

LOST WORLD SERIES

MESSAGE # 3

"RESTLESS CAIN"

GENESIS 4:5-18

This morning our text is Genesis chapter 4. Our focus is the first man who was ever born on this planet. His name was Cain. His tragic choices led him out of the shadow of Paradise, away from the place of God's presence and into an eternity of restlessness.

Imagine again what it was like for Cain, growing up in a world fresh from the hands of God. With parents who never stopped talking of the wonders they had seen and heard as they walked each day with God Himself. As we saw last time, imagine the memories deeply etched on his heart of dreadful wonders of the place of blood and the ashes of 130 years of sacrifices there by the gate to the Garden of Eden. All this was Cain's legacy. Cain was the son of Adam the son of God as the genealogy of the last verse of Luke 3 states it.

Cain rebelled against God's way of salvation (Gen. 4; 1 John 3:11–12). By clothing Adam and Eve with the skins of slain animals (Gen. 3:21), God made it clear that the only way of forgiveness is through the shedding of blood. This is the way of faith, not the way of good works (Eph. 2:8–10). But Cain rejected this divinely authorized way and came to the altar with the fruits of his own labor. God rejected Cain's offering because God rejected Cain: his heart was not right before God. It was *by faith* that Abel's sacrifice was offered, and that was why God accepted it (Heb. 11:4).

The "way of Cain" is the way of religion without faith, righteousness based on character and good works. The "way of Cain" is the way of pride, a man establishing his own righteousness and rejecting the righteousness of God that comes through faith in Christ (Rom. 10:1–4;

Phil. 3:3-12). Cain became a fugitive and tried to overcome his wretchedness by building a city and developing a civilization (Gen. 4:9ff). He ended up with everything a man could desire except God, that is.¹

To see all this, we need to go to the record of the Lost World as it was written from the mouth of God by the hand of Moses in Genesis 4:5-18. Please stand with me as we read.

So Cain's dad was a son directly from the hand of God. Cain had no gaps, all the truth relayed to him was first hand and yet he failed to apply it, he failed to appropriate it, he failed to obey it and so now he suffers a fate worst than that we can ever imagine. Cain eternally shall wander apart from the God who spoke to him, sought him and even lavished His grace upon him. Cain is forever lost. Why would that be? Does God's Word say that Cain is damned forever? Yes, turn almost to the end of the New Testament to that short postcard letter called Jude. Jude was the earthly brother of Jesus and he writes a powerful letter on the danger of apostasy (willfully falling away from known truth). Let's start in verse 11.

Now, back to Genesis. If we were to outline Genesis 4 it would follow these divisions:

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|----------|--------------------------|
| V. 1-5 | The Worship God Expects |
| V. 6-7 | The Warning God Gives |
| V. 8 | The Wrath Guilt Produces |
| V. 9-15 | The Wandering Sin Brings |
| V. 16-24 | The World Man Builds |
| V. 25-26 | The Way God Seeks |

We saw last time what Cain knew. He had learned either by revelation from God Himself or through his parents that:

1. God had a specific PLACE because Cain and Abel brought their offerings to a place. It must have been a place previously agreed

¹Wiersbe, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997.

upon by God's revelation to them. They went to that place and returned from it.

2. God had a specific DAY (4:3) because it says at the end of days. This most likely refers to the Sabbath day when formal worship of God was expected by God and this expectation was revealed by God to them.
3. God had a specific WAY (Hebrews 11:4) because the writer of Hebrews said it was "by faith". We already know that God's Word defines faith as faith comes by hearing the Word of God in Romans 10:17. So they (Adam, Eve, Cain, and Abel) had heard the Word of God and learned the WAY God was to be approached. Abel chose to come "By Faith" which means he heard and obeyed God's Word!

God is very specific about worship. The problem is that doing all the right things is not enough if they do not flow from a heart of love for the God who orders them. Unless the obedience is prompted by faith, the work is worthless. Note that Cain:

- ✓ believed in the One Living and True God,
- ✓ approached the One Living and True God,
- ✓ worshipped the One Living and True God,
- ✓ offered an offering to the One Living and True God,

But Cain was not accepted. Why because God has consistently revealed that there is only one way to Him. Cain (and all who have followed the way of Cain since) neglected God's way. Notice what Cain did wrong in his offering:

- ✓ **NO BLOOD WAS SHED.** The shedding of blood because God has said in Hebrews 9:22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.
- ✓ **NO SUBSTITUTE WAS OFFERED.** The offering of a substitute in his own place, because God says it is Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

- ✓ **NO CURSE WAS HEDED.** When God cursed the ground He was showing that nothing we could (or Cain) come up with on our own was enough. Because Isaiah 64:6 All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

Genesis 4:4-5a But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor

So there it sat. Cain's freshest, unblemished, plump, juicy, vibrant produce. Like a prize winning hybrid it stood out on the old, fire-blackened stone altar just outside the walls of Eden. There on the spot Adam and Eve had been coming with their boys for 129 years since they were expelled. There to the place God had picked to set up this meeting place. There to the spot where blood of substitutionary, sacrificial lambs had been shed. There to the spot overshadowed by those overwhelming beasts called cherubim, with their all-seeing eyes and ever-foursquare faces representing God's holy presence. There stood Cain, tall and proud of what he had brought, what he had done and what he had offered to please God.

But God was not pleased.

No fire fell.

No voice of God testifying of the excellence of the sacrifice.

Nothing but the overwhelming silence of those living creatures of God's holy presence floating there around the altar.

Genesis 4:5-6 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. 6 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?

And then it happened. The charade was up. No more Mr. Nice Guy. Cain became enraged. The KJV puts it "his countenance fell". We all have experienced this to one degree or another. Someone who has pretended patience for us or interest in us, who finally says, all right

that is enough. And then we see the real them. This is the real Cain. Enraged and angry at GOD!

When God would not accept his self-styled worship he exploded in a rage. Paul speaks of the Cains of this world when he says in 2 Timothy 3:5 they are "having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them." Because Cain's offering was without obedience, it wasn't real worship.

It was in the right place.

It was on the right day.

It was to the right God.

It was even on the right altar.

But it wasn't God's way, it was Cain's.

Self-styled worship, however Christianized and biblical sounding, is not real worship. It was not accepted by God.

Genesis 4:7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

Why is this so vital an issue that God makes Cain angry? God was warning Cain of a danger so horrible, so deadly, so dangerous, that all He could relate it to was the unsuspecting crouch and attack of a deadly predator. Because sin if not dealt with is like a deadly beast, coiling, springing and devouring the unprotected one. Only expiation, the substitutionary penalty removing offering of blood could disarm the deadliness of personal sin, and remove the consequences off to the Coming Lamb, Jesus. See, Cain's rejection of God's way was actually a refusal to allow his sin to be placed upon Jesus.

Cain and Abel are not only two actual people who lived and walked on earth a few thousand years ago. They also represent the two roads that head out from the Garden of Eden. Everyone who has ever lived has chosen one of those two paths. Each of us this morning are on one path or the other.

Two lines run through the history of mankind:

- ✓ There are only 2 families (God's and Satan's) ,

- ✓ There are only 2 destinies (Heaven and Hell) and
- ✓ There are only 2 choices (repent or reject).
- ✓ The line of Christ and the line of Antichrist,
- ✓ The line of the Woman's seed and that of the serpent.
- ✓ The Christ line begins with Abel, passes via Golgotha, and leads to the heavenly Jerusalem.
- ✓ The Antichrist line begins with Cain, passes via Babel, and leads to the lake of fire.

Each of us today belongs to one family or the other. You are choosing your own future. Watch the choices made by Cain and Abel.

Both were born outside of Eden.

Both were sinners and fallen.

Both were lost and guilty of each sin they had committed.

Neither were innocent, but only Abel would confess that!

THE WICKED WAY OF CAIN	THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WAY OF ABEL
The natural man	The Spiritual Man
The self-righteous	The Broken spirited
The self-sufficient	The taking God's side against themselves
The lost	The saved
Formal professor	The genuine believer and possessor
those trusting their works	Those possessing Christ's finished work
Human merits	Divine grace
Rejected and cursed by god	Accepted and blessed by god
Deniers of a lost ruined condition	Acknowledged personally sinful ones
Refuses of divine remedy	Believes of God's testimony, placing faith in the substitute and accounted righteous
Religious man	Genuine man of faith
Looks for help from within himself to please god	Looks for help outside of self to please God
Unbloody offering	Bloody offering
No curse removing blood offered	Curse removing blood offered
Sought earthly security	Sought God as his refuge
Founded an earthly city	Found a grave stained with blood on his way to the heavenly city

When God declared that Abel's blood was crying from the ground it marked the 1st mention of blood in God's Word. It also reminds us of all innocent blood shed by wicked men from Abel to our precious Lord Jesus. All that blood cries to God, and those cries remind us that shed blood can't be silenced. Also God was demonstrating to Cain in a very vivid way that SIN CAN NOT BE HIDDEN!

Numbers 32:23 "But if you fail to do this, you will be sinning against the LORD; and you may be sure that your sin will find you out.

Galatians 6:7-8 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

But what do we see in Cain? No grief, no sorrow, no repentance, no contrition, no confession, no repudiation of his errors. No, all we see is just a sin hardened heart. An evil heart of godlessness.

Genesis 4:9-11 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?" 10 The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. 11 Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth." 13 Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is more than I can bear. 14 Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." 15 But the LORD said to him, "Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. 16 So Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

"Adam, where are you?" "Where is Abel your brother?" How significant are these first two questions in the Bible! Sin always finds us out, even though we try (like Cain) to lie about our sin. Abel's blood cried out for vengeance; Christ's blood cries out peace and forgiveness (Heb. 12:24). He was rejected by heaven and refused by earth! He was condemned to a restlessness that could be cured only by faith. Nod literally means wandering. So away from God turned Cain. And like every sinner who has turned their face away from God, Cain went out into the darkness of wandering restlessly in sin.

Job 20:20 "Because he knows no quietness in his heart, He will not save anything he desires.

Job 22:21 "Now acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace; Thereby good will come to you.

Isaiah 57:20-21 But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud. 21 "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

Jude 13 They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.

Why did God release Cain? For one thing, Cain became a "walking sermon" on the grace of God and the tragic consequences of sin. What a picture of humankind today: restless, hopeless, wandering, defeated! There are two paths that lead away from the Altar outside of Eden. The blackened altar, charred by countless fires, stained with blood, illuminated by the glow of the four cherubim hovering around. "Those two lines of approach to God can be followed throughout the Old Testament. The builders of the tower of Babel followed the unbelieving and rebellious way of Cain, whereas Noah and his family followed the believing and obedient way of Abel. The vast majority of

the ancient world followed the ungodly way of Cain, whereas Abraham and his household followed the godly way of Abel. Within the nation of Israel there were always the same two lines of human achievement and divine accomplishment, of trusting in what man can do for God or of trusting in what God has done for man. Those who follow the narrow way of faith are always a minority, but for that faithful remnant, God's blessings never cease and His promises never fail".²

The first path heads to Heaven, the 2nd path leads to eternal Hell. It will be dreadful because it is *eternal*. If one could travel at the speed of light for one hundred years until he escaped this galaxy, and then travel for 3,000 years at the speed of light to reach the next galaxy, repeating the process one hundred thousand million times until he reached every galaxy—eternity would have just begun!

The dread of eternal separation and punishment is inconceivably painful. This is an excruciating doctrine. Jonathan Edwards's metaphors of ***Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*** were not too strong, for the Bible is true! Our lives do hang by a mere thread. Eternity gapes before us.

SELF-EFFORT DOES NOT MERIT HEAVEN

All the religions are self-effort to produce righteousness. They all were begun with Satan's rebellion against God, when he as Lucifer, the highest of the angels, he attempted to usurp God's throne and glory by his own creaturely efforts (see Isa. 14:12-15; Luke 10:18). It was with the lure of self-effort that he tempted Eve, and indirectly Adam, to eat the forbidden fruit, deceiving them into thinking that by self-willed disobedience they could wrest divinity for themselves (Gen. 3:1-7). It was the same lure of self-willed effort that prompted Cain to offer his own kind of sacrifice to the Lord and to offer it in presumption rather than faith (4:3-7).

WE ARE BANNED BY OUR SINS FROM HEAVEN

²MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

R. C. Sproul once said about this portion of Genesis 4-5:

In our inability to perceive the face of God we bear the mark of Cain upon our foreheads. We too are vagabonds, fugitives, and pilgrims. We have been consigned to live east of Eden. We are exiles from paradise, expatriots from our native land. We long to go home, to kiss the earth of Eden and behold our Creator face to face as he walks in the cool of the garden. But though the veil of the temple has been torn for us, and though in Christ we have access to the presence of God, the angel with the flaming sword still guards the entrance to Eden. That sword will not be removed until we gain entrance into heaven.

The angel's sword protects paradise from humans with impure hearts. No person with the slightest impurity can enter that place. We are interlopers in the vicinity of Eden. The God who dwells in light is too holy to even look at iniquity. He will look at us once we are covered by the cloak of Christ's righteousness, but even then he will not remove the veil from his own face until we are glorified.³

THE OPEN ARMS OF CHRIST'S WONDERFUL SALVATION

But the dreadful is met by the wonderful arms of Jesus, which he extends to us. Those arms were stretched wide on the cross so that he might embrace us. He was not only our atoning sacrifice, but he propitiates our sins, turning aside the Father's righteous wrath. Jesus today still has those same human, atoning, propitiating arms—and all we have to do is fall into them. Be blessed now through faith in Christ—and fall into the arms and hands of the living God!⁴

³Sproul, R. C., *The Soul's Quest for God*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1992.

⁴Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Hebrews Vol 1&2—An Anchor for the Soul*, (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books) 1998, c1993.