

LESSONS FROM CAIN & ABEL

Genesis 4:1-5a Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord." And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering He had no regard.

- Some have concluded that because Cain offered the fruit of the ground instead of sheep, God rejected the offering.
 - There's no doubt that God wants what He's asked for: it's a principle. See **Malachi 1:6-14**.
 - Both kinds of sacrifices were required, but does it apply here? **Exodus 23:19; Leviticus 2**.
 - Are we to make something of seeing "firstborn," but not "first fruits"?
 - **Proverbs 15:8-9** *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is acceptable to Him. The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but He loves him who pursues righteousness.* Was Cain wicked?
- **Hebrews 11:4** *"By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks."*
 - Both of them, in principle, still speak. That is, they serve as examples. One of the first examples we see is one of worship: acceptable and unacceptable worship.
 - We know that we must worship in spirit and truth (**John 4:23-24**).
- Why do you worship God? Why are you here today? What do you bring? How do you come?

Genesis 4:5b-7 So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it."

- We're all familiar with the text and what's to come. Let's address something:
 - Chapter 4 is powerful in its presentation of worship and the realities of life. The first transgression mentioned is tied to worship. Then we'll have a good representation of life: there are good and bad people.
 - BUT, we have a choice. This passage has to be confronted before teaching that man acts evil because of their nature, which is beyond their control.
 - Did Cain not have the desire to do right? Did he not have the ability? If so, it was news to God. If so, it seems as though God would be toying with Cain.
 - **Acts 2:40**, "And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this crooked generation'"

Genesis 4:8-11 Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" And the Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand."

- There are people who worship God in spirit and truth and there are people who do not.

- There are righteous people and wicked people.
 - **Jude 11** *Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion.*
 - **1 John 3:12** *We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.*
 - Not trying to be funny, but the Bible doesn't read like a psychology book. "Why did Abel do that? What was going on? Was it his childhood, etc." Not saying it's bad to discuss our past, but at the end of the day, sometimes we simply do bad things.
 - Want some psychology? Most people seek validation - that's normal. Cain could have had that from Jehovah, but he chose not to. "Why?!?" Because he didn't. It's kind of that simply. Same thing happened to his momma. She was lied to. She thought about it and went her own way. "Why?!?" She wanted to.
 - **1 John 3:13** *"Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you."* Which brings us to our next point.
- But, being righteous doesn't save you for suffering.
 - **Matthew 23:34-35** *"Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar."* Who did He say that to? The religious leaders! Take heed lest you fall.
 - **Psalms 38:20** *Those who render me evil for good accuse me because I follow after good.*
 - **Proverbs 29:10** *Bloodthirsty men hate one who is blameless and seek the life of the upright.*
 - **Matthew 5:10-12** *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*
- There was another who's blood "speaks."
 - **Hebrews 12:24** *and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*
 - Abel testifies as a witness. His blood was calling from the ground. Not literally, of course. It's a point. He's been murdered. Innocent blood has been shed by the guilty. There seems to be a call for justice.
 - Yet, some believe the focus should be on Abel's sacrifice. In other words, looking to the first sacrifice of a righteous man (Abel) to the ultimate made by the Son of God.
 - Perhaps both are true? Jesus sacrifice is superior in quality. Not only is it greater than that of an animal, but it doesn't call for justice, but rather, forgiveness and justification. It doesn't seek to condemn, but rather redeem.
 - What do you do with such a sacrifice?

Genesis 4:12-16 *When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." Then the Lord said to him, "Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the Lord*

put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

- There's punishment for such evil.
 - **Genesis 9:6** "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.
 - **Deuteronomy 27:24** " 'Cursed be anyone who strikes down his neighbor in secret.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
 - **Numbers 35:33** You shall not pollute the land in which you live, for blood pollutes the land, and no atonement can be made for the land for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of the one who shed it.
 - So, God was right to cast him out.
- Yet, the Lord still gave him life.
 - What does that say about God and you?