

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

“The Fruit Of Sin”

Genesis 4:1-26

2002

Introduction

“Nothing is so contagious as example.” La Rochefoucauld

I’m sure that for Adam and Eve, eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil seemed harmless enough. A mere misdemeanor. But their disobedience served as an example to Cain. His choice to disobey God surpassed the “trivial” sin of his parents and he became the first man in history to be guilty of murder in the first degree.

By the way, that is the way it is with Satan. He boldly claimed that Adam and Eve would not suffer any harmful effects from disobeying God -- only a higher level of existence. But in this chapter of Genesis we quickly discover how fraudulent Satan’s claims were. And we begin to see the tragic fruit of disobedience to God – the tragic fruit of SIN!

I The Sacrifice Of Sin

A. The sacrifice of brothers [Verse 1-4a]

Eve gave birth to two sons.

Cain = Qanah = “To get or acquire”

It is quite possible that Eve believed that Cain would be the fulfillment of the promise of Genesis 3:15 that God would send a redeemer. If so she was in for a big disappointment! The baby she held in her arms was not the Messiah at all, but a future killer.

Abel = “Vanity, breath, or vapor”

After Eve realized that Cain would not be the Messiah and that the consequences of sin were not likely to be quickly corrected, she faced the vanity of life

If Cain was the symbol of Eve’s hope; Abel was the symbol of her despair.

Cain worked the soil and Abel kept flocks. And at the appropriate time (implying that there was an appointed time and place for the worship of God), they both presented offerings to God.

1. Cain brought an offering to the Lord
The fruit of the ground - Leviticus 2:1-14
2. Abel brought an offering to the Lord
The fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock.

B. The assessment of God [Verse 4b-5]

How did God communicate His response to Cain and Abel's offering? By fire?
 Lev 9:24 "Fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown."

1. The Lord looked with **favor** on Abel and his offering
2. The Lord looked with **disfavor** on Cain and his offering
 - 1 Sam 15:22 "But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams."

The source of the problem was Cain, and the symptom was the sacrifice.

Why did God reject Cain's offering?

1. Some have suggested it was because Cain presented a grain offering instead of a blood sacrifice? Moses records no requirement for such a sacrifice and nothing in the account would suggest that this was the basis of acceptance or rejection.
2. The writer to the Hebrews makes it plain why the offering of Abel was accepted and the offering of Cain was rejected:
 Hebrews 11:4 "By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings."

Prov 15:8 "The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him."

Cain's offering was an extension of his weak spiritual life, while Abel's offering was made in faith, in a desire to worship God in spirit and in truth.

C. The response of Cain [Verse 5b]

1. He was very **angry**
Very angry = Charah = "Extreme anger or fury"
 He was jealous because his brother was accepted and he was rejected.
 1 John 3:12 "[He was angry] "because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous."

Application:

How do you respond to correction or rebuke? With repentance or anger?
 Prov 29:11 "A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control."

2. His face was **downcast**

Obviously he came expecting God to accept his offering. But when the smoke rose from Abel's offering and his own remained untouched, Cain's smile changed to a frown. He was jealous and resentful. And the resulting fruit was an intense anger that changed his whole appearance.

Job 5:2 "Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple."

"Jealousy is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die." - Malachy McCourt

"The jealous are troublesome to others, but a torment to themselves." William Penn

Illustration: The destructive power of jealousy

Rachel's jealousy toward Leah - Genesis 30:1-2

The jealousy of Joseph's 11 brothers - Gen 37:4

Saul's jealousy of David - 1 Sam 18:9

Haman's jealousy of Mordecai - Esther 3:5

The jealousy of the brother of the prodigal son - Luke 15:28

The religious leader's jealousy of Jesus - Matthew 27:18

II The Exhortation To Master Sin

A. The Lord **questions** Cain [Verse 6]

1. Why are you angry?
2. Why is your face downcast?

James 1:19-20 "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."

Notice God's grace. He doesn't accuse Cain or strike him dead in his tracks. He doesn't even say, "Why can't you be more like your brother?" He simply asks him a question, "Why are you angry, and why is your face downcast?"

B. The Lord **warns** Cain [Verse 7]

1. Do what is **right** and you will be accepted

Micah 6:8 "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

God gently admonished Cain and instructed him that the way to win His approval was to submit to the divine pattern of approach to God.

But he wanted to come to God on his terms, not on God's.

Hell will be filled with people just like Cain; men and women who want the blessings of God without obedience to God.

‘You can go to heaven God’s way, or you can go to hell any way you please.’

2. But if you do what is wrong:

a. Sin is **crouching** at your door

b. Sin desires to have you

Sin is likened to a wild beast waiting at the door to attack.

1 Peter 5:8 “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”

c. Sin must be **mastered**

Master it = Mashal = “To rule or have dominion over”

Cain is faced with a decision. He is not obligated in any way to sin.

1 Corinthians 10:13 “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”

God gives Cain a clear choice: he can resist sin and find blessing, or he can give in to sin and be devoured.

Application:

How can you prevent yourself from being mastered by sin?

1 John 2:14 “I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.”

III The Choice To Sin

James 1:13-15 “When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”

A. Cain’s evil **thoughts** [Verse 8]

1 John 3:15 “Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.” (Matthew 5:21-24)

Application:

Are you angry with someone? Are you harboring a grudge in your heart? Are you holding resentment against another individual?

2 Cor 10:5 “... take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

Matthew 5:21-24 “If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front

of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.”

B. Cain’s evil invitation

Cain disregards God's warning, he refuses to repent, he nurses his jealousy and soon his mind conceives a diabolical plot.

Ps 36:1-4 “An oracle concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: There is no fear of God before his eyes. For in his own eyes he flatters himself too much to detect or hate his sin. The words of his mouth are wicked and deceitful; he has ceased to be wise and to do good. Even on his bed he plots evil; he commits himself to a sinful course and does not reject what is wrong.”

C. Cain’s evil deed

Prov 29:10 “Bloodthirsty men hate a man of integrity and seek to kill the upright.”

The horror of Cain’s act is shown in its premeditation, and in the fact he deliberately ignored God’s way of escape.

Application:

1 John 3:10-15 “This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother. This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.”

IV The Punishment For Sin

A. The Lord questions Cain [Verse 9-10]

1. Where is your brother?

God is not asking Cain because He is ignorant of Abel’s whereabouts. He is giving Cain the opportunity to confess and repent of his sin.

Prov 28:13 “He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”

But instead of repenting, Cain attempts to cover the deliberate murder of an innocent man with a deliberate lie. Not only does he lie in denying any knowledge of Abel’s whereabouts, he seems to rebuke God for the question. “Am I my brother's keeper?”

2. What have you done?

This is the same question God asked Eve when she had eaten of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil ...

Gen 3:13 "What is this you have done?"

God uses a powerful word picture to describe his knowledge of Cain's evil act.

Cain thought his sin was hidden and secret, but God said, "The blood of your brother is crying to me ... it is shrieking to me from the ground!"

Illustration: The response of another murderer – King David

Ps 51:10-12 "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me."

B. The Lord judges Cain [Verse 11-12]

God confronts Cain with his sin. The time for repentance has passed and now the sentence is passed on Cain by the Judge of the earth.

1. You are under a curse
2. You are driven from the ground

The curse on Adam would be amplified in his son Cain. If producing food from the earth was difficult for Adam (Gen 3:17-18), it would be impossible for Cain. If Adam was driven from Eden (Gen 3:24), Cain would find no resting-place on all the earth.

3. You will be a restless wanderer

Deut 28:65-66 "Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the LORD will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life."

V The Response To Sin's Discipline

A. Cain complains to God [Verse 13-14]

There is no indication of repentance, only regret combined with self-pity over the severity of his punishment.

- 2 Cor 7:10-11 "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death."

"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)

1. My punishment is more than I can bear

Prov 19:3 “A man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the LORD.”

Lam 3:39 “Why should any living man complain when punished for his sins?”

2. You have driving me from the land
Prov 14:32; “the wicked is driven away in his wickedness”
 3. I will be **hidden** from your presence
2 Thess 1:8-10 “They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power ...”
 4. I will be a restless wanderer on the earth
Cain can't go anywhere without constantly wondering if people's attitudes toward him are sinister or friendly. Never again will he be able to completely relax and be at peace with himself or others.
So he says to God ...
 5. I will be **killed**
Cain knows that his life is in danger wherever he goes. Wherever he is he will run into his relatives (can you imagine anything worse?) who will be motivated either by fear or vengeance to take his life.
- B. God answers Cain's complaints [Verse 15]
1. The Lord **protected** Cain with a mark
We cannot be sure about the exact nature of the mark. It could have been a visible mark or possibly some kind of event that confirmed to Cain that God would not allow him to be killed.
 2. The Lord **warned** against killing Cain
There can only be one reason why God protected Cain. It was to give him every opportunity to reconsider his ways and repent of his sin.
2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”
- C. The consequences of Cain's choice [Verse 16-26]
1. He went out from the Lord's **presence**
It would seem that the founding of this city was an act of rebellion against God, who had said he would be a vagrant and a wanderer (4:12).
 2. He produced 5 generations of **ungodly** offspring
We have a partial genealogy of the line of Cain to evidence the ungodliness of Cain's descendants, and to serve as a contrast to the genealogy of Adam through Seth in chapter 5.

Lamech was infamous for two particularly egregious sins:

1. He was the first recorded polygamist in the Bible. He rejected God's divine ideal for marriage by marrying two wives -- Adah and Zillah.
 "Someone has said that polygamy has its own punishment -- it means more than one mother-in-law!"
2. He committed a brutal murder and arrogantly boasted about it."
 2 Tim 3:1-5 "But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God -- having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them."

Despite how bad things look for mankind, the chapter does not end without a glimmer of the grace of God.

Romans 5:20 "But where sin increased, grace abounded all the more."

"At that time men began to call on the name of the Lord."

Rom 10:8-13 "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile-the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Conclusion

Have you made the decision to call on the name of the Lord and be saved?

1. **Repent of your sin** = "To think differently and to change course."
 Acts 3:19 "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord ..."
2. **Reconcile with God** = "To put right a broken relationship"
 1 Peter 3:18 "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."
3. **Realign your heart to God** = (your loyalties and allegiance)
 2 Cor 5:15 "And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."

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