

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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The REBELLION OF CAIN

Genesis 4

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This morning we continue our study from Genesis.

- Two weeks ago, I spoke about God being a God of order and creativity.
- Last week, I spoke about God the Redeemer.

This week, I have three points to the message:

- Due to his rebellion, Cain lost favor with God.
- Due to his rebellion, Cain lost his brother.
- Due to his rebellion, Cain lost his livelihood.

At the end of the message, we'll look at a comparison of Adam and Cain.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 4:1-2

Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man."² Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Notice how she acknowledges that God is the author of life.

DUE TO HIS REBELLION, CAIN LOST FAVOR WITH GOD

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 4:2-5

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil.³ In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD.⁴ And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering,⁵ but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

Abel and Cain had different jobs – one was a shepherd, one a gardener. We read that Cain brought “some of the fruits” as an offering. It doesn’t say he brought the first fruits or even the best, just some – “God, got some ‘maters fer ya.”

Abel’s offering, on the other hand, was fat portions from his firstborn.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 4:6-7

⁶ Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? ⁷ If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”

EXPLANATION: Here is the warning of the ages: Sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.

When this chapter opens, we read of the birth of Cain and Abel. We do not know of their growing up years, but verse seven tells us that Cain knew the right thing to do. He knew it clearly. No doubt his parents told them how they blew it before God. No doubt Adam and Eve taught their sons to fear God. Cain knew the right thing to do and refused to do it. Do you see here - it is so clear - that God gave Cain an opportunity to get it right. Why did he not do it? Because of his rebellious spirit which led him to hate his brother.

What did Abel’s offering have to do with Cain? Nothing! It was between God and Abel. But Cain made it his business.

I want you to see what rebellion leads to:

- It leads to justification of one’s own actions. In Cain’s case, he held back from God and believed his offering was good enough.
- Rebellion leads to jealousy and anger toward others who are not rebellious.
- Rebellion blinded Cain. He could not and would not see outside of his own perspective.

APPLICATION: We are living out Cain’s rebellion when we give God our second best. In our rebellious spirit, we believe whatever we give God should be good enough. Rebelliousness leads to jealousy and anger. Think about this. Rebellious people like to hang around rebellious people. A rebellious and angry person finds another person to join them, then they find others, and before you know it you have an angry mob. The attitude of Cain was alive and well throughout the Bible. It was

alive and well at the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. And the rebellious attitude of Cain is alive and well today.

So, due to his rebellion, Cain lost favor with God

DUE TO HIS REBELLION, CAIN LOST HIS BROTHER

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 4:8

Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

EXPLANATION: The field was familiar territory to both brothers for shepherding and for gardening. It was a neutral place. When Adam and Eve were deceived and sinned, they tried to hide from God, but Cain wasn’t deceived. He intentionally sinned and did it in an open field where there was no possibility of hiding. Perhaps he wanted to teach God a lesson – “I’ll show him!”

Let me remind you of James 1:14 which I read last week: *But each one is tempted when by his own evil desires, he is lured away and enticed. 15 Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death.*

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 4:9

Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

Because of Cain’s rebellion, not only did he kill his brother, he wrecked the family. They would never be the same again.

APPLICATION: You know, today, it is exactly the same way. The rebellion of one family member can wreck an entire family. It doesn’t take committing murder, like Cain did, to wreck a family. Not at all. One family member who refuses to play by the family rules can wreck a family forever. One family member who bucks authority can change the direction of a family and consume the family’s resources.

Do you recall how I’ve said that it’s Satan’s goal to make things run backward? Rebellion makes a family run backward. Think about it, you’ll see it.

Due to his rebellion, Cain lost favor with God, he lost his brother and...

DUE TO HIS REBELLION, CAIN LOST HIS LIVELIHOOD

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 4:10-16

The LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground. ¹¹ Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. ¹² When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”

¹³ Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is more than I can bear. ¹⁴ Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

¹⁵ But the LORD said to him, “Not so; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. ¹⁶ So Cain went out from the LORD’s presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

The following scriptures give an important genealogy but notice the last sentence in this chapter: *At that time people began to call on the name of the LORD.*

EXPLANATION: Life had been simple for Cain. He was a gardener. He never knew what it was like to be in the original garden, the Garden of Eden. He only knew the cursed ground and had learned to work the soil. But because of his rebellion, life went from simple to complex. His punishment was that the ground was cursed a second time and anything he attempted to grow would not grow.

APPLICATION: Is there a modern-day application for this? Of course! Whatever skills you have, whatever things you own, whatever your job, whatever your income... it’s really God’s. He’s just allows you to be his steward for a while. When you are gone, he’ll find someone else to be stewards of those things. If we tend to think those things are ours and not God’s, if we don’t give God our best, if our best is not a sacrificial gift like Abel’s was, then we can lose our livelihoods as well. God can snatch those things right out from under us. Let us learn from Cain.

EXPLANATION: Here’s a comparison of Adam’s and Cain’s sinful natures:

- The very first man, Adam, sinned.
- The very first person born of a woman, committed murder.

Here's a comparison of their excuses when caught:

- Adam: the woman you gave me...
- Cain: Am I my brother's keeper?

Here's a comparison of how God reached out to them:

- God reached out to Adam and asked him where he was and what he had done.
- God reached out to Cain and asked him why he was angry and didn't he know if he did the right thing he'd be OK.

A note here: Who reached out to whom? God reached out, just like he does today. Aren't you glad God reaches down to us even while we are sinners.

Here's a comparison of Adam's and Cain's punishments:

- Adam was cursed by God. He lost his close fellowship with God and was banished from the garden and had to deal with a cursed earth.
- Cain was also cursed by God and in a similar way. The ground would no longer respond to crops he tried to grow.
- Notice God's grace to them, even though they received punishments.
 - Adam (and Eve) continued to live and have children.
 - Cain continued to live, was even protected by God from being killed by others, and he married and had children.

How does the rest of the Bible deal with Adam and Cain?

- In Genesis 5:5 Adam dies and we don't hear about him again for a very long time other than in genealogies. And when we do, it is not favorable.
 - Hosea 6:7 references rebellious people being like Adam.
 - In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul reels it all in for us and helps us better understand about Adam's role. Romans 5:14 *Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come.*
 - I Corinthians 15:22 *For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.*

- I Corinthians 15:45 *So it is written: “The first Adam became a living being,” the last Adam a life-giving spirit.* Jesus is called the “second Adam”.
- Likewise, outside of Genesis, Cain is only mentioned a few times by name and neither time, like his dad, is he mentioned with favor.
 - I John 3-12 *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.*
 - Jude, verse 11 *Woe to them! They have taken the way of **Cain**; they have rushed for profit into Balaam’s error; they have been destroyed in Korah’s rebellion.*

A side note here, the New Testament was written thousands of years after Adam and Cain. However, it is clear the NT people knew them by name. This is another reason I believe Adam and Cain were real people, not just characters in an allegory.

In recent weeks, I’ve used the term “new normal” several times – this is a term I ask you to remember as we study the lives of these Bible characters.

Let’s review the new normals that Adam and Eve experienced:

- Their first normal was a perfect life in the garden.
- After they sinned, they had a new normal which was living under the curse. They had to adjust to it. No one but them would ever know exactly what was lost when they sinned. They could tell about life in the garden, in perfect fellowship with God, but only they could know what it was really like.
- Their next normal was being parents. They raised two boys that were at least old enough to care for plants and animals before one of them was killed.
- Their next normal was dealing with the death of their son.
- Their next normal was having another son. God showed his grace once again.

What we see is a theme going through their new normal. God’s grace. Throughout scripture, it’s the constant thread for all the new normals for people who love God.

Finally, let's look at how Abel was remembered. This was the man who did what God wanted. His offering pleased God. Cain could have gone to Abel and he would have helped him out.

In Hebrews, Abel is mentioned again with other tremendous people of faith.

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 4:4

By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

CONCLUSION: By faith. What are the words Abel speaks, even though he is dead? Give God your best. All we know about Abel is that he tended his flocks and he gave God his best.

Are we giving God our best in all ways? Is he pleased with our offerings? That's between you and God.

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