

Lessons From The Life Of Cain **Genesis Chapter 4**

Genesis 4:1 And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. As Adam and Eve begin to carry out the command given them of God to be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth, we see in **verse 1** Eve gave birth to what appears to be their first child. This child was a son named Cain. Eve acknowledges that she had received a man from the Lord, one thing that is interesting to note here is the supreme role that God plays in the creation of each individual that is born in to this world. Many times when God is talked about concerning creation, He is spoke of as creating Adam and Eve, which He most assuredly did, forming Adam from the dust of ground and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life and forming Eve from one of the ribs of Adam, but here Eve clearly acknowledges this child that has been born to her was given to her by the Lord. When a child is conceived in a woman that is a child that is created by God and when man and woman make the decision to abort that child they are taking a life that God created. Eve recognized that this child was a blessing and creation from God.

Genesis 4:2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

In **verse 2** we are introduced to Cain's brother Able and the verse identifies the occupation of the 2 brothers. 1st Able was a keeper of sheep and 2 Cain was a tiller of the ground. This is really all we know about Cain personally up to this point. We can conclude some other things concerning the world that Cain grew up in however. For one we know that sin had already been introduced into the world. The fall of man previously occurred when his Father and Mother sinned in the garden by eating of the forbidden fruit. This disobedience of Adam and Eve made it possible for mankind to have the knowledge of both good and evil. So as Cain grows up in this world which was a contrast from the initial innocence that was provided by God in the garden, he was well aware of what sin was. He did not inherit the sin of his father as the doctrine of total hereditary depravity suggest nor was he born without a choice, but he was born into a world where sin could be identified and upon being able to identify sin he as well as every other individual were accountable and he had to make decisions concerning the sin that would be set before him.

Genesis 4:3 Verse 3 says in the process of time, it came to pass that Cain brings of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord, verse 4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering, 5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.

Why? On the surface bringing an offering of the fruit of the ground was not sinful in and of it's self. We can read in **Number 18:12** that an offering of the fruit of the ground was acceptable to God in the Law of Moses. This several years before the Law of Moses, but we have no reason to believe that it was the fruit of the ground it's self that was sinful. It appears that it was the manner in which it was offered. Notice **Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,** It seems as though the Hebrew writer, by telling us that Abel's sacrifice was offered by faith making it more perfect, which means complete, we can conclude that it wasn't so much the sacrifice it's self rather the manner in which it was offered to the Lord. This sacrifice was offered with a lack of faith making it less perfect which essentially means that it was incomplete. Paul teaches us in **Romans 10:17 that faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God** and we have no reason to believe that this did not apply here, faith has always come from the Word of God. The fact that Able had faith is evident that the word of God spoke of a specific command and he obeyed. We must

also conclude that Cain likewise heard this same word else God would not have held him accountable. Whether it was the offering it's self or not the main point here and what we know for sure is that either way Cain's offering was imperfect and incomplete because it lacked faith.

We notice Cain's reaction in the remainder of **verse 5** scripture says he was very **wroth** which means he was extremely angry and his countenance fell, meaning he lost control of his composure. His facial expression probably displayed this. This tells us a couple of things , number one I am not sure that it was a matter of whether Cain wanted to please God or not , I believe he wanted to satisfy God. If he didn't he probably wouldn't have gotten so angry. Also if he really didn't want to please God why would he bring anything at all. I believe he cared to a certain point, but the problem was he wanted to obey on his terms rather than God's terms. This made his worship vain and useless. This teaches us a very important lesson and that is worshiping God , must be carried out on his terms. So many in the religious world want to worship God and please God but only on their terms. It matters what we bring to him. There wasn't anything wrong with the fruit of the ground in and of it's self, but it was not brought in faith and from faith. This form of worship was less perfect than Able according to **Hebrews 11:4** telling us that it was incomplete. Making application to New Testament worship, what is wrong with the mechanical instruments of music in our worship? There isn't anything wrong with the instruments themselves , the instruments aren't sinful what makes the worship sinful is that it is not of faith. It is not what God has ask us to bring. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God , what have we heard God's Word tell us to bring? Singing **Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16**, we can do this in faith because we have 1st heard it in the word of God, while the piano may sound good and may be offered with the intention of wanting to please God it cannot be offered in faith because it cannot be heard spoken of in the word of God making our worship incomplete. Cain wanted to please God , he finds out that what he wanted to give God was not what God ask of him and his reaction is anger, notice the Lords response in **verse 6 And the Lord said unto Cain Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen?**

I believe this strengthens the point that Cain had heard the Word of God, and knew what was expected of him. God ask him what's the reason behind your anger, as almost to ask why are you surprised that I have no respect for you or your offering. Notice **verse 7 If thou doest well shall thou not be accepted?** When God ask him if thou doest well what He is asking him is if you do what is suitable and proper, or appropriate for the command I have given you will you not be accepted? Will you not be approved in my sight? God ask this question in a rhetorical manner, because it doesn't require an answer. God knows the answer, God knows that Cain knows the answer and Cain knows that he knows the answer. God is simply emphasizing the obvious to make a point to Cain, that obedience results in acceptance. He continues **and if thou doest not well** if you do not do what is suitable and proper or appropriate for the command **sin lieth at the door, and unto thee shall be his desire**, simply put God is telling Cain sin is lying outside your door ready to attack you and it wants to control you. God recognizes the road which Cain is traveling down and try's to counsel Cain. He reminds him of what he already knew concerning what he had been commanded and the consequences of a failure to obey. Now it has led Cain to this anger and God is trying to help Cain with this anger, by again telling of the ramifications of a failure to deal with it properly. He says it will attack you and it will control you if you let it , but here's what you must do Cain , you must master it. God gives us the ability to overcome and resist sin by submitting to His Word. His word here is a warning of what sin can do and an admonition to master it , but he will not force us and he did not force Cain. It was Cain's choice whether he would yield to sin or master it, would he learn from his mistake of disobedience concerning this offering and

listen to God now and heed His counsel or would he again ignore what God had commanded and act upon the lust and desire to do what Cain wanted to do? Sadly we see the answer in the very next verse. Cain did not master his anger and this anger attacked him and controlled him just as God had warned and this led to bitterness and hatred and notice what happens in **verse 8 And Cain talked with Able his brother and it came to pass when they were in the field , that Cain rose up against Able his brother, and slew him.**

Cain talked with Able his brother and it is evident that this conversation did not lead to resolving Cain's anger. This unresolved anger led to resentment which led to murder. This is the particular sin that we most attach to Cain , he was the 1st murderer and rightfully so but notice the progression that led to this murder. It began with Cain wanting to give an offering to God on his terms rather than what God had commanded, from there when Cain's offering is rejected because it was not of faith, he reacts with anger, God warns Cain of the danger of unresolved anger, Cain ignores God's counsel and by allowing this anger to take root in his heart, it did just as God said it attacked him. When sin attacked him it resulted in hatred that ultimately led to murder. We see this is a contrast to what God requires of His creation as John writes of Cain in 1st **John 3:12** the preceding verses speak of the message from the beginning which is to love one another and the contrast to this is "Not as Cain" who was of the wicked one. I don't believe that this means that Cain was under the control of Satan to a point that he had no choice, but I firmly believe it is the result of Cain's failure to heed to God's command and master his anger. Anger is a powerful emotion and can take us to places we normally would not go nor want to go if we leave it unresolved. That's why Paul says in **Ephesians 4:31 to Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:"**

Colossians 3:8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."

Cain did not put away bitterness , wrath and anger but allowed them to stay around and by doing that he chose whom his master was. He chose that day whom he would serve, and his choice was Satan , every individual who is of the age of accountability makes a decision whom they will serve, either we choose to serve God period, or we chose to serve Satan, there is no getting around it. Either directly or indirectly if we ignore God we cast our lot with Satan. I say directly or indirectly because we will either deliberately choose to not serve God thus directly choosing Satan or indirectly by allowing the things that God requires we get out of our life to remain , in this case we may not directly acknowledge allegiance to Satan but by allowing sin to remain in our hearts either way we become of the wicked one. Just as Cain did by allowing anger to remain in his heart unresolved. Neglected feelings of bitterness, hatred and resentment in our hearts will not simply go away they will fester and while they may not lead the extremities that they led Cain , we can rest assured they will lead to some form of sin. The character that we are developing by allowing these things to remain in us is the character of the wicked one and this is what happens to Cain and he murders his brother Able. Sin is as steady progression that does not stop until it kills us or we put a stop to it notice as sin continues. **Gen 4:9 And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?**

I find it interesting the similarities in the approach that Cain use to address God in relation to his parents. In **Genesis 3:7 after Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit scripture says their eyes were opened and they knew that they were naked** and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. 8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. 9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? 10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the

garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. Isn't this what sin does? When we become so intent on the lust of the flesh, lust of the eye and the pride of life we fail to see the consequences of disobedience. Even though Adam and Eve were specifically given a command they allowed their lust to control them very similar to their son Cain who allowed his anger to control him. Once we commit that transgression or that sin almost immediately we realize the magnitude of it. Adam and Eve knew and Cain knew, but how do each initially deal with it? They attempt to conceal their sin. It is common with people, when they have sinned, to try to hide it from others. Concealing that sin and storing it away does not rectify or justify it. It most certainly does not keep God from finding out about it. How many politicians and professional athletes do we hear about on the news who have made a desperate attempt to conceal an affair or multiple acts of adultery against their spouse, in some way believing that they would be able to keep their sin from being discovered by their spouse. Consequently whether they realized it or not acted as though their creator could not see what they were engaging themselves in. Cain isn't trying to literally hide himself, but he is trying to hide the fact that he murdered his brother. He thought he could conceal his sin from God, by simply telling God I do not know where he is. There is no doubt that Cain knew "where" his brother was. And God was not asking because He didn't know. The question again was a rhetorical one. God recognized where Able was, God knew Cain knew where Able was and Cain was aware that he knew where Able was. God wanted to expose Cain's sin front and center to him. When this progression of sin begins as we talked about earlier we can be certain that lying is somewhere in the progression. We also see that as his mother and father he both deliberately disobeyed God as his father and likewise deceived himself afterward as mother when she allowed herself believe that what God said wasn't so. Cain knew that killing his brother was wrong but afterward, he deceived himself into believing that he could conceal this from God. We can't deceive ourselves into thinking that we can get away with any sin or that God doesn't know about our sin. Cain also displays an arrogant tone with God when he says *am I my brothers keeper?* There is a powerful side point here concerning this phrase am I my brothers keeper. Are we? Yes we are, as a family of God we have a responsibility to one another, in encouraging, warning, loving, rebuking, and several other areas. Cain had a responsibility to his brother but again the progression of sin blinded him of that responsibility and led him to conclude he had no duty at all concerning his brother.

Verse 10 God continues after Cain's murder, deceit and presumption concerning his brother, God ask, **"What hast thou done? The voice of thy brothers blood crieth unto me from the ground,** This verse speaks very loudly to the sanctity of life in the eyes of God. God is the creator of life and when life was taken the life giving ability that He gives his creation, which is blood cried unto God. There was no denying, excusing or concealing this wicked act. Was Cain without opportunity to make restitution for his original disobedience? No. God counseled him to get his anger under control. Was Cain with out warning? No. God had warned him, sin would attack him and it take him to a point that he did not want to go and a place he never intended to go. Once we take that path we cannot go back and undo that progression. We can't change what has happened and we must live with those word's, decisions and acts the rest of our life. Simply put we must live with the consequences and this is what we see here.

Notice **Gen 4:11-12 (KJV) 11 And now Your brothers blood is crying to me And now here's the result you are cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; the very ground that your brother Abel's blood fell on and soaked into verse 12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength;** Think about the significance of this, Cain's profession was a tiller of the ground. God would no longer bless the ground that Cain had always made his living by, despite how much Cain would work the ground, fertilize the crops

and pull the weeds , despite his most diligent effort the earth would not yield her strength or her life giving ability to him. Think of the irony here, because he took life, the ground would no longer give him life concerning his crops. Because he took the life giving ability of blood, the earth would take the blood symbolically that would allow him to produce a successful crop. There is more God continues to inform Cain ***a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.*** The picture God paints here for Cain is a life where he would never be successful in his original occupation and a life where he constantly would find himself on the run, wandering from place to place. He would never again feel the security that comes from calling a place home. There are consequences to sin, but here's what's really terrifying if this couldn't get anymore disturbing notice Cain's response; ***verse 13 Cain said my punishment is greater than I can bear.*** Cain's response is not, I was wrong when I didn't bring an offering of faith and I was wrong when I didn't heed to you counsel concerning this anger and resentment that I had and I realize now Lord where my sin has taken me. I have murdered my brother and I am sorry. If this had been Cain's response how would things have been different? He still would have received punishment because God is a just God and he would render to Cain what was due him , but Cain could have escaped the eternal consequences of his sin. We have no record of Cain ever showing any penitence of his sin at all and from his demeanor and past attitude toward God's advice and counsel we have reason to believe that he ever did, but had he God would have forgiven him. But there are consequences to our actions. In our society today a man or a woman may allow there anger to turn to resentment, hatred and ultimately lead to murder. That individual can receive the forgiveness of sins through the precious blood of Jesus Christ , that's how powerful His blood is. But that individual must still suffer the consequences of their actions upon this earth by life in prison or possible execution. This doesn't mean their not forgiven but what it means is our decisions and actions carry consequences. Sometimes consequences we must live with our entire life. Cain would still have never had the blessing of the earth for his crops , he would still live a life on the run but he could have been forgiven. His concern however was only for himself. My punishment is greater than I can bear, ***verse 14 Behold thou hast driven me from the earth,*** When Adam and Eve sinned they were driven from the garden and Adam would be forced to work the ground hard for a productive crop and this was the occupation Cain had and now even working hard would not yield a productive crop, he was about to be driven from the earth. Also he now recognizes the severity of a severed relationship with God when he says and from thy face shall I be hid, when our relationship with God is severed what other successful avenues do we have? As wicked of a character as Cain had developed he realized the significance of separation from God, in his occupation and in his life. He says ***"I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth and it shall come to pass that everyone that findeth me shall slay me,"*** where is the focus? It is solely upon Cain himself. He shows no remorse at all for the death of his brother, he show's no regret for his disobedience and attitude toward God. His sorrow is solely based upon how he will be affected. Knowing that Cain was right in the sense that people would seek to slay him ***verse 15 the Lord said unto Cain "Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain , lest any finding him should kill him.*** Not only would this be a sign for those who found him to not kill him but it also would be a constant reminder to Cain himself of the terrible act he had committed. Living with the guilt daily of knowing that he was responsible for the murder of his brother. Not only that but having everyone you came in contact with identifying that mark and wanting nothing to do with him. It's interesting to note here as well that this mark forbade anyone from taking his life but , it's purely speculation but not beyond the realm of possibility that several throughout Cain's life who recognized the mark that identified him as a murder mocked and ridiculed him,

possibly even causing him physical harm only not to the point of death. Speaking to the fact that he would be a fugitive constantly running away from enemies and the harm that they were attempting to do him and in some cases being successful in some form of brutal treatment. As we look further down into the genealogy of Cain we see the impact his decisions had on his family. Notice **Gen 4:23 And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. Gen 4:24 If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.** Our sin not only has impact on our lives but also can have a lasting effect on others for many years to come. The foundation we lay and the decisions we make may be the very thing that determines whether generations to come are obedient to God or follow in the way Cain. Lamech appears to be several generations removed from Cain but was well aware of Cains actions and knew the consequences, yet still carried out the same heinous acts. We learn several important lessons from the life of Cain. **#1** God is concerned with what we bring Him. It's not enough to want to please God, we must come to Him and worship Him on His terms. **#2** We must acknowledge our disobedience. **#3** The sin of anger must not be ignored. We cannot allow anger to go unresolved. As with any other sin it is ready to attack and wants to control us, we must master it. **#4** We must heed to God's counsel. God's Word is continually warning us of the dangers of sin just as it did Cain. We must not fail to listen. **#5** we learn the horrific depths that sin can take us to (murder). God had warned Cain, sin would attack him and it take him to a point that he did not want to go and a place he never intended to go. It will do the same to us. **#6** We must realize that God knows all things. When we are disobedient, trying to conceal our sin doesn't keep it from. We must acknowledge it and repent of it and strive to do better. **#7** There are life long consequences to our decisions. While we can be forgiven we still may be forced to live a very difficult life in the remainder of our days upon this earth. **# 8** My decisions impact others. What type of foundation am I laying for my future generations?

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