

THE SPREAD OF SIN

LESSON #4

CHRONICLES OF
REDEMPTION



The Spread of Sin

Genesis 4:1-5:32

THEMES



God:

- Is gracious—providing man with a way to cover his sin and be reconciled to Him.
- Is all-knowing—*seeing* the thoughts and intents of the heart as well as acts which are hidden from men.
- Communicates with man—instructing and warning him.
- Is holy and just—He sets the standard for man and exacts the appropriate judgment for violations.



Man:

- Is sinful by birth and by choice. He is born alienated from God, and he also deliberately chooses to sin.
- Is answerable to his Creator for his sin. He needs cleansing from his sin to have his relationship with God restored.



Sin:

- The payment for sin is death. Through Adam, sin and death passed to all humanity.



Redemption:

- There is an acceptable and an unacceptable way to approach God: those who come to God for forgiveness must demonstrate faith by coming according to the way *He* has instructed.
- The acceptable sacrifice required by God was that of an animal offered, in faith, as a substitute for the sinner, an innocent for the guilty.
- The animal sacrifice had no power to permanently cleanse the sinner's guilt. It rather provided a temporary sin covering *in anticipation* of the full removal of sin by the promised Redeemer.



The Two Ways:

- Humanity is divided by the way each individual responds to God’s authority: those following the *way of Cain* reject God in unbelief, replacing His authority with self-will or the will of another. Those following the way of the godly come to God in _____ and in submission to His will.

INTRODUCTION

Adam and Eve, now banished from Eden, suffered the full force of sin’s backlash. Denied the _____, their existence would be hard and their death sure. Moreover, the alienation they experienced from God and from one another would now be passed on to their children through birth. As parents of the human race, they could not have realized the far-reaching and devastating consequences of their sin on future generations, for Adam and Eve reproduced *after their kind*. From that time forward, all people would be born _____—separated from God. All children of Adam are born sinful.



Romans 5:12

“...Just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned...”

2 SONS



Read Genesis 4:1-2



The birth of Cain and Abel

- ***“I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord” (4:1).***

Adam and Eve obeyed God’s command to *be fruitful and multiply* and gave birth to two sons, Cain and Abel. As Eve gave birth to her first son, she recognized that her child had come from God, the Source of life. She also would have experienced _____, a stark reminder of His judgment on her sin. Universal pain in childbirth testifies to the far-reaching

2 OFFERINGS

consequence of sin. But to those who hope in God, it is also a reminder that final deliverance will come through the One promised by God (Gen. 3:15).



Read Genesis 4:3-16



Sacrifices Offered



Their occupations

Cain was a _____ who worked the land. In contrast, Abel was a _____.

NOTES:

- **“...Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. And Abel...brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions” (4:3-4).**

The two distinct offerings of Cain and Abel reflect back to Adam and Eve’s experience in Eden after their sin. Their unsuccessful attempt to cover themselves with fig leaves was corrected by God’s own provision of skins from a slain animal, thereby paying the price for sin—which is _____ (cf. Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22). In an act of undeserved love and mercy, God set into motion the concept of _____ death—an innocent animal sacrificed in place of the guilty pair.

Clearly, Cain and Abel would have heard this account from their parents. Although not explicitly stated in this narrative, God *must* have communicated the appropriate way of offering, because Abel’s acceptable offering implied that the brothers had such knowledge. The acceptable sacrifice required by God was that of an animal offered as a substitute for the sinner, an _____ for the guilty. Because Cain and Abel had inherited the sin from their parents through birth, they needed to offer sacrifices for a sin covering (cf. Ps. 51:5). However, the slain animal had no power to remove sin altogether. It was merely a sin covering temporarily given by God in anticipation of the full removal of sin by the promised _____.



Sacrifices Considered

- **“...And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering...” (4:4).**

Abel’s offering from his flocks was acceptable to God because it was a sacrifice which took the life of an _____ in place of Abel, one guilty of sin. By coming to God in the way He instructed, Abel demonstrated both recognition of his sin, and obedient faith in God’s Word. Because of his _____, Abel was accepted by God and called *righteous*, meaning *right with God* (cf. Matt. 23:35; Heb.11:4).

- ***“...but for Cain and his offering He had no regard” (4:5).***

Cain brought part of his harvest. Though Cain’s offering seemed right in his own eyes, he did not sacrifice in the way _____ had instructed (cf. Prov. 14:12). Cain’s disobedience was evidence of his unbelieving heart. Therefore God rejected both Cain and his offering.

The essential differences between the two offerings were...

1

Abel’s offering conformed to God’s will in that it involved the death of an innocent _____. (Gen. 3:21, cf. Heb. 12:24). Cain’s offering did not.

2

Abel demonstrated obedient faith (cf. Heb. 11:4). Cain demonstrated _____.

God responded in opposite ways to the two brothers. This reveals that not every way devised by man is _____ to God. Clearly, God has set a standard by which men are to come to Him. God loves man, yet He is not _____ to forgive and forget the actions of those who disregard His way. The sincerity of Cain’s effort is not the issue here, but rather his unwillingness to conform to the standard God had appointed.



Murder of a brother

- ***“So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell” (4:5).***

Outwardly, Cain professed to worship God by bringing an offering. However, Cain’s belligerent response to God’s rebuke exposed his true heart. Beneath the pretense of worship was a hidden heart of _____.

When seen and judged by God, Cain reacted in angry hostility. His _____ soon escalated to _____.

- ***“...Sin is crouching at the door: and its desire is for you, but you must master it” (4:7).***

God saw the intents of Cain’s heart and _____ him in advance that he was very near to being overwhelmed by sin (Heb. 4:13). His anger was opening the door for sin to master him—and when given full control, it would end in death (cf. James 1:14-15).

Tragically, Cain refused God’s gracious warning.

• **“Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him” (4:8).**

The New Testament gives further insight to this verse, clarifying the motives of Cain’s heart.

“Cain...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” (1 John 3:12). When Cain

brutally murdered his brother, he imitated

_____, who is a murderer and liar by nature (cf. John 8:44). Cain’s anger was not an external and temporary rage which overtook him, but rather the direct result of jealous hatred rooted deep in his heart. Cain’s own _____ was the problem, exhibiting the sin he had inherited from his parents.

Mark 7:21-23



“...From within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

God is interested in the purity of a person’s _____ (cf. Prov. 4:23).



Judgment of Cain

NOTES:

1

“Where is Abel your brother...What have you done?” (4:9-10).

God was not ignorant of Cain’s hidden sin. God’s question gave Cain an opportunity to take responsibility for murdering his brother. It is an intrinsic part of God’s gracious nature to communicate with man. He gives guidance; He warns; He offers opportunity for man to confess and turn from sin. Cain should have confessed his sin and sought God’s mercy. Instead Cain arrogantly despised God’s call, (*“Am I my brother’s keeper?”*), and hardened his heart.

God as _____:

■ God as _____:

“And now you are cursed from the ground...you shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth” (4:11-12).

Untried by any human court, Cain was nevertheless called to justice by the One Who sees all things. His sentence was tailor-made in that God caused the earth to withhold *its strength* from a farmer—one dependent on the earth. Moreover, he was condemned to live in alienation from both God and man (cf. 4:14). God is the Judge of all mankind. To Him alone will man ultimately answer for his deeds.

■ God as _____:

“And Cain said...‘My punishment is too great to bear!’ ...And the Lord appointed a sign for Cain, lest anyone finding him should slay him” (4:13-15).

Rather than requiring his life, God mercifully protected Cain by not allowing him to be killed, even though he was a murderer. God grants life and withholds death as He wills.

2 FAMILIES



Read Genesis 4:16-24



Family of Cain

- ***“Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord...” (4:16).***

Cain was cursed by God to a life of _____. Rather than turning from his sin, Cain turned from God, wanting nothing to do with Him or His ways. He settled in *Nod* (meaning *aimless wandering*).

- ***“...And Cain knew his wife...” (4:17).***

Cain’s wife must have been one of Adam’s _____ (cf. Gen. 5:4). At this early date, the biblical prohibition against incest was not yet in place, as the human race was pure, and marriage between siblings would not produce the harmful effects seen later.

- ***“And he built a city...” (4:17).***

The descendants of Cain and the society they developed were characterized by the following:

NOTES:

Moral _____: Following his rebellious path, Cain’s descendants corrupted God’s monogamous design for _____ (4:19; cf. Gen. 2:24) and displayed outspoken disrespect for human life (4:23-24). This rapid spread of moral disintegration came to characterize the Cainite line.

Cultural _____: Cain’s descendants nonetheless made significant advancements in the development of husbandry (Jabal), music (Jubal), and metallurgy (Tubal-Cain). Interestingly, the modern “_____” view of primitive man is NOT biblical. The work of Tubal-Cain—being the eighth generation from Adam—in both iron and bronze simultaneously, eliminates the concept of the widely separated so-called Iron and Bronze Ages.

→ → Cursed by God to wander, Cain defiantly established a city, naming it after his son *Enoch* (meaning *beginning* or *initiation*). Cain’s city marked the beginning of pagan _____.

In spite of apparent prosperity, Cain and his descendants lived as though God did not exist. Their perspective toward life was distinctly earthly and materialistic. Without God, man lives only for what he can _____ and _____, gratifying his senses and amassing wealth. But in the end, both he and his treasures will pass away.

Psalm 49:10-12



“...The fool and the senseless person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inner thought is that houses will last forever...They call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man, though in honor, does not remain: he is like the beasts that perish...”



Family of _____

- ***“God has appointed another offspring in place of Abel...” (4:25).***

The narrative returns to Adam and Eve who are given another _____ to replace Abel. The meaning of *Seth* is *appointed one*, referring back to the *Seed* of redemption (Gen 3:15), the promised Deliverer Who would later come through the line of Seth (Luke 3:38).

- ***“Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord” (4:26).***

After the fall of man in the garden, sin continued to spread throughout the race, affecting the descendants of both Cain and Seth. Both families grew side by side, but each followed a different path. The descendants of Cain lived in the world without God and without hope. On the other hand, the descendants of Seth recognized their inherited sinfulness and inability to please God and called out to Him for mercy. These were the true _____ of God.

- ***“...And he had other sons and daughters...” (5:4 ff.).***

This phrase, repeated with each consecutive generation, shows that mankind _____ on earth.

- ***“...Adam lived...nine hundred and thirty years, and he died” (5:5).***

Individual life spans were exceptionally _____. Adam lived 930 years, Jared 963 years, and Methuselah, the oldest man recorded, lived for _____ years. This remarkable longevity greatly aided the propagation of the race. By Noah’s day there may have been millions of people alive. Nonetheless, the phrase *“...and he died,”* used eight times in chapter five alone, graphically affirms the truth of God’s word to Adam, *“...You shall surely die”* (Gen. 2:17). Death is the payment for sin which had spread throughout

society. The one exception was Enoch...

- ***“Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him” (5:24).*** NOTES:

In stark contrast to *“...and he died,”* God overruled the power of death for Enoch, taking him directly to _____ . To *walk with God* is to live a life in harmony with God’s revealed will (cf. Heb. 11:5). It implies friendship, agreement, and a common direction (cf. Amos. 3:3).

- ***“...He called his name Noah... This one shall give us rest...from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the Lord has cursed” (5:29).***

In Hebrew, the name *Noah* sounds similar to the word used for _____. Lamech may have looked to his son as the One promised of God Who would remove the curse of sin (Gen. 3:15). Life must have been grim for the father of Noah to long for relief in such a way.

2 WAYS

The moral absolute displayed in the biblical account of the two offerings flies in the face of modern pluralistic thinking. Typically, man assumes that he is free to choose his _____ way of coming to God. But God has never given man that prerogative. Rather, God has clearly laid out the acceptable way of worship. In God's world, there is right, and there is wrong. He is the final _____. Satan asserted his will against the Creator and was cast out of heaven. Likewise, the first couple discovered that God's command could not be ignored without accountability. There are two distinct ways in which people respond to God's authority, and each person is answerable to God for the path he follows.



Way of Cain

- ***“Woe to them! ...They have gone in the way of Cain...” (Jude 11).***

Cain is an example of a man who outwardly professes to worship God, yet inwardly _____ against His authority. When Cain's attempts to worship were rejected, he turned his back on the true God and ultimately replaced Him with a counterfeit of his own making. Cain symbolically leads the way of all who reject God. Those in the *way of Cain* follow their own authority. They declare allegiance to the world and its pleasures— and like Cain, they are marked by pride, independence, and an unbelieving heart (cf. Psa. 1; Prov. 16:25; Matt. 7:13-14).



Way of the Godly

- ***“How blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways” (Psa. 128:1).***

Abel is an example of a man who came to God in the way that He instructed. His _____ demonstrated a loving and trusting heart toward his Creator. Those in the *way of the godly* declare allegiance to God. Though sinful and needy, they are marked by humble submission and obedient faith.

Psalm 1:1-6



“How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners...But his delight is in the Law of the Lord...And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers...For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way



Questions

1. Why did God have regard for Abel and his offering but not Cain and his offering?

2. What elements did God determine were necessary for an acceptable sin covering?

3. Was Abel’s sacrifice a temporary sin covering, or did it remove sin altogether?

4. Is all sincere worship acceptable to God?

5. How did God show mercy to Cain?

6. What was the progression of Cain’s sin?

7. Why is Seth significant in the Biblical record?

8. What were the differences between the descendants of Cain and the descendants of Seth?

9. What are the two ways people respond to God's authority?

10. How did the first parents' sin affect their children? How does sin affect us today?
