

What's the Message – Lesson Five

Today's study is from Genesis chapter four – Sin Multiplies

Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Savior. May the Lord bless you through today's study, and give you a deeper comprehension of the horribleness of sin, that you may more fully appreciate the wonders of God's forgiveness. Amen.

So please, open your Bible to Genesis, chapter four, and let us examine the old familiar story of Cain and Abel and see if we can uncover some nuggets of wisdom that we can apply to ourselves.

As you may recall, we ended our last lesson with Adam and Eve being ejected from the Garden of Eden because of their rebellion, and an angel with a flaming sword was placed to prevent them from ever returning. Now we see the consequences of that rebellion multiply.

The first two verses of chapter four tell us that Adam and Eve had two sons, and when they had grown, Cain became a farmer and Abel a shepherd. Then, most likely because they had been instructed by their parents that bringing offerings to the Lord was the proper thing to do, the next verses tell us:

In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering He had no regard. So Cain was very angry and his countenance fell.

This anger festered and grew, and grew . . . until Cain reached a boiling point and acted . . . thinking he could remove his pain by killing his brother Abel. And so the first murder occurred. But instead of solving his problem, Cain soon realized that he had created a new set of problems that would haunt him for the rest of his life.

God's judgment was not what Cain expected, but rather than repent, Cain lashed out at God in verse 13, claiming that his punishment was more than he could bear. Cain became a wanderer, never finding a place where his conscience would allow him peace and contentment. And verse 16 tells us that Cain "went away from the presence of the Lord."

The next section of this chapter is often skipped over and ignored as a boring documentation of unfamiliar names given to the descendants of Cain. But to skip this would be to miss a man who jumps out of history in the sixth generation after Cain, a man by the name of Lamech. Here we read in verses 23 and 24 that Lamech boasts to his wives . . .

Hearken to what I say: I have slain a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-fold.

Then the chapter ends with the brief account of the birth of another son to Eve, a son to replace both the dead Abel and the departed Cain. This son is named Seth, and he would be the continuation of Adam and the line of followers of The Lord. Now, Teacher, what is the message?

Let's try to reduce it to the most fundamental points. First, why was Abel's offering acceptable, while Cain's was not? Was it the nature of the offering itself, or the nature of the heart of the giver? Clearly the latter. The contrast could not be plainer. Abel chose the firstlings and fat parts of his flock. The meaning here is that Abel gave the Lord his finest, while Cain "went through the motions" begrudgingly.

Then when the Lord confronted him, and warned him that "*sin is crouching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it,*" Cain's response was just the opposite. He gave into the temptation, and then took out his anger on his brother. Finally, when God spoke His judgment on Cain, Cain refused to repent and ask for forgiveness, but hardened his heart and *went away from the presence of the Lord*. Even though we may not commit physical murder, can we look at Cain here and see our own behavior reflected?

Point two. Sin grows and spreads, and becomes commonplace. By the sixth generation the depravity of mankind has become so normal that this loudmouth, Lamech, boasts that he has killed a man for some minor personal affront. Then he disappears from history. But his attitude remains still today, and is seen when we read or hear of someone being killed over a pair of shoes, or some fancy wheel rims for a car. The picture is of a society that has departed from the Lord, and in great need of a Savior.

Lastly, we have the birth of Seth, and his line of God-fearing people who began to call on the name of the Lord. This entire chapter is a message of contrast; a contrast of sin that we must struggle to overcome . . . while fear of the Lord and obedience to Him is to be proclaimed. It is a contrast of Law and Gospel.

But mankind chooses to ignore God's plan and continues to progress in a downward spiral, as we shall see next time.

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