

CAIN AND ABEL

TEXT: GENESIS 4:1-16

Introduction:

1. Cain was the first son of Adam and Eve.
2. The Bible only gives us a few details about the first family and the beginning of the human race. For example, the Bible does not tell us how many children Adam and Eve had, but we can assume they had many because God said to them, "Be fruitful, and multiply" (1:28).
3. Genesis 5:4 says, "And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters."
4. Titus Flavius Josephus was a first-century Jewish historian. His book, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, is still widely read today. In this book, Josephus said, "The number of Adam's children, as says the old tradition, was 33 sons and 23 daughters."
5. Regarding Genesis chapter 4, W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "It is a necessary and useful reminder that only a few things are touched upon in this chapter, and that many things are left unexplained. The writer calls attention to the mountain peaks only of human history and experience as he passes from one fact to another" (*Genesis*).
6. Cain, the first son of Adam and Eve, became the first murderer, and his murder vividly illustrates the rapid development of sin within the human race.
7. The world's first murder is referred to several times in the Bible. In Matthew 23:35, our Lord referred to "the blood of righteous Abel."
8. First John 3:12 tells us that Cain "was of that wicked one," and that his works were "evil."
9. Here is the contrast: righteous Abel and wicked Cain.
10. In Genesis 3:15, God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman (Eve), and between thy seed (children of the devil) and her seed (children of God)" (cf. Romans 16:20).
11. Here in Genesis 4 we see this enmity developed right away – this enmity between the two seeds – wicked Cain and righteous Abel.
12. And it has been that way ever since.
13. Hebrews 11:4 tells us that Abel was a man of faith, that he offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, and that by this "he obtained witness that he was righteous."
14. Cain was a tiller of the ground, whereas his younger brother Abel was a keeper of sheep (4:2).

15. "And in the process of time," Cain offered up a sacrifice to God, and so did his brother Abel. Cain offered up the fruit of the ground, and Abel offered up the firstlings (firstborn) of his flock (4:3, 4).
16. But God was not pleased with Cain's offering (4:4, 5). Some offerings are not acceptable to God.
17. In the light of Hebrews 11:4, it is clear that Abel gave an offering of faith, and Cain gave an offering without faith.
18. One of the important lessons of Genesis 4 is that God is to be worshipped, and He is to be worshipped properly (cf. Heb. 11:4).
19. From the earliest pages in Genesis we see that God is to be worshipped through sacrifice, and this sacrifice must be appropriated by faith (Heb. 11:4).
20. Much of what passes today as worship -- even so-called "Christian worship" -- is unacceptable to God.

I. THE WAY OF CAIN

1. Jude 11 warns of evil apostates, who "have gone in the way of Cain."
2. What is "the way of Cain"?
3. The way of Cain is the way of human reasoning (as opposed to divine revelation). "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD" (Genesis 4:3), foolishly thinking that the LORD would be pleased with his offering.
4. Merrill Unger has written, "Cain's false worship represents the fountainhead of all spurious religion, the essence of which is man's approach to God in his own way rather than in God's prescribed way" (*Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*).
5. The way of Cain is the way of man-made religion -- there was no blood shed (4:3-5). But the Bible says that without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin (Hebrews 9:22).
6. Cain's worship was unacceptable to God because Cain did not acknowledge the necessity of an atonement for sin. The *Scofield Bible* says Cain is a "type of the religious natural man, who believes in a God, and in 'religion,' but after his own will, and who rejects redemption by blood" (pp. 1328, 9).
7. The way of Cain is the way of human willfulness as opposed to God's will.
8. The way of Cain is the way of pride, as opposed to humility.
9. The way of Cain is the way of hatred, as opposed to love.
10. The way of Cain is the way of unbridled anger -- "And Cain was very wrath" (4:5).
11. The way of Cain is the way of resentment and disgrace -- "his countenance fell" (4:5b).

12. The way of Cain is the way of violence and murder (4:8). When we consider the world's first murder, let us note that God warned Cain a head of time (4:6, 7).
13. The way of Cain is the way of jealousy. First John 3:12 says Cain "was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."
14. The way of Cain is the way of lying -- "And he said, I know not..." (4:9). Sin cannot be hid from God!
15. Notice the repetition -- "his brother...thy brother...my brother" (4:8, 9). This emphasizes the enormity of the crime, and the necessary punishment that followed.
16. The way of Cain is the way of condemnation -- "And now art thou cursed from the earth" (4:11).
17. The way of Cain is the way of despair (4:12, 13).
18. The way of Cain is the way of banishment from God (4:14).

II. THE LINEAGE OF CAIN (4:16-24)

1. "And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD..." (4:16). "Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD" (3:8), and their son "Cain went out from the presence of the LORD" (4:16).
2. We see this often in Scripture and in our dealings with men. They turn away "from the presence of the LORD" (4:16).
3. The Word of God gives us the lineage of Cain in Genesis 4:16-24, and then gives us the lineage of his brother Seth (4:25, 26; 5:6-32).
4. The line of Cain is the ungodly line. The line of Seth is the godly line. There are two contrary lines.
5. Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and started to wander. The word *Nod* (4:16) means "wandering" (margin).
6. Cain was restless, rebellious, and violent; and his children followed his bad example (cf. 4:23, 24).
7. For thousands of years, people have asked where Cain got his wife (4:17). Ken Ham, the creationist, says he has been asked this question more than any other -- on Christian radio programs as well as on secular radio talk shows, at seminars, at churches where he is a guest preacher, in homes he visits, in public schools and in Christian schools, etc.
8. Obviously Cain's wife was either his sister or some other close relative. At that time there weren't any laws that would prohibit it, and therefore it was not wrong.

9. Originally, there was nothing wrong with brothers and sisters marrying. In fact, starting with only one pair, Adam and Eve, that was the only way they could have populated the world.
10. Abraham's wife Sarah was his half-sister, and there is no suggestion in Scripture that this was wrong.
11. The law against close intermarriage was not given until the time of Moses, more than two thousand years later. Leviticus 18:6 says, "None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the LORD."
12. Ken Ham wrote, "Adam and Eve were created perfect, their genes would have been perfect. As the curse God placed upon creation started to operate only after they sinned, their descendants would not have had many mistakes in their genes. These mistakes (harmful mutations) add up only after a long period of time. So brothers and sisters (Adam and Eve's children) could have married and not had the problems of deformities in their offspring as might well happen today, if such close relatives married and had children. This is because today humans have lots of mistakes—because of the curse—in their genes. This may cause problems when matching pairs are inherited from both parents, as is much more likely with close intermarriage" ("Cain's Wife: It Really Does Matter!").
13. We see how things quickly went from bad to worse after the fall of Adam (cf. Genesis 4:19, 23, 24).
14. It was in the line of Cain that polygamy was first experienced (4:19, 23). God's original design was one man and one woman for ever (2:24).
15. From the sons of Lamech come the founders of agriculture (4:20), music (4:21), and manufacture (4:22).
16. There was progress, and art, and civilization, but the descendants of Cain were godless.
17. Today we would call these people "secularists" or "liberals" or "progressives" or "humanists," etc.
18. Ephesians 2:12 says, "without God in the world."
19. By the way, many news reports have noted that the pope seldom mentions God or the Bible or sin or salvation or heaven or hell. In other words, he is godless.
20. All of his speeches are about global warming, poverty, pollution, socialism, immigration, and other political issues.
21. The pope wants to abolish the death penalty, but God established the death penalty (Genesis 9:6).

22. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "Is it not suggestive that the first time art, trade, and manufactures are mentioned they are associated with godlessness? Is it, or is it not, an accident that art has often flourished most when religion has been at its lowest? Is it not a fact that there is that in music, art, and civilization which easily panders to the very lowest in man?"
23. Albert Barnes said the three sons of Lamech "were the inventors of most of the arts which sustain and embellish life...It has been noticed that the inventive powers were more largely developed in the line of Cain than in that of Seth. And it has been suggested that the worldly character of the Cainites accounts for this. The Sethites contemplated the higher things of God, and therefore paid less attention to the practical arts of life. The Cainites, on the other hand, had not God in their thoughts, and therefore gave the more heed to the requisites and comforts of the present life."
24. Many refined and cultured people are devoted to art and music and the finer things in life, but they are godless. They mistakenly believe that art and music can substitute for God, but that is not possible.

III. THE LINEAGE OF SETH (4:25, 26)

1. By contrast with the ungodly line of Cain, we are next introduced to the godly line of Seth, his brother (4:25, 26).
2. Eve regarded Seth as a substitute for her murdered son Abel (4:25). In fact, his name means, "Substitute" (Scofield's "Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names").
3. Eve acknowledged that God had given her Seth. She regarded him as a precious gift from God, and in faith expected him to be the parent of a godly race.
4. Therefore, chapter 5 traces the line of Seth all the way to the three sons of Noah.
5. With the birth of Seth's son Enos, there came a revival of true religion -- "then began men to call upon the name of the LORD" (4:26).
6. The descendents of Cain did not call upon the name of the LORD.
7. The Bible says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13).
8. But the descendents of Cain were not interested in getting saved.
9. The Lord Jesus Christ came through the godly line of Seth, not the ungodly line of Cain (cf. Luke 3:23, 38).
10. On the other hand, the line of Cain is traced no further than the seventh generation from Adam. The Bible record stops with Lamech and his family.

CONCLUSION:

1. Let us consider the words of Cain, recorded here in Genesis 4:13.
2. "And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear."
3. Cain realized his sin was grievous, but his mind was occupied more with his punishment than with the sin which had caused it.
4. And then in verse 14 -- "and from thy face shall I be hid."
5. Here we see two aspects of eternal punishment -- unbearable punishment and separation from God -- for ever and ever.
6. A.W. Pink said, "My punishment is greater than I can bear' will be the language of the lost in the Lake of Fire. The awful lot of the unsaved will be unbearable, and yet it will have to be endured and endured for ever. 'From Thy face shall I be hid' cried Cain. Though the sinner knows it not, this will be the most terrible feature of his punishment -- eternally banished from God. 'Depart from Me ye cursed' will be the fearful sentence passed upon the wicked in the day of judgment. 'And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod.' Nod means 'wandering' -- there is no peace or rest for the wicked: in this world they are like the troubled waves of the sea; in the world to come, they shall be like wandering stars, lost in the blackness of darkness for ever. My reader, if you reject the Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, Cain's doom shall be your doom. 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him'" (*Gleanings In Genesis*).