

The World Experienced the First Murder

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why it was necessary for God to remove Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden, after they sinned, so they would not eat of the tree of life and live in their physical bodies in sin forever. In this topic, we will see what happened to the first two sons who were born to Adam and Eve after they were removed from the garden.

Genesis 4:1-5 says, “Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, ‘I have acquired a man from the Lord.’ Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.” Here, we are introduced to the first two sons born to Adam and Eve.

We see that God began to populate the earth through Adam and Eve. God told Adam and Eve, in Genesis 1:28, “Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” In this verse, we see that the plan of God was to fill the earth with people and to give those people the rule over the earth and over every living thing. As a result, we see that Adam and Eve began to carry out the plan God has for the earth with the birth of these two sons. Once the boys became adults, we see that they had different interests. Abel became a shepherd and had a flock of sheep. Cain became a gardener who tilled the ground and grew crops.

The time also came when both Cain and Abel brought an offering to the Lord. God had shown, by killing animals to provide a covering for Adam and Eve, the need to offer a blood sacrifice as a covering for sin. We see, by what is written in the book of Hebrews, that God had explained the need to show faith by offering blood as a covering for sin. Hebrews 11:4 says, “By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.” Cain chose to offer part of the crops he had grown as an offering to God. This showed that he was depending on his own works to try to please God. In contrast, we see from Hebrews that Abel chose to show faith in the promises of God and not depend on his own works. God respected the offering of Abel because God looked at the heart and saw that Abel presented his sacrifice by faith. God could not respect the offering of Cain because God knew that his own works revealed the condition of his heart. Cain then showed the condition of his heart by becoming angry when God did not accept his offering from his works. Even his face showed the anger that he had in his heart.

Genesis 4:6-9 says, “So the Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire *is* for you, but you should rule over it.’ Now 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 killed

him. Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Where *is* Abel your brother?’ He said, ‘I do not know. *Am* I my brother’s keeper?’” Here, we see that God came to Cain with a question. God gave Cain the opportunity to explain why he was angry and why his face showed that anger. God provides forgiveness of sins to all who come to Him in repentance and faith. However, Cain chose to reject the forgiveness God offers. Jude 11 says, “Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.” Here, we see that Cain became an example of all who reject the forgiveness God offers and instead, choose to depend on their own works.

God continued to offer forgiveness to Cain. God said if Cain would do what was right and show faith by offering a blood sacrifice, God would accept his sacrifice. In our last topic, we saw that the word translated “desire” *means longing or craving*. Cain was told that sin desired to rule his life. However, God told him that he could rule over that sin by offering the sacrifice God required. Instead of listening to God, Cain chose to show his anger toward God by murdering the brother whose sacrifice God had accepted. 1 John 3:11-12 says, “For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous.” These verses make it very clear that Cain murdered Abel because the works of Cain were evil and he had no desire to repent of his evil.

We see that Cain waited until the opportunity came for him to kill his brother. Later, they were talking together out in the field, which meant they were not where Adam and Eve would see what happened. Then, Cain rose up against Abel and killed his brother. Judas followed the example of Cain, as Matthew 26:14-16 says, “Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?’ And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.” Here, we see that Judas looked for the opportunity to betray Christ when no one was around. Cain and Judas both tried to hide their sin from other people.

However, no one can hide their sin from God. 1 Samuel 16:7 says, “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For *the* Lord *does* not *see* as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’” Man can never hide his sin from God because God knows the thoughts of the heart before they ever become actions. As a result, God came to Cain and gave him the opportunity to repent of his sin. God just asked Cain the question, “Where is Abel your brother?” Cain chose to try to cover his sin with a lie. He said he did not know where Abel was. In addition to lying, Cain also asked God the question, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” By this question, Cain revealed who he was following. 1 John 3:10 says, “In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor *is* he who does not love his brother.” Cain showed that he was a child of the devil by not practicing righteousness and by not loving his brother.

Genesis 4:10-15 says, “And He said, ‘What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground. So now you *are* cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.’ And Cain said to the Lord, ‘My punishment *is* greater than I can bear! Surely You have driven me out this day from

the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen *that* anyone who finds me will kill me.’ And the Lord said to him, ‘Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.’ And the Lord set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him.” God had not yet given the penalty for murder. That was not given until after the flood. Genesis 9:6 says, “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man.”

God told Cain that the blood of Abel was crying to Him from the ground. As a result, God gave a curse to Cain that would come from the earth, since the earth had received the blood of his brother. God said that this curse from the earth meant the ground would no longer yield its strength to Cain. It would no longer produce crops like the offering Cain had brought to God from his own efforts. Genesis 4:3b says, “Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord.” God said He would never again get healthy crops from the ground. God said this would cause him to be a fugitive and vagabond on the earth. The word translated “fugitive” means *one who staggers, shakes, or is tossed about as they wander from place to place*. The word translated “vagabond” means *to wander or flee*. Here, we see that Cain would wander from place to place in fear of what others might do to him.

Cain said his punishment was too great. He said that the ground would not produce crops for him because he would be hidden from the face of God. As a result, he said he would be a fugitive and a vagabond wherever he went on the earth. As we said, the word translated “fugitive” means *one who staggers, shakes, or is tossed about as they wander from place to place* and the word translated “vagabond” means *to wander or to flee*. Cain realized that the rest of his life he would be shaking with fear as he wandered from place to place. This would be the result of the fact that he would be constantly afraid that someone would kill him. God then showed mercy to Cain by telling Cain that anyone killing him would have vengeance taken on them sevenfold. God also put a mark on him to protect him from such vengeance. This mark showed the mercy of God because God chose to protect his physical life as long as he lived on the earth. At the same time, this mark also caused him to have shame because it was a constant reminder of his sin. Such shame for sin is still one of the ongoing consequences of sin until a person receives, understands, and accepts the forgiveness of God.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand and explain the ongoing consequences of sin. At the same time, we also want to help them learn to explain the mercy and grace that God provides to all who will come to Him in repentance and faith. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things to those who are not yet Christians.