

THE SPREAD OF SIN – Part 1

Genesis 4:1-8

INTRODUCTION

The Lost World – The only record we have is in **Genesis 4-5**

- This is the only record of early development we have - of man's first deeds and achievements.
- The Flood destroyed everything.
- Archaeological excavations are of the post-Flood world.

Henry Morris – The Genesis Record – *“The brief Biblical record is ... the only fully reliable account we have of that first age. It leaves us in no doubt that the antediluvian world was substantially different from the one in which we now live. ... much of the earth's waters were stored “above the firmament” in the form of a vast blanket of invisible water vapor, which produced a marvelous “greenhouse effect” over the earth's entire surface. This, in turn, produced a uniformly mild, warm climate everywhere all year long, with no wind and rain storms. There were extensive land surfaces, covered with lush vegetation and an abundant animal life, all over the world.”*

In **Genesis** - *Bereshith* in the Hebrew (means “Book of Beginnings”) - in Chapter **4** there are many ‘**firsts**’:

- first pregnancy, birth, and baby
- first sacrifice, first appearance of the word “sin”
- first murder, first polygamy, first lie (human)
- first curse directly on man
- first city, civilization,
- first instance and record of music and metallurgy
- first prophet - identified by God
- first public/corporate worship

Chapter 4 Outline

vv. 1-16 – spread of sin

vv. 17-24 – spread of society (Cain’s family estranged from God)

vv. 25-26 – spread of salvation (Seth’s godly family)

READ Gen 4: 1-16

Proposition: 3 Stages in this Passage:

1. Things Seem To Be Going **Well**
2. Something Is **Wrong**
3. Something Is Very, Very **Wrong**

So That: We understand the spread of sin.

First Stage ...

I. Things Seem To Be Going Well Gen 4:1-4

Point – We begin chapter **4** thinking, “Wow, things have really healed. This family has recovered from a terrible spiritual disaster. Their two sons are offering.” Things seem to be going well ...

Faith and Sacrifice:

- **coming out of Chapter 3 we should understand that Adam and Eve are saved**
- **Adam demonstrated his faith in God when he named his wife Eve because she was the mother of all the living**
- **after his sin (The Fall) Adam has placed his trust in God and is believing God rather than Satan**
- **we have a beautiful picture of salvation in v. 21 - man cannot cover his spiritual nakedness - only God can do that**
- **these are strong indications that Adam and Eve are saved**

A. Faith

4:1-2a

Point – Coming out of chapter 3, **Adam** and **Eve** are saved.

- Faith of **Adam** is demonstrated in his naming of **Eve**

- Faith of **Eve** is demonstrated in **4:1 (Cain)**, **25 (Seth)**

Proof – Gen 4:1-2a – “**Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, ‘I have gotten a manchild with *the help of the LORD.*’** ²**And again, she gave birth to his brother Abel.”**

“Now the man had relations with his wife Eve”

A few observations:

- 1) “**Now**” - **Adam** did not have relations with **Eve** prior to this, in the Garden
- 2) “**the man**” – The man is key. He is the one who transgressed. He is the one who was expelled.
- 3) “**had relations with his wife**” – Hebrew word – *yada* – “to know”

God gives plenty and sufficient information for marital intimacy in Scripture

- Song of Solomon
- **Heb 13:4** – “**Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled;**”

God is also sensitive and delicate in His writing in Scripture

- Adam “knew” his wife

Application – contrast this with the shameful way some rock star, evangelical pastors go way beyond what God does in Scripture

- Seattle pastor, from pulpit, relates alleged visions of sinful sexual activity - gives many more details and goes far beyond what God tells us in Scripture
- pastor of the second biggest church in America, had a 24 hour “bed-in” on the roof of his church broadcasting live

When God deals with a subject, let's go as far as God goes - let's not shy away - but we must not be arrogant and go beyond

Not just biblical discretion - to know intimately or experientially
Exod 6:3 - 6:7; 10:1-2

- God did not make himself “known” to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob
- when you then go to **Ex 10:1-2**, God is going to reveal Himself experientially as their Deliverer and as their Redeemer
- in **Ex 6:7**, even though His name has been revealed at a surface level to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in Genesis, the nation of Israel will know God experientially as Yahweh in a way that even their fathers did not know
- this is the same Hebrew word *yada* as used in **Ex 4:1**

So, when Scripture tells us the man “**had relations with his wife**”, it is delicate and sensitive language that is also expressing a beautiful truth of it being within marriage - it is a gift from the Lord.

“**and she conceived and gave birth to Cain**”

first pregnancy, birth, and baby

It's one thing to see an animal give birth. It's another thing to see a human birth made in the image of God - an eternal being.

“**and she said, ‘I have gotten a manchild with *the help of the LORD.*’**”

- God made man, and now with the help of the Lord, I have made a second man.

“**with *the help of the LORD***” – thankfulness and praise

- now seeing her trust in the Lord
- Nascent faith - an early stage; an embryonic faith (Illustration – like a mustard seed)
- She believes.
- She shares credit with God.

You could say at the beginning of chapter 4 we see, and I say this only semi-jokingly, **Eve** the Arminian. At the end of chapter 4, we see **Eve** the Calvinist.

A message of hope

- **Eve** sees God's Promise in **3:15** coming true
- She seems to believe **Cain** is fulfillment of God's promise in **3:15**.

“And again, she gave birth to his brother Abel.”

a second birth

“Abel” – means breath or vapor

Note, there have been four kind of births:

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1) Human with no mother and no father. | Adam |
| 2) Human with father, but no mother. | Eve |
| 3) Human with mother, but no father. | Jesus |
| 4) Human with mother and father. | Everyone Else |

Application – Psa 139 – “For You formed my inward parts; You weaved me in my mother’s womb. ¹⁴I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. ¹⁵My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, *And* skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book they were all written, The days that were ordained *for me*, When as yet there was not one of them.”

Faith, ...

B. Sacrifice

4:2b-4

Point – Somber and beautiful picture of sacrifice in chapter 3, ...

Proof – Gen 4:2b-4 – “And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. ³So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. ⁴And 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;”

“And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground” – Abel’s “was” – imperfect tense

Cain’s “was” – perfect tense

- better translation – “Abel became a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.”
- perhaps as the first born, Cain followed more closely in the footsteps of his father, Adam and Abel became a keeper of the flocks

Nothing here makes one vocation superior to the other

- both are part of original Creation Ordinance (1:28; 2:5, 15) - of subduing the earth and cultivating the ground
- “tiller” in 4:2 same Hebrew word as “cultivate” in 2:5, 15

“³So it came about in *the* course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. ⁴And Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions.” – first sacrifice (recorded)

“*the* course of time” – literally means “end of days”

- could refer to instructions from God about some kind of harvest, day, offering/sacrifice - an appointed time for sacrifice God had given to Adam who had passed on to his sons.
- some have speculated that this offering could have been at the entrance of Eden? Certainly possible but not definite. Similar to the tabernacle. Also the “east of Eden” phrase in v. 16 (3:24, 4:16)

Both Cain and Abel bring an “offering” that is related to their vocation.

- **“Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground”**
- **“Abel on his part....”**

Even under the Mosaic Law, offerings were made without blood. Many vegetable or meal offerings are included in the Mosaic Law.

What the text does not say:

It does not say “blood” sacrifice

- there are no indicators in the text about kind, smell, etc. ...

Of the three men for which I have the most respect and whom have impacted me the most - John MacArthur, Prof. Bill Barrick, and the late James Montgomery Boice - two think Cain’s sacrifice was not acceptable was because it was not an animal blood sacrifice. One agrees with me ... or perhaps better stated I agree with one ☺ that the form of his sacrifice could have been acceptable with a right heart.

“the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering”

This is the beginning of God’s communication to us that **Abel** is **saved!** Even outside garden, things are going well. Even outside the garden, there is salvation.

Why does God have **“regard for Abel”**???

Answers right here in the text:

- 1) **“And Abel”** – Hebrew sentence normally begins with verb. This sentence begins with ‘Abel’ - **that is not normally done so we see God drawing a contrast. He emphasized Abel.**
- 2) **“on his part”** – Hebrew *gam* – strong contrast with **Cain**
- 3) **“the firstlings of his flock”** - first fruits (**Exod 23:16**), offered the best animal

4) “**and of their fat portions**” - the best part

What the text does say:

- 1) “**And Abel**”
- 2) “**on his part**”
- 3) “**the firstlings of his flock**”
- 4) “**and of their fat portions**”

Note: “their fat portions” – Makes me feel good that, when it comes to steaks, I have always been a marbled man; not a filet man

Answers also in the NT:

1) **Heb 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.”

2) Jesus calls Abel “**a prophet**” – **Luke 11:50-51; Matt 23:35**

- A prophet is one who has received direct revelation from God.
- **1 Pet 1, Acts 26** □ the prophets prophesied/preached Messiah.
- perhaps the prophets, even Abel, had more Messianic knowledge than we sometimes think.

Things seem to be going well, ...

Second Stage ...

II. Something is Wrong

Gen 4:4-7

Point – Things seem to be going well ... until we discover something is **wrong** with Cain’s offering

→ The effects of **sin/Fall** are still here.

Proof – **Gen 4:5-7** – “**but 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, 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.”

“but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard” –

This begins the huge contrast between the brothers.

Cain’s birth Abel’s birth

Abel’s occupation Cain’s occupation

Cain’s offering Abel’s offering

Abel’s acceptance Cain’s rejection

Cain’s anger Abel’s death

How did **Abel** and **Cain** know that God had regard for **Abel’s** offering and not **Cain’s**?

- 1) it is possible that God spoke
- 2) it is possible that the offering was consumed by fire (**Lev 9:24**)? Moses doesn’t record at all how God’s favor and disfavor were expressed. We don’t know. This is, therefore, unimportant.

Why does God have regard for Abel and his offering, but He does not have regard for Cain and his offering.

‘How’ is not important but ‘why’ is....

Recall what the text does and does not say about the offerings.

The point is the **heart** internal; not external

Isa 1:11-13; Hos 6:6; Mic 6:6-8

Cain – has some kind of barren service but his heart isn’t behind it

- going about it without a circumcised heart is worthless
- rote duty, barren mechanics, without heart.

Proof **“So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell”**

– **Cain** adds a second sin to the first (offering up an improper sacrifice) – literally – “burned with intense anger” (second sin)

His ungodly, sinful anger comes from **inside** – not because of poverty, or a deprived upbringing and parental abuse. He couldn’t

plead he had been hardened by war or brutalized by the sight of its victims. Cain had not fallen in with bad company. The sin came from himself alone.

Mark 7:15 – “there is nothing outside the man which going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man”

God - the Shepherd, by nature a Savior - questions the sinner **Cain** just as He did with **Adam and Eve** in the Garden of Eden in chapter 3.

4:6 – “Then the LORD said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?’ ”

- as was the case after the first sin, God comes to the sinner. The sinner does not come to God.

4:7a – “If you do well, will not *your countenance* be lifted up?”

- because he would be restored to God
- God points Cain to the path of repentance
- this is direct revelation from God - God is speaking directly to Cain and yet he does not believe the Word of God

4:7b – “And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.”

“sin” – *chattah* – first appearance in Scripture – Hebrew word which means to “miss the mark”

Illustration – “crouching at the door; and its desire is for you”

- Sin is not personified.
- Sin is animalized, like a wild beast waiting to rip you to shreds.
- Sin thirsts after your blood.

God tells Cain what he must do:

“but you must master it” - slave or master?

- **Rom 6:12, 17-18** - you must become a slave of sin or we are a slave of Christ - that is the reality and that is what Cain is facing right now

There is no repentance - only stubborn silence from Cain.

Cain was the literal first seed of the woman has already become the figurative first seed of the serpent.

Things started well....not only is something is wrong, ...

Third Stage ...

III. Something Is Very, Very Wrong Gen 4:8

Point – **James 1:15** – “**when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.**”

- Literally true here in **Gen 4**

Proof – **Gen 4:8** – “**And Cain 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.**”

Jesus identified **Abel** as “a prophet.”

Let me ask, to whom did **Abel** prophesy?

To whom did Abel preach? → **Cain**

Abel brought the Word of the Lord to bear to **Cain** ... and **Cain** did not like it.

“**And Cain told Abel his brother**” - no indication in the text of what Cain told Abel - I think it is safe to assume it was wrapped in luring deceit and lies.

“**And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.**”

The Hebrew word translated here as ‘**killed**’ means to murder with intent.

- deliberate premeditated murder
- the word is even stronger than the Hebrew word in the 6th commandment, which can mean either murder or even manslaughter

This **first murder** has caused a great breach between man-God and between man-man. Think of the guilt that must have been on **Adam** and **Eve**. They were the cause of death.

- One son is murdered.
- Later on, another son is banished.

This leaves the reader shocked □ so quick to disintegrate.

Gen 6 – the first time the heart of man is mentioned.

- chapters **3-4** lead up to this; they prepare us to understand the heart of man and how it unfolds and leads to the flood
- **6:5** is easy to understand when you read chapters **3-4**
- very possibly, even likely, there were billions of people living on the earth at the time of the flood - God saved eight!

Cain had:

- 1) saved parents
- 2) saved brother
- 3) direct revelation from God

Yet he is a murderer ... of his own brother, of his own blood.

1 John 3:12 – “**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.**”

Illustration – Pastor M. Aharon helped 700 Hindus and Muslims to trust in Christ in the town of Nizamabad, located about 300 miles east of Bombay in Central India. He established 12 churches in that community. His ministry outraged Hindus and Muslims.

Pastor Aharon was mercilessly assaulted by a group of militant Hindus in January 2006. He was beaten up for his zeal in bringing both Hindus and Muslims to Christ. He was not killed but was left half dead. His face was covered with blood. He survived the attack at the hands of the Hindu mob. As the group of thugs were beating him, a mob cheered and yelled in support inciting others to join in. Police stood by doing nothing, even preventing the pastor from escaping. Only after Aharon was falling unconscious to the ground did police move in and lead him away.

When a Voice of the Martyrs contact asked Pastor Aharon what was going through his mind during the attack, he said, *“I remembered Christ and many others persecuted for their faith in the last twenty centuries.”*

Abel is the first prophet to be killed.

Abel’s is the first of a great cloud of witnesses who bore a brave testimony for the truth and paid for it with their lives.

Jude 11-13

CONCLUSION

Friend, there is room in Heaven for murderers who repent. Moses, David, and Saul, who became Paul, are murderers who repented and became saints. Simon the Zealot, Barabbas, the list goes on ...

There is a cure for the spread of sin - the free offer of salvation through faith and trust in Jesus Christ. That is the offer that God brought to Cain and that God brings to us.