

GENESIS 4:1-15 ALL MY CHILDREN

I am sure there are many of you that are accustomed to the phrase, “Elvis has left the building!” Where we now find ourselves in Genesis chapter four where Adam and Eve have left the garden. They are now in the greater “province” of Eden, if you will. However, I don’t want to proliferate the idea that they were necessarily denied total access to the garden. There were cherubim placed at the east of the garden, possibly to escort them out of the garden, but there was no wall built or any such thing. But, there was a flaming sword that kept every one and everything away from the tree of life. So it is possible that they still had access to the garden, they just didn’t have free access. It is also possible that this is where they sacrificed to God as cherubim are often linked to the presence of God.

At any rate, they are now living outside the garden paradise in which they once were placed. I know the feeling and you do also. Have you ever been strongly reprimanded by a boss? Have you ever been strongly reprimanded any one whom you loved and respected? I’m sure we all have. So you are familiar with “that” feeling. It is somewhat painful but at the same time you sort of feel like you now have a fresh start. It is the same was when you make up with your spouse after a fight. There is heightened sense of awareness to the injured party by the offender. The pain is still recent, but there is now a newness to life, or at least to that relationship.

That is where Adam and Eve found themselves. They messed up, no doubt, but God came in and covered them with the skin of a lamb. Blood has been shed because of them. They now find themselves in a new environment. At first they probably didn’t stray too far from their familiar surroundings. I’m sure they got busy building a house and settling the land around them. Adam got accustomed to working the fields for their food. Eve made the house a home and began to domesticate things.

I’m sure they caught themselves sitting on their porch in the evenings looking towards the garden. They may have been able to see the Cherubim standing watch. All the while they pondered what could have been. I’m sure we fall into that trap also. And that is another side effect of sin. We begin to

look back and wonder. We think about how it would be different had we just done this or that differently. And while it is good to ponder, when we live in the past and constantly revisit our mistakes, we actually are being rather prideful. While it is good to be own our mistakes in humility, it is arrogant to look back and continue to rake our selves over the coals. How is that, you may ask? Well, God had forgiven them. There really was a new start. But they are no longer allowed to live in the garden, you say. That is correct. We do have to live with the consequences of our actions. Otherwise free will would have no meaningful result – neither would life. However, we have to move on and continue our lives in the beds we have made for ourselves. But, God hasn't stopped moving in our lives. We still have a part to play in His plan. That is where we find that first couple.

Gen. 4:1,2

1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the Lord." 2 Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel.

We are told here that Adam “knew” his wife and she conceived.

The word “knew “ is personal. It shows how seriously God means for us to take the most intimate part of the marriage relationship. It isn't violent or crude as many make it today. It is another means of becoming closer – to REALLY know each other. We don't know how long this was after the fall, just as we don't know how long after the seventh day the actual fall occurred. We do see however, that Eve remembered the prophecy spoken over her in Gen. 3:15. She would have a Seed that would bruise His heel on the serpent's head. And as she held Cain in her arms for the first time, she and Adam were thinking; this is the one! God has given us our redeemer. Cain means acquisition. In layman's terms we would say, “ here he is” or “I got him!” She thought she was holding a savior, but he was a murderer.

So there they are. Just like all of us when holding a child for the first time. They had great plans for this baby. He was going to grow up strong, healthy, good-looking, intelligent; all those things. And not to mention, he was going to reverse the curse. He was going to fix everything. He was their ticket back into the garden and the way things once were. That wasn't to be the case however. There is another player in this production. He is the adversary – ha

satan! He also remembers what he was told in Genesis chapter three. There is a literal “seed war” happening here.

The enemy was told that a child was coming to fatally wound him. He was told his days were numbered. And the only way to stop that from happening in his eyes is to stop that child in his tracks. So, he sits back and watches. As he does this – and as Cain begins to grow, another child is born to the couple.

This one is named Abel, meaning vapor, and vanity, transitory. And transitory he was, because his life was cut short. His life was but a vapor.

Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. 4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, 5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

There is actually a lot more going on here than just two boys going to church. First of all, we see definite signs of high culture: agriculture and animal husbandry. Some may feel that these are signs of high culture because they are agriculture, but if you have ever been on a farm, then you know that its not only hard work, but there is actually a great deal of science involved. Furthermore anthropologists look for both of these things when tracing ancient civilizations. Man never was a mindless, roving hunter-gatherer, unless it was at the time of the dispersion at Babel. Otherwise, mankind, as we see here has had technology. We will talk more about that later.

We also see that there was some sort of organized religion. We don't have many clues as to their worship, but they both came to worship on this particular day. There is Biblical precedent for God's approval of a sacrifice being manifest by the sacrifice being consumed by fire from in high. This is also what we read regarding this particular sacrifice in extra-biblical material.

So as the boys sacrificed, Abel's was accepted, presumably consumed whereas Cain's was not. There are many that believe this to be because Cain brought produce instead of an animal sacrifice. However, we don't know

what the rules were here. We do know that in the Law, grain offerings were accepted as sacrifices, however they weren't used for sin offerings. We don't know that these sacrifices were sin offerings. The Hebrew term "*minchah*" is used here. It is a very general term for offering. I believe it was rejected not because of the substance of the sacrifice but for the sentiment behind it.

Heb. 11:4

4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

Abel's sacrifice included faith.

Heb. 11:6

6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Abel came in faith to give his sacrifice. Cain just came to church. He was just going through the motions. His sacrifice was that of dead, dry religion. It was the equivalent of someone quoting liturgy without meaning what they say. It is the equivalent of going/ coming to church just for the sake of going or because that is just part of the culture. It is like us, when we get into a rut as far as our faith goes, or even our marriages. Most people have felt like this before concerning a job.

Cain brought vegetables. In my opinion that may have been satisfactory, but he didn't bring of the first fruits of his crop. He had a flippant view of his spiritual walk. He thought giving wasn't important. I mean, he gave something, right. Many people today don't feel that giving is important. But it is. It is a form of worship.

We are to give to the Lord from our talents, our time AND our treasury.

Lk 12:34

34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

If you want one measure of your spiritual condition, just look at your checkbook. Whatever you spend your money on is what is important to you. How important is your walk, your God, your church?

We cannot be flippant in our walk. It creates bad habits and manifests a lack of knowledge of the character of God. We commit the sin of unbelief when we fail to take God and His Word seriously.

This most likely wasn't an isolated incident. This type of attitude toward God tends to grow in people. Something bad usually happens, causing people to wonder, "Where is God?" "Why didn't He prevent this?" "Why did He abandon me?"

When we are the center of our universe, these questions can eat away at us. It is very likely that this characteristic of Cain grew from some seed of doubt. As time went on, his spiritual life meant less and less to him. He became more focused on himself until he was no more than a shell of a man, especially when it came to his spiritual life. We are seeing the end result of this unchecked matter.

The lack of acceptance angered Cain and it was very evident by his countenance (his whole attitude as well as the look on his face.) He is mad at God! Something didn't go his way and now he is ill. He is essentially throwing a temper tantrum.

Once again, he fails to really know God and His character. He believes that God has held out on him. He believes he is being wrongfully punished. He is exhibiting symptoms of the same sentiments the serpent sewed into Eve's mind. And not surprisingly, the results are the same. His response to God is not what it should be.

6 So the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

Now God visits Cain and is once again asking questions. Does God not know what is wrong with him? Wasn't he at church that day? He most certainly was. But we see once again that God is asking questions in order to steer Cain to the right end.

It has been said that advice not asked for is often seen as criticism. I believe that to be true. Therefore, in His infinite wisdom, God simply asks Cain some questions? By doing this, many times you are able to get to the bottom of something, even help someone work through a problem without sounding like you are condescending. God asks the questions and steers to the conversation to help Cain come to the right conclusion. It appears that Cain knows what he has done wrong. ***“7 If you do well, will you not be accepted?”***

God is saying, “Cain, you know what you’ve done wrong. You know how to fix this.” God is giving Cain a mulligan/ a do-over.” God also tells him that if he doesn’t take advantage of this second chance, that sin lies at the door and it will eat him alive.

For us, it is obvious. This all plays out in an orderly fashion. Why can’t we see the same thing coming when we are involved?

The answer is, when we are in the middle of a dilemma such as this, we are effected by the same emotions and sin as Cain. We can be as blind as he. This is what God means when He tells Cain he needs to get a handle on this thing. (verse 7b)

Cain could and should have learned from the error of his parents. He should learn from this experience and move forward.

We should learn from those that have gone before us also. That way we don’t have to make the same mistakes they made. But we fall into the same old trap. Once again, there is nothing new under the sun and all things are common among men.

So now the question remains, what will Cain with this opportunity? Will he take advantage of it or will he squander it?

8 Now 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 killed him.

Biblically speaking, there is a hint of pre-meditation here. They were talking and Cain waited until they were in the field, where no one could be around and rose up against his brother.

The book of Jasher, an extra-biblical source that is quoted in Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18, states that Cain sought out an opportunity to kill his brother. His pride got the better of him. He was mad at Abel for God's acceptance of his sacrifice. It is said that Cain was ploughing his field when Abel came through with his flock. This made Cain mad and an argument ensued. This was the occasion for which Cain was looking. This time he did take advantage of the situation. He killed his brother with the blade of his plow and then buried him in the field.

The burial shows he knew he did wrong. By burying his brother, he is attempting to cover up his sin. But he couldn't bury Abel deep enough for his blood not to cry out and be heard by God.

Jude 11 warns of the *way of Cain*, which is unbelief, empty religion leading to jealousy, persecution of those truly godly, and murderous anger.

ii. There is no greater curse on the earth than empty, vain religion, those who *have a form of godliness, but deny the power of God* (2 Timothy 3:5). Many are afraid of secular humanism or atheism, but dead religion sends more people to hell than anything else.

Vain religion tends to anesthetize the conscience, making people feel better, all the while they are getting closer and closer to death.

I once saw a wildlife show where a Nutria was injured by some predator. His back leg was bleeding badly and it was in a great deal of pain. To ease the pain he got into the water, which was cool. While it did ease the pain, the Nutria continued to bleed until he was too weak to swim back to shore. Eventually he died in the water and was eaten by turtles and gators.

Dead religion – just going through the motions makes us feel “religious” but it hurts us spiritually rather than help. We get further from God while it looks like and may even feel like we are worshipping Him. All the while we are distancing ourselves from Him.

God comes looking for Cain.

9 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?"

He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

10 And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground."

So now Cain is probably back to work in the field, trying to look as though nothing has happened. And then he hears a voice.

"Where is your brother?" God asked.

Once again, why does God ask the question? He does so in order to allow Cain an opportunity to confess. What does Cain do with this opportunity? He gets cocky with God.

"Am I my brother's keeper?"

Actually, he is. There is innate value in all-human life. We are to look out for others. Cain didn't kill in self-defense. He didn't even kill a stranger. He killed his brother.

Can you imagine what it was like standing in the field, lying to God about killing your brother, knowing he is buried nearby? I mean it's one thing to lie to the police about something like that, but he is lying to God; and then he gets a cops attitude on top of that!

Can you imagine lying to someone else in order to cover a sin? We have all done it.

Can you imagine lying to God in order to cover a sin? We have all done it.

It seems to carry more weight when we read it. It is more obvious when we are the fly on the wall.

11 So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth."

Have you ever known anyone that lost their job or career due to something they had done? I mean they were banished from their career field forever, for their actions?

Cain didn't just lose his job. He was a farmer and would never be able to feed his family by farming again. He was forced to roam. He became a hunter/gatherer until his old age. He lost the stability of a home. His family suffered for his sin.

No man is an island. All that we do effects everyone around us just like the rings on a pond.

Cain not only affected his wife, but he also affected the lives of his mother and father – not to mention Abel!

Cain then responded to his sentence.

***13 And Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is greater than I can bear!
14 Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me.”***

Cain's response speaks volumes. He doesn't repent. He is complaining about his sentence. He took an innocent life and now, though he is living, is upset about his plight.

“One of the clearest marks of sin is our almost innate desire to excuse ourselves and complain if we are judged in any way.” (Boice)

ii. “One of the consequences of sin is that it makes the sinner pity himself instead of causing him to turn to God. One of the first signs of new life is that the individual takes sides with God against himself.” (Barnhouse)

2 Cor. 7:9,10

9 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Some are sorry for what they did. Others are sorry they got caught. Cain was sorry he got caught. His focus continued to be upon himself. Throughout this whole episode, beginning from the day in church to the murder, conviction and his sentencing; it was all about him.

We are either focused in God or we are focused in ourselves. If we are truly focused on God then we will also focus on others. We will always defer to others. We trade our will for God's will.

15 And the Lord said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the Lord set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him.

God didn't want murder to continue, so he marked Cain so no one would kill him. No one knows what that mark was, but it worked.

It was probably an even worse punishment for him to have to live as a vagabond and endure the suffering with his family. He suffered as they did with every step they took across the countryside.

Once again, there is nothing new under the sun. Sin crept in and festered. Pride grew out of that and led to murder. Cain certainly didn't get what he wanted out of the deal.

Remember, in the beginning he wanted his sacrifice to be accepted. He wanted to be equal to his brother. Now he is a fugitive from God, his brother is dead and he still is the scourge of his family.

But don't forget, we still have one more player in this drama.

Who else felt that he something to gain from Abel' death and Cain's banishment?

Satan! Was he responsible?

John 8:44

44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

I believe he was working behind the scenes, poking and prodding; taking advantage of Cain's weaknesses and insecurities in order that he would kill his brother and disqualify himself as the promised redeemer.

He seeks out our weaknesses also.

But praise God for Jesus.