)

My brother & sister, I pray that this reassuring & comforting word will stay with you & me until we see our Lord face-to-face!

AMEN (2,774 words excluding footnotes)