

Introduction

Title: Three Sons, Two Lineages

Theme: The first sin of Adam and Eve had immediate as well as long-term consequences.

Over the years, many people not familiar with the contents of the Bible have decided to read it so they can find out what it says. A good and worthy goal, to be sure. As is normal with most books, they start at the beginning. Pretty quickly they encounter Genesis, chapter 4. Two names jump out at them – Cain and Abel. Perhaps familiar to this new reader, perhaps not, but their story quickly unfolds. Let's go there.

I. The Cain and Abel problem (4:1-15)

(Quickly cover the bare details of the story, being stopped suddenly by the murder.)

¹ Now the man ^[a]had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to ^[b]Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a ^[c]manchild with *the help of* the LORD."

² Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

³ So it came about ^[d]in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground.

⁴ Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering;

⁵ but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

⁶ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"

⁷ If you do well, ^[e]will not *your countenance* be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

⁸ Cain ^[f]told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

Anyone who has grown up on the story lines of novels, movies and tv might say at this point, "Wait a minute!!! I've got some questions about this!! I need more information!! I don't understand what's going on here!!

One common writing technique is the use of flashback or backstory. The story begins with a situation the reader (or watcher) doesn't really understand, and suddenly the story goes back in time to see events leading up to the opening situation.

You know what I mean. Picture this. "It's late at night in December, Christmas Eve, in fact. It's cold. Freezing cold. There's a man by himself out on a bridge, staring down at the river below. He looks very unhappy. Perhaps he should end it all tonight." What movie am I describing? *It's a Wonderful Life*. The very beginning hooks you into the story, but you need more information. Why is he there? What's his problem? You get answers in the way Clarence, the angel second class gets them, with flashbacks of George Bailey's life that help you understand how he came to this point of desperation. So here's our Cain and Abel flashback. In Genesis 3, God pronounces judgments on Satan, and on Eve, and on Adam.

A. The flashback or backstory

1. God's judgment on Satan (Gen 3:15)

The protoevangelium – Greek for "the first gospel"

(READ) ¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall [Ⓜ]bruise (or crush) you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel."

This judgment predicted enmity – hostility, even including hatred – between Satan's offspring and Eve's offspring. This would be a problem with all of humanity – separation and conflict between those people who aren't in right relationship with God and those who are right with Him.

But Adam and Eve's sin nature was passed down to all their descendants. So how could anyone be in right relationship with God? Well, that's part of the backstory, too. Look down at verse 21 in Genesis 3. **(READ)**

²¹ The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

2. The shedding of sacrificial blood covered Adam and Eve (Gen 3:21; Heb 9:22)

Some animal or animals had to die to provide covering for those two. We can infer that the Lord instructed them in accordance with Hebrews 9:22, that "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin", because the text in chapter 4 indicates that the first couple and their descendants made offerings to the Lord that required animal sacrifice.

B. Two different seeds; Two different mindsets (4:2b-5; Heb 11:4)

So now we come to the ceremonies that illustrate how the different seeds respond. **(READ vss 2b-5a)** The brothers are described by their occupations. Abel was a shepherd and Cain was a farmer. Cain chose to bring some of his crop as an offering to the Lord. His work may have required sacrifice of his time and energy, but it was not a sacrifice of blood. Abel brought an offering from his flock, a blameless little sheep who would die to cover Abel's sins. (Hebrews 11:4 refers to Abel's offering as a "better sacrifice than Cain's.") And how did God respond to the efforts of the two men? He had regard for Abel and his offering but did not have regard for Cain. The Hebrew word for "regard" is simple, it means "to respect" or "to not respect", depending on what is being considered.

What was Cain's response to being dissed by God? **(READ verse 5b)** When a person is pursuing very important goals and someone or something prevents those goals from being attained, there are two common responses: anger and/or depression. I think Cain experienced both. He had his own ideas about how to worship and honor God, but God rejected those ideas. (Scofield commented that Cain's efforts were the beginning of all false religions, where man decides how his God or gods should be worshipped.)

C. Cain yields to sin's power and control (4:6-8; 1 John 3:11-12)

Cain obviously needed some help, so God came to him for a personal counseling session. The Lord got right to the point with two questions. **(READ vs 6)** Apparently, no answer was given by Cain, so the Lord gave him some wise counsel. **(READ vs 7a)** In other words, "Do the right thing and you'll feel better." But he followed that with a severe warning. **(READ vs 7b)** The Lord strongly made His point by describing sin as a ravenous, wild beast, waiting hungrily outside the door so the person getting too close will be attacked, come under the animal's control, be killed, and be devoured. It's a powerful, scary, metaphor. But He also exhorted Cain – he could escape such a horrible fate by exercising wisdom and self-control. But it was no use. **(READ vs 8)** The little brother was dead.

You've figured out by now that I'm saying that Cain was one of the seeds who is not in right relationship with God, and Abel was one of the seeds who is. But this is not just my view, it is the apostle John's view as well. Let's go to 1 John chapter 3. **(READ vss 11-12)**

¹¹For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; ¹²not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

D. Cain is put on trial for murder (4:9-15; Heb 11:4)

Cain is on trial before the Judge of the Universe, accused of murder. Cain is on the stand. God begins the questioning. **(READ vss 9 and 10)**

⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" ¹⁰ He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground.

God has just introduced the prosecution's first witness – the victim himself, speaking from the faith Hall of Fame. Hebrews 11:4 describes Abel's role in the trial – **(READ)**.

⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying ^{1a}about his gifts, and through ^{1b}faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.

There is no defense, Cain is clearly guilty. The sentence is pronounced in verses 11 and 12. His future farming efforts will be futile because he has caused the very ground he would work to curse him because of Abel's blood. And he will wander the earth as a restless, disconnected man.

Cain appeals the sentence because he envisions efforts by antagonistic men to kill him for what he has done. You can see that in verses 13 and 14. So the Lord responds in verse 15 – **(READ)**.

¹⁵ So the LORD said to him, "Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD ^{1a}appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one finding him would slay him.

Now the phrase "appointed a sign" can also be translated "put a mark on". There are various views of the meaning of this phrase, with some commentators thinking it was not a physical mark on his body. But whatever it was, the 79 times this word "sign" occurs in the Old Testament, there was always something that could be seen – something visual. So as far as Cain's sign, or mark, you can let your imagination work on that one for a bit.

Before we move on to finish this chapter, here are some interesting summary thoughts from Derek Kidner. (Comment on receiving tiny Genesis commentary volume in the mail.) Kidner writes, "Many details emphasize the depth of Cain's crime, and therefore of the Fall: the context is worship, the victim [his own] brother; and while Eve had been talked into her sin, Cain will not [allow] even God talk him out of it; nor will he confess to it, nor yet [be accepting of the] punishment [from God]."

II. The world moves on in morality and immorality (4:16-26; 5:22; 6:11)

As you read on in chapter 4, verses 16-18, you see Cain moving away from the vicinity of Eden, finding a wife, building a town, and having a son. Five generations later, a male named Lamech was born. Lamech is immediately identified as ungodly because we are told that "he took to himself two wives". (verse 19) Bigamy has come to the world. That was not and is not God's design for marriage. His sons through those women helped to develop livestock management,

the arts and technology in the new world. (verses 20-22) But Lamech himself wanted to be known for other "accomplishments". Let's look at verses 23 and 24.

²³ Lamech said to his wives,

"Adah and Zillah, listen to my voice, you wives of Lamech, give heed to my speech, For I ^{1a}have killed a man for wounding me; and a boy for striking me;

²⁴ If Cain is avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

Lamech took great pride in having killed an adult and a youth who harmed him. He saw himself as a great man. In fact, he thought that he was 11 times a greater man than Cain because of the punishment that should come on anyone who would dare to take him out. The standard set by Cain became Lamech's starting point on becoming a great man.

The narrative throws us a bit of a curve ball with verse 25, we jump back to Adam and Eve.

(READ)

²⁵ Adam ^{1a}had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him ^{1a}Seth, for, *she said*, "God ^{1a}has appointed me another ^{1a}offspring in place of Abel, for Cain killed him." ²⁶ To Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then *men* began to call ^{1a}upon the name of the LORD.

This chapter had become pretty negative with the focus on Lamech and the lineage/heritage of Cain. Bad seeds were filling the earth, since Abel had died before producing more potentially good seeds. But Seth marked the continuation of the lineage of potentially good seeds. My title for this message, "Three sons, two lineages" may have seemed odd, but I chose it because the sons of Adam and Eve, Cain, Abel, and Seth, were the starting points for the lineage of the seed of Satan and the seed of woman. This is why the genealogical record in Scripture is so valuable. Seth's descendants include Enoch, Noah, Abraham, David, and Jesus. Verse 26 indicates that some godly men and women were seeking the Lord in prayer, worship, and daily life. (They were calling on the name of the Lord.) But Cain's lineage had a head start. Though there were some people trying to walk with God, like Enoch (chapter 5 verse 22) and Noah (chapter 6 verse 9), the world was becoming a very dark, very sinful place. Genesis 6:11 says that "the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence." The judgment of God was about to fall. It came in the form of ? The flood. But that is coming in just a few weeks down the road. The lesson, not the water.

Personal Implications:

- We are at a great distance from the events of Genesis 3 and 4. Thousands of years of distance. Yet the battle between these two lineages rages on. Violence and hatred show up on the news every day. Charlie Kirk's murder was shocking but not unusual. This will continue until Jesus returns. Unrighteous people are constantly seeking to destroy people, especially God's people. Are you discouraged or defeated by that fact? Jesus warned His disciples about this, and He calls us to stand for truth and righteousness in a very fallen world. "Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."

Ephesians 6:10-11

- Genesis 3:15 is of crucial importance. Are you one of the seeds of Satan, or are you a seed of Eve? Those who are born again, who are in Christ, are seeds of Eve and are in right relationship with God. If you are not in Christ, acknowledge your need for Him today! Decide to turn from your selfish, sinful ways, and in prayer tell Jesus that you are trusting Him for the forgiveness of your sins.
- If you are a believer, do you emulate Abel and express gratitude for God's forgiveness as part of your worship experience?
- If the Holy Spirit speaks to your heart about potential or actual sin in your life, do you take the steps to correct the problem?
- Are you serving Christ in ways that will multiply the number of seeds in the lineage of Abel?