

Cain and Abel – Gen 4:1-8

- Pray
- Open your bibles

Review: Why did God create man? He wants to be with us!

This is in the context of God’s instructions for the tabernacle and the priests ministering there
Exo 29:43-46 (NLT), ⁴³ I will meet the people of Israel there, in the place made holy by my glorious presence. ⁴⁴ Yes, I will consecrate the Tabernacle and the altar, and I will consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests. ⁴⁵ Then I will live among the people of Israel and be their God, ⁴⁶ and they will know that I am the LORD their God. I am the one who brought them out of the land of Egypt so that I could live among them. I am the LORD their God.

Now, think about what we talked about last week, the fall of Adam and Eve...

QUESTION? Do you think that Adam and Eve are happy about what happened?

QUESTION? Do you think they were ashamed when they recognized their sin?

QUESTION? Do you think they realized that Satan was a liar and God was telling the truth?

QUESTION? Do you think they were listening carefully when God cursed the serpent?

QUESTION? Do you think they are mad at God for cursing them, or mad at Satan for tempting them?

Without diminishing the global impact of the catastrophe that occurred in Chapter 3... I believe Adam and Eve get a pretty bad rap. What would it take for Adam and Eve to be redeemed? In other words, could one mistake send them both to hell? Is that the kind of God we serve?

QUESTION? Are Adam and/or Eve in heaven? We simply don’t know, but we can see evidence of faith in the following verses...

QUESTION? Are we saved but what we do, or in whom we trust?

Look back Gen 3:20-24, which we didn’t have time to discuss last time:

Gen 3:20-24, *Now the man called his wife’s name ^[a]Eve, because she was the mother of all the living. ²¹ The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. ²² Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”— ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.*

- **Verse 20, Man’s response**
 - Immediately after the curses, Adam responds by naming his wife

- He named his wife Eve, which means “Life”, “because she was the mother of all the living”
 - QUESTION? Why did Adam name her “Life”
 - How does Adam know she will be the mother of all the living? These were the only two people on the earth. No one had had been born yet!
 - God said to Satan, I will put “enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise you on the head”
 - Adam believes Eve will be at enmity with Satan
 - Adam believes Eve will produce offspring who will also fight against Satan
 - Adam also believes that out of her will come one who is “Life”, who will deal a crushing blow to the enemy
 - If she was the mother of ALL THE LIVING, would there be any other humans, anywhere other than those who came from Eve? Just saying...
- **Verse 21, Gods provision**
 - The LORD provided for their covering by killing an innocent animal (a foreshadow of Christ)
 - These weren’t wool sweaters, these we animal skins
 - The first death on earth was by God to cover sinners
 - Instead of killing them both, he cared for them by covering them
 - God provided the sacrifice, and God provided the covering?
 - *Gen 22:7-8, Isaac spoke to his father Abraham and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” And he said, “Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”⁸ Abraham said, “God will ^[a]provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together.*
 - Here is the principle,
 - Heb 9:22, “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness”
 - Adam and Eve did their best to cover their shame using fig leaves
 - This was a human attempt at making things right
 - God, in his grace and mercy does it the right way, FOR THEM
 - Here God makes it plainly understood that an innocent life must be taken to cover human sin
- **Verse 22, QUESTION?** Why was God concerned about man eating from the tree of life?
 - Because our sin had not yet been dealt with!
 - Can you think of any creatures that are inherently sinful who live forever?
 - Does Satan and do demons have an opportunity for forgiveness? No.
 - What happens to perpetually evil beings? Lake of fire!
 - God, in his mercy, has forbidden us from having access to eternal life while our sin is not taken care of. We would live forever evil, and be banished to the Lake of Fire!
 - Eating from the tree of life in a sinful state would do them eternal harm

- In order to inherit eternal life, we have to be redeemed!
- Restricting access to the tree of life was an act of mercy on God's part!
 - God has a better plan! Salvation by grace through faith.
- **Verse 23**, So Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden
 - QUESTION? Do you think they wanted to stay?
 - There is a dead animal lying nearby, showing them what death is like
 - QUESTION? Do you think they would have eaten from the tree of life?
 - I would have tried!
- **Verse 24**, God drove them out of the garden, for what reason?
 - To till the ground from which he was taken
 - Having to leave paradise gave him time to meditate on what was lost
 - QUESTION? How does suffering in this life produce hope in us for the next?
 - QUESTION? Why did God place Cherubim with flaming swords at the entrance to Eden?

Now Chapter 4

Gen 4:1-8, Now the man ^[a]had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to ^[b]Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a ^[c]manchild with the help of the LORD." ² Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. ³ So it came about ^[d]in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. ⁴ Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; ⁵ but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. ⁶ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? ⁷ If you do well, ^[e]will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." ⁸ Cain ^[f]told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

There is some detail here, but God also wants us to see the big picture in the story.

- **Verse 1:** [NASB] Now the man ^[a]had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to ^[b]Cain (qayin), and she said (amar), "I have gotten (qanah) a ^[c]manchild (ish) with the help of the LORD."
 - Cain means a "possession". She said "qayin, amar qanah",
 - This is a sound play in the Hebrew (paronomasia)
 - A play upon words that sound similar
 - They paved paradise and put up a parking lot
 - The woods are lonely, dark and deep
 - Going against the grain
 - What she says is almost poetic
 - I have acquired a possession, or I have created a possession
 - "...gave birth to Cain (possession), I created (or possessed) a man, even the Lord"

- ASV “I have gotten a man with the help of Jehovah”
 - ESV “I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord”
 - HCSB “I have had a male child with the Lord’s help”
 - KJV “I have gotten a man from the Lord”
 - NET “I have created a man just as the Lord did!”
 - NCV “With the Lord’s help, I have given birth to a man”
 - NIV “With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man”
 - NLT “With the Lord’s help I have produced a man”
 - RVR (Spanish) “By the will of Jehovah I have acquired man”
- This is a hopeful expression, one of delight and expectation, AND acknowledging God’s role in the process
- The life of Cain begins with joy, wonder, and the promise of family and potential
- **Verse 2,** ² *Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.*
 - Abel means vapor, or breath, indicating the fleeting nature of man, and esp. Abel
 - Both their professions were noble, productive, and essential
 - Cultivating livestock and crops were the two needs in the early days on earth
- **Verses 3-8,** ³ *So it came about ^[d]in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. ⁴Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; ⁵but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. ⁶Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? ⁷If you do well, ^[e]will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.” ⁸Cain ^[f]told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.*
 - Course of time – we don’t know how long
 - We can also assume that both brothers knew what God required
 - They had their parents telling them what God required
 - Plus, the Law of Conscience was in effect from the dawn of man
 - *Rom 2:14-15, ¹⁴For when Gentiles who do not have ^[g]the Law do ^[h]instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having ^[i]the Law, are a law to themselves, ¹⁵in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, ¹⁶on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.*
 - So, Cain brought “an offering ... of the fruit of the ground”
 - Abel brought “the firstlings of his flock and the fat portions”
 - QUESTION? What issues do you already see here about their respective offerings?
 - Cain brought some things
 - Abel brought the best things

- QUESTION? Do you think Adam and Eve shared with their boys anything about the garden, and what happened when they disobeyed God and believed Satan?
 - QUESTION? Do you think they emphasized that God was to be trusted?
 - QUESTION? Do you think they shared anything with them about how wonderful their relationship with God was before the fall, and what an amazing place the garden was, which they are now banned from?
- God had “regard” for both Abel himself, and what Abel offered to Him
 - This means he accepted both
 - Abel for his reverent attitude
 - And His gift, because he gave the best of what he had
 - His gift is motivated by his attitude
- But for Cain and his offering, God had no regard
 - This means he rejected both Cain and his gift
 - Cain is rejected because of his careless approach to giving
 - His approach to God was faithless
 - If we believe God is worthy of worship, then our giving should reflect that belief
 - And his gift, because he gave God only “something” of what he had
 - His gift was qualified by his attitude toward God
- So Cain became angry, and his anger showed on his face
 - NLT “he looked dejected”
 - QUESTION? Why was Cain angry?
- Another point here is not only how it was offered, but what was offered
 - In Gen 3:21, God killed an animal and covered Adam and Eve with the skins
 - In Leviticus, an animal sacrifice was usually required as a “sin offering”
 - While a grain offering is also provided for, but this was typically only as a “thank offering”, not a “sin offering”
 - The fact that Cain was a “tiller of the ground” shouldn’t have stopped him from offering an animal as a sacrifice to God
 - Cain could have paid his brother for a spotless lamb, but probably his pride wouldn’t allow him to do that, since Abel was younger
 - While this may be another reason God did not accept Cain’s offering, it is more likely Cain’s dismissive attitude that brought God’s rejection
- The New Testament writers minced no words about Cain’s and his sin:
 - *Heb 11:4, By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying ^[a]about his gifts, and through ^[b]faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.*

- *1 John 3:11-12, For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; ¹² not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.*
 - *Jude 11-13, [Speaking of false teachers] Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay ^[b]they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. ¹² These are the men who are ^[c]hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, ^[d]doubly dead, uprooted; ¹³ wild waves of the sea, casting up their own ^[e]shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the ^[f]black darkness has been reserved forever.*
 - Cain is set apart in these verses as an example of an evil unbeliever
- **We learn some things from these verses**
- **1-The doomed have hopeful beginnings**
 - Everyone rejoices in the potential of a new human being coming into the world
- **2-The doomed offer unacceptable worship.**
 - QUESTION? what is unacceptable worship?
 - Everyone worships someone or some thing
 - The righteous one
 - Worships the true God in a true way
 - The unrighteous one
 - Worships the true God in a false way
 - Worships a false god, in other words, demons
 - Worship himself
- **3-The doomed resent the true people of God**
 - QUESTION? Do unbelievers like it when we are dogmatic about our faith?
 - The true gospel is divisive! Unbelievers resent us for our position on this
 - *John 14:6, Jesus *said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.*
 - *Acts 4:12, And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."*
 - Cain hated the acceptance that his brother Abel received
 - Abel's righteous behavior was a public rebuke to his brother (no words)
 - Remember the story of Joseph? Why did his brothers hate him?
 - *Gen 37:4, His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him ^[a]on friendly terms.*
- **4-The doomed reject the Word of God**
 - QUESTION? What does rejecting the Word of God look like today?

- Verse 6: “The Lord said to Cain, why are you angry, why has your countenance fallen?”. God had something important to say to Cain. This is directly from God!
 - QUESTION? Is God asking for information?
 - No, he wants Cain to check his motives
 - God’s Word has a way of getting us to check our motives as well
- **5-God continues offering grace and reasoning with unbelievers**
 - Verse 7a: “If you do well, ^[e]will not your countenance be lifted up?
 - QUESTION? What is God doing here? God is by nature a Savior!
 - He’s giving Cain a chance to repent
 - He’s gently showing him that God’s way is the best way
 - The verse 7b, “And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.”
 - This is the downside of disobedience. He’s giving Cain a choice
 - Depending on how Cain chooses, God could apply His forgiveness
 - QUESTION? What’s the imagery of sin “crouching” that God uses?
 - 1 Pet 5:8, *Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*
 - The idea is that if Cain decides to do things God’s way, sin will not master him, but if he rejects the way of God, he will be unable to master the sin that is ready to pounce on him at every moment
 - QUESTION? Were Cain and Abel both born sinners?
 - Then what’s the difference between them?
 - Abel embraced God’s Word
 - Cain rejected God’s Word
 - Why? Because he loved his sin
 - He wanted to do things his own way
- **6-Unbelievers trample on the goodness and grace of God and go their own way**
 - At this point, Cain can make a choice. God has offered him a way out!
 - QUESTION? WHAT CHOICE DID CAIN MAKE?
 - Verse 8, ⁸Cain ^[f]told Abel his brother. *And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.*
 - Seems like Cain had a conversation with Abel about what God said
 - The bible doesn’t reveal the conversation, but we can guess...
 - Cain probably related to Abel what God had said, and Abel agreed that God was right and perhaps encouraged Cain to get himself right and repent
 - That was the last straw for Cain, and he struck his brother dead. He had no interest in God’s forgiveness and provision
 - The Hebrew here for killed is “harag”, the strongest Hebrew word for murder

- To smite with deadly intent, to slay, to destroy, to purposefully murder.
 - **7-Those who trample the grace of God can be easily overwhelmed by sin**
 - This is the image of the pouncing Lion. It creeps up, and then strikes suddenly, without warning
 - *James 1:15, ¹² Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has ^[c]been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted ^[d]by God”; for God cannot be tempted ^[e]by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin ^[f]is accomplished, it brings forth death.*
 - Watch the news; two men get into an argument, and the shooting starts
- **The root of the issue is what we believe about God’s character. This speaks of FAITH**
- **QUESTION? How much of what we believe about God’s character is faith, and how much is knowledge? Which is stronger?**
- **QUESTION? WHAT IS FAITH?**
 - **Heb 11:1**, Now faith is the ^[a]assurance of things ^[b]hoped for, the ^[c]conviction of things not seen. ² For by it the men of old ^[d]gained approval.
 - **Job 42:1-6 (NLT)**, Then Job replied to the LORD:
 - ² “I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you.
 - ³ You asked, ‘Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?’ It is I—and I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me.
 - ⁴ You said, ‘Listen and I will speak! I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.’
 - ⁵ I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes.
 - ⁶ I take back everything I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance.”
- **QUESTION? How do we acquire faith?**
 - **Rom 10:17**, So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word ^[a]of Christ.
- Satan impugned God’s character in Chapter 3, which led to the fall
 - Abel acted in faith because he understood the character of God, and worshipped Him
 - Cain acted without faith, because he didn’t recognize God’s character, and that God deserves our worship
 - Put another way:

- One person can hear the story of the fall, and blame man
- Another can hear the SAME story of the fall, and blame God

Parable of the talents (5, 2, 1) - I knew you to be a cruel man!

Mat 25:14-30, ²⁴ “And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. ²⁵ And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.’

²⁶ “But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. ²⁷ Then you ought to have put my money ^[d] in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. ²⁸ Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’

²⁹ “For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. ³⁰ Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

- The worthless slave withheld good from his master because he thought his master was cruel and unjust. He had a totally wrong view of God!
- The wicked have this worldview. They don’t want God to be right, or to even exist, so they ignore Him, thinking he’ll go away.
- The wicked also do not want any accountability whatsoever
- However, the bible is clear we will all stand before the throne of God to give an account
 - *Mat 12:35, The good man brings out of his good treasure ^[d] what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure ^[e] what is evil. ³⁶ But I tell you that every ^[f] careless word that people ^[a] speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.*
 - *Act 17:31, He has fixed a day in which He will judge ^[a] the world in righteousness ^[b] through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men ^[c] by raising Him from the dead.”*

Rom 3:3-4, What then? If some ^[a] did not believe, their ^[b] unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? ⁴ May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, “THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ^[c] ARE JUDGED.”

- So Cain’s unbelief does not nullify who God is, or God’s plan for humanity
- In this first family on earth, we see the beginning manifestation of two Kingdoms
 - The Kingdom of the faithful righteous
 - The Kingdom of the unfaithful wicked
- This family demonstrates that there are really only two families forming on the earth
 - Those who love and obey God. This is the Kingdom of God.

- Those who hate and disobey God. This is the Kingdom of Satan.
- We will see these dual kingdoms developing together on earth in subsequent chapters

Read *Thy Kingdom Come*, page 41