

"Cain and Abel"

"The Picture of the Lost Sinner"

Genesis 4:1-16

Introduction: Today in our Genesis study we have come to chapter 4. I have decided we will study our way through the first 11 chapters because it is within those chapters we will gain a great foundation for understanding the rest of the Bible.

Now as we approach this chapter we must keep in mind that we are still in the Book of Origins or the Book of Beginnings. Within this chapter we will also find many "firsts":

1. The first children born.
2. The first murder.
3. The first society.
4. The first look at the severity of sin's consequences.
5. The first unbeliever.

The list goes on but you get the idea.

Today we shall look closely at 2 sons which Eve gave birth to. These 2 men will represent the only 2 groups of people that exist on the earth. Now we classify people all the time and when we look at people we see multiple classes or different groups. Let me give you some examples:

1. White and black
2. Rich and poor
3. Blue collar and white collar
4. American and foreigner
5. Upper class, middle class, and lower class

That list goes on and on but you get the picture. God however sees people in only 2 classes:

1. Saved
2. Lost

Our money, position, skin color or none of those things matters to God. He looks at our hearts and He sees either a heart dark with sin or a heart washed clean by the blood of His Son Jesus Christ.

I. The Choice of Cain

Notice Genesis 4:1

The first son born to Adam and Eve was given the name Cain. The word "Cain" has the idea of a "smith" and a "smith" is someone who works with metal. Really it refers to someone who "forms things". I believe that Eve has that very thought in mind when she names Cain. She sees him as a child that was "formed" by God and she was exactly correct.

Jeremiah 1:5a

⁵ Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee;

So Eve saw her son Cain as a gift from God and she had great hopes for him. Some believe the phrase, "I have gotten a man from the Lord" could also read, "I have gotten a man THE Lord". Let us remember she had her hope resting in the promise of Genesis 3:15 of a coming Redeemer and its possible that she believed Cain was the answer to God's promise.

Notice Genesis 4:2a

Some believe that Cain and Abel were twins but there is really no proof for that. I personally believe that Abel came along a little while after Cain and I say that because of his name. His name means "breath" or "vapor". It also has the idea of something being "empty" or "unfulfilling". I believe that after the birth of Cain, Eve began to realize the effects of the curse and she began to experience the emptiness of life apart from God. She had hoped Cain was the Deliverer God had promised but I believe as she had to deal with that little sinner she came to understand he was not the One she had hoped for and when she became pregnant again we see her frustration with life in the name she gives to her 2nd born.

Notice Genesis 4:2b

Here we see the occupations of both of her sons.

Abel was a shepherd and Cain was a farmer. Both occupations were honorable. One was not better than the other. Both men felt the effects of the curse in their work areas.

Notice Genesis 4:3-4

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Now we jump ahead in time. The boys seem to now be grown and we will see that they will both come to worship God. Let us stop here and consider a few thoughts.

At this time there was a place of worship established. As I read this I also realize there was a specific time of worship. Apparently God had established the worship system and it was introduced to Adam and Eve and they then passed it down to their sons.

When we read these verses we see that both of them brought an offering to the Lord. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground and Abel brought a lamb.

Cain's offering would have been beautiful with all the different fruits and vegetables he had grown. He may have had it arranged really well and so he brings it to the altar.

Abel's offering was unlike Cain's in that it was a bloody lamb that had been killed.

Notice Genesis 4:4b-5a

Here we see that God accepted the offering of Abel but He rejected the offering of Cain. The offerings of these 2 men speak volumes about them.

Abel's Offering

Abel's offering of the lamb showed that he also believed in the promise of Genesis 3:15. He understood that without the shedding of blood there was no forgiveness of sin. How did he know this? Let me refresh your memory.

Genesis 3:21

²¹ Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

God had killed the innocent animal as a substitute for Adam and Eve and from that day forward they understood there had to be a blood offering for the forgiveness of sin.

I can assure you that Adam and Eve would have set both boys on their knees and told them over and over again of how God provided a substitute to die for them. They would have told both of their sons of the promise of **Genesis 3:15** and the coming of the future Deliverer Who would deliver the world from the curse.

Abel listened very closely and he realized he was a sinner and he needed forgiveness. He also believed what God had told his parents and he believed there had to be a substitute that would die for him and shed its blood as an atonement for his sin. Therefore he brought the lamb and in so doing he showed his faith in the promise of God.

Cain's Offering

Cain's offering represented the works of his hands. But it also tells us much about the attitude of Cain. He did not see the need for a substitute to die in his place. He believed his works were good enough to please God and so he gathered some of his own works and he brought them to God.

Now let us understand that he also heard the Truth from his mother and father. But Cain refused to come to God on His terms. He did not see the need for a future Deliverer because he did not see himself as a man who was all that sinful. Again I say that he believed he could please God with his own good works. But Cain was wrong for God would not accept his offering.

Application:

Cain is the picture of many people in our world today. Let me paint a picture in your mind of what Cain would have been like had he lived today.

He would have believed in God we know that because he came to worship. He would have come to church every week; he would have always been on time. He would have looked like the ideal Christian. He would have been dressed in a suit and he would have been the man many looked up to in the community. He would have prayed to God and even read his Bible but he would not have been saved.

You see Cain believed in God, he spoke to God, he worshipped God, He even gave to God but he was not a believer. He refused to place his faith in the promise of the coming Deliverer and so he had the looks but he was lost and headed to hell.

Hebrews 11:4a

⁴ By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous,

When God accepted the offering of Abel it was proof that he was righteous meaning that he had been forgiven of his sins.

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Cain was religious but he was not saved.

This is the picture of many people that go to church every week in our communities. They believe in God, they pray to God, they give to God, but they have never placed their faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as their Substitute for payment for their sins. They are religious but not saved.

Like Cain they are trusting in their own good works. In other words they believe they can please God with their good works. Let me just say if that is you then you are wrong. Your good works will not be accepted by God.

Isaiah 64:6

⁶ But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

You cannot work your way to heaven. God requires that all of your sin must be paid for before you die or you will spend eternity in hell as payment for your sin.

God provided a Substitute to take our penalty for sin and that Substitute was His Son Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:3

³ For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

⁴ And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Jesus died for you just as the innocent animal died for Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:21 and just as the innocent animal died for Abel in Genesis 4:4. These animals were Old Testament pictures of Jesus Christ.

They looked ahead to the cross we look back.

Hebrews 11:13

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¹³ *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

So, Jesus died for you and I and His death satisfied the wrath of God on our behalf.

1 John 2:1-2

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

² *And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

The word "propitiation" means to "appease". In other words Jesus death "appeased" the wrath of God on our behalf.

II. The Grace of God

Notice Genesis 4:5b-6

These verses are the living picture of something which Peter would write about.

2 Peter 3:9

⁹ *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

God did not just turn His back on Cain but God sought him out and presented to him the most important choice in his life.

Notice Genesis 4:7

Here was the offer to Cain. If he would rest his faith in God's promise he would receive forgiveness and he would be set free from the power of sin. God explained to him that sin was like a lion waiting to pounce upon him and completely control him.

Cain had come to a very important crossroads in his life. He had heard over and over again from his parents that God required a blood sacrifice for his sin. He had continued to reject the offer. Now he stood at the place where he would he had to make a choice.

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Notice Genesis 4:8

Here was his choice. I want you to listen very closely to what I am going to say here.

He chose his sin over God's righteousness. His sin then took him farther than he ever desired to go. He has now committed murder.

Application:

This is what will happen to you if you continue to reject God's grace. His sin led him to murder yours will lead you to hell. It will take you farther than you desire to go. It will control you and take you straight to eternal damnation.

Notice Genesis 4:9-10

Notice that he has fled the scene. He has tried to cover his sin but the point here is that he refused to acknowledge his sin. Not once in this text will he confess. You know why?

He has hardened his heart and has seemed to cross a line where he could not reach repentance.

Notice that his sin has brought him to the court room of God. Let us notice the sentence handed out.

Hebrews 9:27

²⁷ And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Notice Genesis 4:11-12

He was cursed. He was guilty. Cain would never be able to get another offering from the ground. Life would be a struggle until the day he died.

Why did God allow him to live?

He would be an example of what life was like when God's grace was rejected.

Notice Genesis 4:13-16

He would dwell in Nod. The word "Nod" means "wandering".

Conclusion:

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This is the very path you are on if you are not saved.

John 14:6

⁶Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.