

CAIN AND ABEL

BIBLE TEXT: Genesis 4:3-16

LESSON 4 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found" (Isaiah 55:17).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Genesis 4:3-16.

3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

6 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

8 And 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 slew him.

9 And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

11 And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

13 And Cain said unto the LORD,

notes:

The First Family

When Adam and Eve became the father and mother of Cain, it was the first occasion of a child's being brought into the world. What an honour God had bestowed upon Eve -- "the mother of all living" (Genesis 3:20). Soon a second baby boy whom they named Abel gladdened this very first family.

When these two boys were old enough, no doubt Adam taught them to work. His life was a busy one -- there was ploughing to be done; the thorns and thistles must be removed from the field; the cattle and sheep must be tended. It was Abel who took the sheep to the pasture, to the brook, and watched over them so the wild beasts would not harm them. Cain worked in the garden and in the field.

Offering unto the Lord

Although the Law had not as yet been given, God must have told Adam to bring the firstlings of the flock as an offering for sin, because later God gave that very command in the Law. Adam no doubt also taught his sons how to worship God. Just as today when Christian parents attend church and pray and read the Bible, the children learn to follow their example. Children, whose parents neglect churchgoing, prayer, and reading God's Word, also follow the example set by careless, unsaved parents.

One day Cain and Abel brought offerings unto the Lord, a confession of their need of God's blessing. Cain had worked hard in his garden and he brought some of his fruit and vegetables to offer unto God. With the fruit of the ground, products of his toil, he sought favour with God by his works. Abel brought one of the first-born sheep or goats unto the Lord. Perhaps he searched his flock very carefully in order to find the very best animal. Carefully, perhaps, he fed this first-born sheep or goat, in order that it would be an "excellent sacrifice" for God.

Whatever we give unto the Lord or whatever we do for Him, must be the very best. Let us never give unto Him only that which costs us nothing, for there is no blessing of the Lord upon such an offering.

Later on, we find that God gave a commandment to the Children of Israel that their offering should be a lamb "without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats" (Exodus 12:5). It may be that God spoke into the heart of Abel and told him to make sure that the offering he brought was a perfect sacrifice. This all pointed forward to the day when Jesus, the spotless "Lamb of God," should give His life as a sacrifice upon the Cross of Calvary that sinners might be redeemed.

The True and the False

Even at this very early date we find two religions -- true religion in which there is a blood atonement for sin, and the false religion, a bloodless kind that seeks justification by works. Whose offering did the Lord accept? The Lord "had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect." God looked on the hearts of these two men, as today He still looks on the hearts of men.

The Difference

God's Word clearly teaches that "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). And we also read that without faith it is impossible to please God. Abel brought an offering that required the shedding of blood, and he also came in faith. That means that he

My punishment is greater than I can bear.

14 Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

15 And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

16 And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

QUESTIONS

1. Whose sons were Cain and Abel?
2. What kind of work did they do?
3. In what way did Abel bring a better sacrifice unto God than Cain brought?
4. With whose offering was the Lord pleased? Why?
5. How did it affect Cain, and what did he do?
6. What was his punishment?
7. Cain is known as the first murderer. What is Abel known as?
8. Can you name some others who gave their life for the Gospel?

believed God's way was the best way and the right way. But of Cain we read that he "rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." "And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (I John 3:12). There we see the difference between Cain and Abel.

The First Martyr

Abel was the first man to die, the first martyr for religion, but he died in the faith; and millions since that day have given their life for the cause of God and right.

Cain's Wicked Heart

"Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." The workings of his wicked, envious heart showed in his face; and like the dark clouds that gather before a storm, they were a warning of the terrible deed that was to follow. When one does wrong, it immediately tells on his face; but when one does right, there is a cheerful, happy, free look on his face.

Cover Up

Next we read that Cain told a lie to try to hide the murder. One who dares to commit a sin will often try to cover it with a lie. No sin, great or small, is overlooked by God. The blood of Abel had a voice that cried aloud and it reached the ears of God Almighty, who came down to talk to Cain about it.

The Punishment

God pronounced a curse upon Cain and told him that instead of dwelling in peace among his own family and kindred, he should wander about in some distant and lonely part of the earth. What terrible condemnation haunted him as he "went out from the presence of the LORD" and went to live in the land of Nod, the original word for "vagabond". In time to come all his descendants were wiped out, which all proves that "the way of transgressors is hard" (Proverbs 13:15).

Sin and Its Growth

God had said to Cain, "If thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." Sin is the reason for most of the trouble in people's lives. It will increase in the life of a sinner, and unless repented of, it will send his soul to a lost eternity. Cain was first envious; then he quarrelled; he murdered; he lied. He had an evil heart, an evil eye, then an evil hand. He had been given an opportunity to repent, but instead, he let his bitterness and hatred grow stronger and deeper toward his very own brother. The Bible says that he that "hateth his brother is a murderer" (I John 3:15), and here is a true picture of that. Sin is capable of growth. Suddenly it breaks forth in its true nature, in terrible force, with hideous power. No book ever written shows so clearly and forcefully what a cursed thing sin is, as does the Bible. When Cain's parents, Adam and Eve, became partakers of sin, it was like an octopus fastening its tentacles upon the whole human race that was to follow.

Taking Heed

Let all who read the story of Cain and Abel take heed unto their ways and fear lest a little bit of jealousy or hatred creep into the heart. When it does, no matter how trifling it may seem to be, it may grow until it has complete dominion over one; and then, unless repented of, it will cause one to go deeper and deeper into its depths, and in the end send that person to a devil's hell. How necessary it is to have the heart right!