

CAIN AND ABEL

BIBLE TEXT: Genesis 4:3-16.

LESSON 4 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (1 John 3:15).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Genesis 4:3-16.

³ And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

⁴ And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

⁵ But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

⁶ And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

⁷ If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

⁸ And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

⁹ ¶ And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

¹⁰ And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

¹¹ And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

¹² When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Significance of Cain's and Abel's Offerings

1. A confession of their need of God's favour was indicated, Genesis 4:3, 4.
2. The presenting of offerings was an evidence of the inherited sin of their parents,

Psalm 51:5;

⁵ Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

I Corinthians 15:22.

²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

II The Difference in the Offerings Presented

1. Abel's offering of a lamb was made by the shedding of blood, Genesis 4:4;

Hebrews 9:22;

²² And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

Hebrews 11:4.

⁴ By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

2. Cain's offering of the fruit of the ground was made by virtue of his self-righteous works, Genesis 4:3;

Isaiah 64: 6;

⁴ By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

Luke 18:9-14.

⁹ And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

¹⁰ Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

¹¹ The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

¹² I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

¹³ And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

III Cain's Resentment and Crime

1. Envy and anger are the first motions of sin, Genesis 4:5.
2. The warning that sin lieth at the door is unheeded, Genesis 4:6, 7.
3. Hatred and murder are the last motions of sin, Genesis 4:8;

Matthew 15:19;

¹⁹ For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

Matthew 23:34, 35;

³⁴ ¶ Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

³⁵ That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the

¹³ And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

¹⁴ Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

¹⁵ And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

¹⁶ And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

QUESTIONS

1. Why was Cain angry?
2. What reason did God give Cain for not accepting his offering?
3. Did God show Cain his sin before he slew his brother?
4. Name at least three sins of which Cain was guilty.
5. Has Cain's posterity, in a spiritual sense, continued to the present day?
6. Why was Abel's offering a "more excellent sacrifice" than Cain's?
7. Was Abel a righteous man? How do you know?
8. Of whom did Jude speak when he said, "For they have gone in the way of Cain"?

blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

Galatians 5:19-21;

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

²⁰ Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

²¹ Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

I John 3:12.

¹² Not as Cain, who 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.

IV Cain's Punishment

1. His crime was not hid from the eye of the Lord, Genesis 4:9, 10;

Hebrews 4:13.

¹³ Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

2. A curse was pronounced upon him and his fields, Genesis 4:11-13;

Hebrews 6:7, 8;

⁷ For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

⁸ But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

Jeremiah 17:5, 6.

⁵ ¶ Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusted in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

⁶ For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

3. He was banished from the presence of God and man, Genesis 4:14;

Matthew 25:41;

⁴¹ Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

NOTES:

Cain and Abel, the first two sons of Adam and Eve, were born after the fall -- after Adam and Eve had disobeyed God and thereby been separated from fellowship with Him.

Cain and Abel must have known of Adam's transgression, and that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." No doubt they had been told many times that the Lord had shed the blood of animals to make coverings for Adam's and Eve's sin and shame. They knew that nothing but death -- the shedding of blood -- would make atonement for sin.

Perhaps Cain was very diligent in tilling the ground and taking care of his crops. He was proud of his good works, and he must have felt that he was not subject to God's wrath, that he was good enough -- he had not sinned as had his father and mother, or even as his brother. This we may infer from the fact that he did not bring a substitutionary offering. God had specifically commanded Adam and Eve: "Thou shalt not eat of it [the tree of the knowledge of good and evil]: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," and no doubt they had told their children that it was truly death to be separated from fellowship with God.

Abel's offering showed that he realised he had sinned. By faith he offered "a more excellent sacrifice than Cain" He believed that

God's requirements are just and right. He trusted, whether he understood or not, that the way of worship which God had laid down was the only right way, the only way that leads to a restoration of fellowship with God here and hereafter. But his implicit trust and obedience no doubt led him to realise something of the deadly far-reaching effects of sin. It is of such enormity that succeeding generations, no matter how far removed from the original sin, bear the nature of sin in their soul. Each person who comes to the age of accountability and chooses sin, the way of disobedience to God, brings death to his soul. Abel knew he was subject to the righteous wrath of God, and to eternal separation from Him. Life had to be forfeited -- blood had to be shed. If he was to escape this penalty himself, he must bring a substitute as an offering unto God.

Cain's offering consisted of the fruit of the ground. That offering, a meat or meal offering, is explained in Leviticus 2:1. It was a gratitude offering and paid respects to God as the Creator of all things, the Source of material blessings; but it did not have in it the blood atonement, which is the only way by which fallen, sinful man may be redeemed. He sought justification by the works of his hands rather than by simple faith and obedience to God's plan.

In the same way many people worship God today. They go to church, sing the hymns, listen to the minister pray, and go through the form of pious worship; but they have no conviction for sin. They have performed a religious duty and thereby eased their conscience and shaken off their fears of an angry God. In such a worship, their own sinful nature is not exposed and they are not made to see and feel their need of the atoning Blood. They feel self-sufficient. Their duty, they think, is to mankind. They try to cover their own guilt with deeds of mercy.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5).

Abel felt guilty of sin. He brought a sin offering. He brought it in faith that through the shedding of blood he might find remission of sins. "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).

A Witness in the Heart

The Lord looks down into the heart. He saw in Abel a heart that was penitent, one that was crying out for mercy. He was coming God's way to obtain mercy. He brought his offering for sin according to God's instructions, and by faith obtained the witness in his heart that his offering was accepted. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous" (Hebrews 11:4).

Today we do not have to bring a lamb and offer it for our sins. Jesus is God's Lamb, and over 2000 years ago He was offered on the Cross of Calvary for the sins of the whole world. Any sinner can come with a truly penitent heart, confess his sins and turn from them with all his heart, look to Jesus, and by faith receive pardon for his sins and obtain the witness in his heart that he is forgiven.

A Bloodless Religion

Cain's religion has a large following today through Christian Science, Modernism, and other bloodless religions. A bloodless religion is a powerless religion. These bloodless religious movements all date back to Cain. The first head of their movements was a murderer.

The Israelites found there was power in the blood of the lamb (which lamb typified Jesus) that was slain the night they left Egypt. The death angel passed over every home where the blood was applied. But in every home in Egypt where the blood was not applied their first-born was slain (Exodus 12).

Persecution

Who was Cain angry with, Abel or God? He was angry with

God because He did not accept his offering but he took his spite out on Abel. The devil and his emissaries are angry with God but they take their spite out on God's children. It is a significant fact that the first strife in the world was over religion. The devil hates true religion.

Murderers and Liars

Sin is at the root of an evil-doing. The Lord said to Cain, "If thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." He also told him if he did well his offering would be accepted. It all speaks of the condition of the heart. If sin is in the heart the incense from the offering one may bring does not bear to the Lord a "sweet-smelling savour" (Ephesians 5:2). "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: . . . Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him" (Isaiah 3:10, 11).

Cain's countenance was fallen. It is said of the wicked that the "show of their countenance" witnesses against them. The jealousy that was in his heart led to anger, anger to hatred, and hatred caused him to murder Abel. The Apostle John tells us that he that hateth his brother is a murderer. Cain was a murderer in the sight of God before he actually committed the deed, for God looks upon the heart.

One sin leads to another, and when the Lord asked Cain where his brother Abel was, he lied, "I know not." The Word tells us that "murderers, . . . and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Revelation 21:8).

One time Jesus said to the Pharisees: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Covering Up

Possibly Cain had thought he could hide the crime he had committed and it would never be known. Many people up to the present time have tried to do that. Sinful man often wants to keep his sins under cover and hidden from the eyes of man. God's question about the whereabouts of Abel touched the "quick" of Cain's guilty heart and caused his anger to flare anew. In a vain effort to conceal the truth from God, he retorted, "Am I my brother's keeper?" "But all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13).

"You cannot hide from God,
His eye is fixed on you."

Banished from the Presence of God

Cain went out from the presence of the Lord a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth. The Lord had warned him that sin couched at his door. The warning went unheeded, and was eventually followed by judgement. Cain felt that his punishment was more than he could bear. The burden of sin becomes very heavy for the sinner. Many have testified that they staggered beneath the load. But oh, how merciful the Lord is if a sinner will repent! Jesus says: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

If Cain felt that the banishment here on this earth from the presence of God was too great for him, what about being banished forever from the presence of God in a burning hell? That is the end of a life of sin. Sin separates a soul from God. No sin can enter Heaven. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4).

What a warning this lesson should be to all who read it! Flee to the Blood for a refuge, and hide beneath its cleansing flow. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whose confesseth and forsaketh them

| shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).