

# THE SPREAD OF SIN – Part 2

## Genesis 4:9-16

### INTRODUCTION

*Financial Contagion* - refers to a scenario in which small shocks, which initially affect only a few financial institutions or a particular region of an economy, spreads to the rest of financial sectors and other countries whose economies were previously healthy. Financial contagion happens at both the international level and the domestic level.

Contagion (from the word “contact”) – which describes the spread of disease from one to another

In the same way, this describes the spread of sin.

Illustration - In the OT, God gives the picture that only a tiny bit yeast is needed to leaven an entire lump of bread dough. In the NT, this is applied to talk about how one little bit of sin can be a contagion that affects the entire body of Christ or all of humanity.

#### Genesis Chapter 4 Outline:

vv. 1-16 – Spread of **Sin**

vv. 17-24 – Spread of **Society**

vv. 25-26 – Spread of **Salvation**

#### **Recall:**

*Bereshith* – Book of Beginnings □ Chapter 4 **Firsts:**

- first pregnancy, birth, and baby
- first Sacrifice, first prophet
- first appearance of the word “sin,” first murder
- first lie (human), first curse directly on man

*“A hear a lot of preachers talking about sinners ‘making decisions.’ Isn’t that what got us into the mess we’re in now?”*

Man fell even when surrounded by perfection. The first family seems to recover from the disaster. Their two sons are offering sacrifices. Things seem to be going well. Then we have the first clue something is wrong with Cain when God rejects his offering.

Suddenly, one of their two sons kills the other one absent of any outside influence: no TV, no red-light district, no bad companions to corrupt good behavior.

Point is the **heart** □ internal; not external

- God lays out what He wants us to do with our hands, with our eyes, with our lips, but it all comes from our heart

**Illustration** – I remember hearing about a discussion with young child regarding Cain and Abel. The child said that the problem with Cain was that his “smoke was crooked”. It was discovered that this young child had read a children’s book of Cain and Abel and the illustration of the story in the book showed the smoke rising from Abel’s offering rising straight up into the air. Meanwhile, the smoke rising from Cain’s offering was rising in a crooked manner. Sadly, this is all the child remembered from the story.

It’s not about the smoke but about the heart.

**Proof** – **Isa 1:11-13** – “**What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?**” Says the LORD. **‘I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams, And the fat of fed cattle. And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats. <sup>12</sup>When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts? <sup>13</sup>Bring your worthless offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies-- I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly.’”**

**Hos 6:6** – “**I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.**”

God is bringing out that the outward exercise of religion - if it is coming from an unregenerate heart - it is an abomination to the Lord and it is worthless to Him. That began with Cain.

## **READ Gen 4:1-16**

### **Proposition: 3 Actions of God:**

- I. He Hears the Cry of the Afflicted
- II. Judges the Sin of the Apostate
- III. Protects the Life of the Anathematized

**So That:** We understand the severity of sin and God's judgment on it. We also understand there is always hope in the midst of this judgment.

#### **First Action of God...**

- I. He Hears the Cry of the Afflicted Gen 4:9-10

Point – God cares for the oppressed, the persecuted, righteous  
→ God hears the voice of Abel's blood crying from the ground

Proof – Gen 4:9-10 – “Then the LORD said to Cain, ‘Where is Abel your brother?’ And he said, ‘I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?’<sup>10</sup> And He said, ‘What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to Me from the ground.’”

God is not seeking information.

God knows exactly where Abel is.

God is offering Cain a chance to come clean, to repent.

He is drawing out at this point. He is not driving out at this point.

The voice of God is not the problem. It is never the problem.

The problem is in the heart of the sinner.

The blood of Cain's own brother is still trickling out of his corpse; the horror of his crime could not be more vivid. But God doesn't

say to this murderer, “Murderer! You’re immediately damned to hell!” No. The Lord offers the door to repentance.

**And he said, ‘I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?’**

**This is the first outright human lie.** And it is an arrogant lie and a sarcastic question. Cain is a deceptive liar and murderer.

Boice – *“an ever-increasing vortex of hatred and murder”*

**“The way of Cain” – Jude 11** - the way of deception, the way of hatred, the way of unrighteous anger and murder.

Question: You may ask, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

Answer: Yes → Yes, the believer is his brother’s keeper

**Turn to → Gal 6:1-2**

- **when you have a brother or sister that is caught in sin, you are to pick him up – v. 1**
- then, we are then to continue to hold him up – v. 2

**1 John 3:16 – “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”**

**v. 10 - “And He said, ‘What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to Me from the ground.’”**

Point - “**crying**” – often used in Scripture to describe the cry of the oppressed and afflicted

Proof - Exod 3:7 – **“And the LORD said, ‘I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings.’”**

Gen 4:10 → First mention in Scripture of “**blood**” - God hears the cry of the blood

- blood guilt or blood guiltiness

**Jer 19:4 – “...they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent.”**

**Isa 26:21 – “Behold, the LORD is about to come out from His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; And the earth will reveal her bloodshed, And will no longer cover her slain.”**

**Matt 23:35 – “Behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, <sup>35</sup>that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.”**

(Abel to Zechariah spans the entire Bible they had at that time → Hebrew Bible order □ Genesis to 2 Chronicles)

- Cain could silence the voice of his brother the prophet.
- Cain could not silence the “**voice of his blood.**”

Point - Our God is a God who hears

**Illustration – Gen 16:11 – “you shall call his name Ishmael, Because the LORD has heard your affliction.”**

“Ishmael” means “**God hears**”      *shema + el = Ishmael*

Proof -

God hears Hagar (**16:11**)

God hears Abraham (**17:20**)

God hears Ishmael (**21:17**)

God hears Leah – Simeon (**29:33**)

God hears Rachel – Dan(which is short for Daniel) (**30:6**)

This is in contrast to false gods that cannot hear.

**Ps 115:4-6 – “Their idols are silver and gold, The work of man's hands. <sup>5</sup>They have mouths, but they cannot speak; They**

**have eyes, but they cannot see; <sup>6</sup>They have ears, but they cannot hear; They have noses, but they cannot smell;”**

**Turn to: 1 Kings 18:27-29**

Dead idols don't respond. The living God does. He hears. He understands. He acts. He comes to Cain just as He comes to us and tells us who we are and what we have done. He tells us the sins that hurt others matter to Him.

**Application** – What does Abel's blood say?

- 1) To God ☐ Vindicate me!
- 2) To us ☐ Imitate me! Abel is the first of a great cloud of witnesses who bears a brave testimony for the truth.

God **Hears** the **Cry** of the **Afflicted**, ...

**Second Action of God ...**

**II. He Judges the Sin of the Apostate** **Gen 4:11-14**

Point – God curses the complaining, unrepentant, unrighteous

Proof – Gen 4:11-12 – “**And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. <sup>12</sup>When you cultivate the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you; you shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth.**”

First time God's curse is placed directly upon man

- **Cain** is directly cursed
- **Adam** and **Eve** were not directly cursed
- **Satan** and **creation** were directly cursed

God's judgment again matches man's sin

**Serpent** ☐ **3:14** – “**dust shall you eat All the days of your life**”

**Adam** ☐ 5 times in **vv. 17-19**, 3 times in **v. 17** – “eaten ... eat ... eat ...”

In the same way, here with **Cain**, God's judgment matches the sin.

- Cain polluted the ground so the ground will respond back.

Proof □ **“When you cultivate the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you;”**

**“you shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth”** – better translated as “wandering vagrant”

- **Cain** will wander from place to place without peace or rest
- a future of barrenness, pain, frustration, despair and finally death

**Application - as do all men who defy God**

Cain repeats back God's pronounced judgment ...

**Gen 4:13-14 – “And Cain said to the LORD, ‘My punishment is too great to bear! <sup>14</sup>Behold, Thou hast driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Thy face I shall be hidden, and I shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and it will come about that whoever finds me will kill me.’”**

**1<sup>st</sup> Punishment ...**

**A. Driven from the Ground**

**“Thou hast driven me this day from the face of the ground ... and I shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth”**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Punishment ...**

**B. Hidden from God**

**“from Thy face I shall be hidden”**

- literally means “from Your presence I will be hidden”

Only two categories that human beings can be in - either:

- 1) In sin; or
- 2) In Christ

- 1) Hidden from God; or

## 2) Hidden in Christ

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Punishment ...

#### C. Alienated from Man

“and it will come about that whoever finds me will kill me”

- people expect others to act as they would
- murderers fear they will be murdered

Cain will be in perpetual state of fear of man ☐

Perfect justice ☐ The man who viciously murdered his own brother will live all his life in fear of being murdered himself.

**Application** – Fear God and you will then have nothing else to fear

- we will have a clean conscience

Geoff Thomas of Alfred Place Baptist Church in Wales – *“When a fish bites off the head of a smaller fish it suffers no pangs of conscience, but people are all made in the image of Almighty God. A man is urged to do what is right even at considerable cost to himself. He believes it is honorable and noble to lay down his own life for his friends. Parents will voluntarily suffer that their children may not be in want. A husband will sacrifice himself for his wife’s sake, and his conscience will commend him when he acts like that, saying ‘Well done.’”*

**Point** ☐ Godly sorrow versus worldly sorrow

**2 Cor 7:10 -“For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.”**

**Application** – Psalm 51

**5 Qualities of True Repentance:**

- 1) **Is occupied with sin’s guilt; not sin’s consequences**
- 2) **Is focused upward; not inward**
- 3) **Seeks pardon; not pity**

- 4) Prays for cleansing; not cover-up
- 5) Unafraid of Biblical language

**Illustration** – I had a business partner of mine years ago in Seattle, who was a strong Christian. He was an amillennial and we had all kinds of enjoyable and fun discussions.

He grew up as a hippy and then got saved. □ After he was saved, he went back and asked forgiveness from girls he had defrauded and dishonored. He went back to a lumber yard from which he and friends had stolen planks to ask for forgiveness. He also went back with a blank check made out to the lumber yard! (The lumber yard thanked him and didn't accept the check). This is a picture of true repentance.

God Hears the Cry of the Afflicted and Judges the Sin of the Apostate,.....

Third Action of God ...

**III. He Protects the Life of the Anathematized Gen 4:15-16**

Point – Protection in the midst of punishment

- great picture of God's **common mercy**
- God protects the complaining, unrighteous man (Cain)

English theologian and historian **Thomas Fuller**, in his 1650 book called A Pisgah-Sight Of Palestine And The Confines Thereof, wrote "*the night is darkest just before the dawn*"

Proof – Gen 4:15-16 – “So the LORD said to him, ‘Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold.’ And the LORD appointed a sign for Cain, lest anyone finding him should slay him. <sup>16</sup>Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.”

God protects Adam and Eve in chapter 3. Here He protects Cain.

- seven fold vengeance will be taken on anyone who kill the murderer

“**the LORD appointed a sign for Cain**” – Hebrew word does not mean “mark”

- 75 times other appearances in OT □ “sign”
- ridiculous interpretations such as skin color or other nonsense have been suggested
- the bottom line is that we don’t know what the sign was

**4:16** → world outside Garden,

**Adam** and **Eve** are driven out of Eden

**Cain** is driven from the very presence of God and all stability

4:16 – “**land of Nod**” – land of wandering

4:12 – “**a vagrant and a wanderer**” – *na wanad*

Two strong indications that “the land” became populated as a result of Cain:

- 1) The name “**Nod**” and
- 2) Cain builds a city (**v. 17**)

No indication the land was populated before Cain.

The verdict is in. It is “guilty”. But God does not carry out His verdict immediately and to the fullest extent. He postpones it. God gives Cain time and opportunity to repent, to be restored. For those who do repent, like Adam and Eve in Chapter 3, God doesn’t carry out the verdict on them. When God carries it out later, He carries it out on Jesus Christ.

## CONCLUSION

**Heb 12:24** – “**Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.**”

These words were written some 30+ years after the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ.

- God, in His inspired Word through the author of Hebrews, uses the word “speaks” is present tense.

→ **The blood of Christ is still speaking today.**

Gerhard von Rad, in his work Biblical Interpretations in Preaching – “*Abel's blood, even the best and dearest, never brings salvation in the presence of God; instead it increases the burden of the curse. But Christ's blood 'speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel.'* Thus the Bible speaks of two kinds of blood and their voices before God: one of these is millionfold, and its message is accusation, while the other is the blood of the One, and it brings healing.”

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Both **Chapter 3** and this section (**4:1-16**) end with “**east of Eden**”

“**east of Eden**” – further away from God, figuratively

How long did the Garden of Eden last? Don't know. For a while at least. Somewhere between a while and up to the Flood.

**Illustration** – Think of the Tabernacle layout. Man approached God, spatially speaking, from the “**East**”

**Ezek 8:16; 10:18-19; 11:22-23 - Departure of the glory of God**

- picture of God speaking to Israel, saying if you are going to turn your back on My worship and on Me and worship the sun, then with your back towards Me you can watch as My glory departs from you

**Return of the Glory of God** □ **Zech 14:4** – “**In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.**”

**Turn to: Rev 22:1-5, 14**