

The First Murder

Genesis 4:1-16
SS Lesson for 10/21/2018

Devotional Scripture: James 1:9-18

OUTLINE

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Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

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Paul stated that Adam caused condemnation upon me

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Satan attacks from what seems like a stronghold

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Peter - Another of the Apostles

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Things that start small in the mind grow to actions that take place

A perceived simple lie can cause death

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God honors obedience

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Gives Satan a foothold

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Enticement - Asking why not and how can I do it and yet be right (justification)

Enticement starts with my own selfish deceitful desires (Eph 4:22)

Sin causes a hardening of the heart (Heb 3:13)

Enticement is wanting something I really shouldn't have (James 4:1-2)

Rejecting responsibility is a way of justifying (Gen 3:12)

Conception - completing the details in my mind

Usually conception starts with desiring what I see (Gen 3:6)

When I "plot" to do something, I have already conceived it (Micah 2:1-2)

Jealousy and vengeance

Leads to resentment which can kill (Job 5:2)

The one in authority always has the right to do what they think is right (Matt 20:9-15)

There is no need to be stubborn and rebellious because of the treatment of others (Luke 15:28-31)

Abusive treatment usually follows jealousy (Acts 13:45)

God is the only avenger (Rom 12:19)

THE SIN (4:8)

Definition of Sin

Premeditation

When a scheme is devised to kill, this is murder (Exodus 21:12-14)

It is usually hate that provides the motive for murder (Deut. 19:10-13)

Transgressions

Definition of Transgression

I must acknowledge my transgressions (Ps 32:5)

My prayer is for God to blot out my transgressions (Ps 51:1)

My transgression of sins are always before me (Ps 51:3)

The law was added because of transgressions (Gal 3:19)

It was God's mercy that saved me from my transgressions (Eph 2:4-5)

Killing of Abel

THE CONSEQUENCES (4:9-16)

Adam's Reactions

Lying (vs 9)

Lying can get me killed

One of the greatest lies I could tell is to "fake" fellowship with God

Rejecting responsibility (vs 9)

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God's Reactions

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Definition of Curse:

Commentary

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God is to be praised for His eternal love and mercy

God does not stay angry forever, but delights in showing mercy

Next Steps: Life goes on

I must learn an important lesson and recognize evil coming my way (Prov 27:12)

Realize that my foolish decisions can ruin my life (Prov 19:3)

Know that God's wrath is temporary if I repent and humble myself before Him (Isa 26:20)

When I live righteously, Jesus will provide the endurance to the end (2 Cor 4:8-11)

Remorse is not enough

Three Lessons of Cain's Punishment

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM BOB DEFFINBAUGH

The Fruit of the Fall in the Life of Cain (4:1-15)

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Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson teaches the facts about **The First Murder** that was committed in history. The **study's aim** is to see that because sin lies in wait to trip us up, we must always be ready for it. The **study's application** is to acknowledge that God offers us His mercy in the midst of our sin and calls us to recognize it.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: Gen 4:10

And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground."

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

The subject of chapter 4 is the spread of godless society. Here is man in rebellion against God—man who did not obey and who destroyed the goodly and denied his responsibility and culpability for it. The ungodly here are portrayed as living on in the world (with a protective mark of grace; without being saved. Their sense of guilt was eased by their cultural development and their geographical expansion.

Under Moses' leadership Israel would move into a world of cultures. Civilizations with music, art, industry, and enterprise would be on every side. These would be antagonistic to Israel, and would help cause God's people to reject the sacrifices and live as cursed people. Israel needed to be warned against such arrogant opposition.

In the story of Cain and Abel the seed of the woman met the seed of the serpent (3:15). Cain fell to the prey of the crouching evil and eventually went out to form a godless society, rejecting God's way. The "way of Cain" (Jude 11), then, is a lack of faith which shows itself in envy of God's dealings with the righteous, in murderous acts, in denial of responsibility, and in refusal to accept God's punishment.

4:1-5. Cain and Abel were played off against each other, reversing the subjects clause after clause. In fact, the entire chapter contrasts them: Cain is mentioned 13 times in verses 1-16. Seven times Abel is mentioned, and three other times "brother" is substituted. Rightly the Apostle John saw murder as a sin against one's brother (1 John 3:12, 15). The nature of rebellious man unfolds in the person of **Cain** who had an auspicious beginning as the child of hope. But the narrative lines him up with the curse; he **worked the soil** (lit., ground, *'ādāmāh*, Gen. 4:2; cf. 3:17). **Abel**, however, seems to be lined up with man's original purpose, to have dominion over life (cf. 1:28); he **kept flocks**. These coincidental descriptions are enhanced with their actions in worship. **Abel** went out of his way to please God (which meant he had faith in God, Heb. 11:6), whereas **Cain** was simply discharging a duty. Abel's actions were righteous, whereas Cain's were evil (1 John 3:12). These two types of people are still present. Cain's lack of faith shows up in his response to God's rejection of his offering of fruit (Gen. 4:5). Rather than being concerned about remedying the situation and pleasing God, he **was very angry**.

4:6-7. Cain was so **angry** he would not be talked out of his sin—even by God. Eve, however, had to be talked *into* her sin by Satan; but Cain "belonged to the evil one" (1 John 3:12). It is as if he could not wait to destroy his brother—a natural man's solution to his own failure. God's advice was that if Cain would please God by doing **what is right**, all would be well. **But if not sin** would be **crouching** (*rōḥēṣ* is used here in the figure of a crouching animal) **at his door**, ready to overcome him. **Sin desires to have** Cain (these words show God's interpretation of "desire," the same Heb. word, in Gen. 3:16), but Cain could have the mastery over it. Here is the perpetual struggle between good and evil. Anyone filled with envy and strife is prey for the evil one.

4:8-16. After murdering **his brother** (v. 8) **Cain** repudiated responsibility for it (v. 9) and claimed that God's punishment (cropless soil and wandering, vv. 10-12) was too severe (v. 13). God graciously protected him by some **mark** or sign that would be a deterrent to an avenger (v. 15—nowhere is the nature of this "mark" clarified), but God condemned him to a life of ceaseless wandering (v. 12). This was his curse, to be banished from God's **presence** (v. 14). But **Cain** defied that curse by living in a city **in the land of Nod** (lit., "wandering"), **east of Eden** (v. 16). Several Mosaic motifs were founded here: (1) Sacrifices should be offered to God from a heart of faith, and should be the best of the livestock, the firstborn (v. 4). (2) Israelites had responsibilities to their brothers—they were each others' keepers and must not kill one another. (3) Homicidal blood polluted the land, crying out for vengeance—spilled blood raised its voice of accusation (v. 10). (4) Blood revenge was averted by God through protective care, just as

later removal to a city of refuge would avert an avenger. (5) Punishment for guilt was at the foundation of Israel's theocracy. (6) Life without God is a dangerous life without protection. (7) Sometimes the elder was rejected in favor of the younger, turning the normative societal custom around.

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

Most of us know what sibling rivalry is. As a child, I was not immune to it. Even though I had only one sibling, I found myself living in competition with him. There was a drive to score higher in school, to perform better in extracurricular activities, and even to get into more clubs. I found myself striving to be "the good kid" in my parents' eyes. For children to involve themselves in this type of rivalry is not uncommon. Certainly we grow out of it, though, right? Wrong. Not always. As we grow older, we may continue to find ourselves in competition. We want to be the better worker, the cooler parent on the street, or even the more active church member. We unconsciously try to outdo the other. In our society, the person with the highest status or the most toys is the best. When someone else has that, even a sibling, we can fall prey to envy. That was what happened between Cain and Abel. We have a scenario of one person's heart being right but the other one's not. Abel was considered righteous by God (Heb. 11:4) and sincerely strove to serve Him. What about Cain? We do not know how sincere his sacrifice was. What we do know is that he was doing evil in God's eyes (1 John 3:12). So when the two brothers brought their sacrifices, only Abel's was considered worthy. Cain's, on the other hand, was rejected. Can you imagine Cain's anger and frustration? I can almost hear him saying, "Of course God accepted Abel's gift! Everyone likes him. He has always been the better brother, the one everyone favors." Cain gave in to bitterness, and the end result was dreadful. You may be thinking, Yes, but I have never done anything that drastic. That is an extreme. We may think that what we are doing is not that serious, but Jesus teaches otherwise. In Matthew 5:21-22, Christ's teaching about anger is plain. He tells us that anyone who has unrighteous anger has sinned dangerously. The only difference between Cain and ourselves is that Cain allowed himself to carry his anger and jealousy to extreme physical violence. Cain was banished for his terrible sin. However, even in the midst of tragedy, God still demonstrated His grace. God placed a mark upon Cain to protect him (Gen. 4:15). Though the consequences were dire, Cain would still be able to live. God did not put Cain to death. How many times have we said something out of anger or done something out of jealousy? I do not know about you, but there are words I have said and things I have done that I have lived to regret. We are told that envy leads to emptiness (cf. Eccles. 4:4) and that jealousy is even more dangerous than anger (Prov. 27:4), which is itself quite deadly. Have you shown anger or envy toward someone? Jesus tells us that we need to resolve the issue with that person. We cannot expect our worship to be accepted before God if we do not (cf. Matt. 5:23-24). As believers, we are admonished to live peacefully (Rom. 12:18). That means not giving way to envy or anger. Instead, we must do everything we can to resist the temptation to follow Cain's downward path (1 John 3:12), lest the consequences be terrible for us.

Approach to Lesson

I used the Scripture passage James 1:14-15 as my primary focus on studying this lesson:

(James 1:14-15) 14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

From this passage I used the key words of "Temptation", "Desire", "Enticement", "Conception" and "Sin" to review and understand Cain's problems. I then looked at the "Consequences" as described in the subject of this lesson to discern what I should learn from Cain's mistakes. At the beginning of the Focus Passage, I had always heard of the concept of "Born into Sin" so I added a "sub-study" on that topic with two views of the subject.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

NOTE: The body of the lesson came from a previous SS Lesson dated 06/20/1999

The Birth (4:1-2)

1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the Lord."

2 Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

Born into Sin - Two Views

Commentary excerpt from "Doctrine of Sin" by Frenchie White (Theological Interpretation)

1. Definition: Old Sin Nature {O.S.N.} this is a doctrinal term which points out the inherited sin nature of Adam. (WHICH IS TRANSFERRED GENETICALLY TO EVERY MEMBER OF THE HUMAN RACE, CHRIST BEING THE SOLE EXCEPTION) It is the source of **all** personal sins and **all** human good [SIN + HUMAN GOOD = EVIL], and it has trends and areas of lust which determine one's personality when out of fellowship.

2. Some Biblical synonyms for the O.S.N.:

Romans 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual: **but I am carnal**, sold under sin. {KJV}

Romans 7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from **the body of this death?** {KJV}

Galatians 5:16 [This] I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of **the flesh**. 17 For **the flesh** lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against **the flesh**: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. {KJV}

Romans 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with [him], that **the body of sin** might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. {KJV}

Romans 7:13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But **sin**, that it might appear **sin**, working death in me by that which is good; that **sin** by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. {KJV}

3. Genetic transmission of the O. S.N.:

(a). Adam's original sin is transmitted to entire human race. (REMEMBER THE EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE BEING JESUS)

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: {KJV}

Romans 5:13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. {KJV}

Romans 5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one [judgment came] upon all men to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of one [the free gift came] upon all men unto justification of life. 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. {KJV }

(b). The O.S.N. infects every cell of the body *{THE EXCEPTION BEING THE OVUM}*.

Romans 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man [Sin Nature] is crucified with [him], that **the body of sin** might be destroyed [katargeo {kat-arg-eh'-o} render inoperative], that henceforth we should not serve sin. {KJV }

(c). Men will repeat the sins of their fathers.

I Kings 15:3 **And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him:** and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his **father** (DAVID WAS HIS GREAT-GREAT-GREAT-GRANDFATHER). {KJV }

(d). The O.S.N. as we have seen is passed on from parent to child, hence we can say with confidence that it is specifically found in the genetic make up of the chromosomes of mankind.

(e). **Cell reproduction occurs in two ways either by mitosis [EXACT REPRODUCTION OF THE CELL] or by meiosis [THE SPLITTING OF THE CELL INTO TWO HALVES] .**

(f). In the process of meiosis each old cell will retain half of the O.S.N. until there is one pure cell free from the O.S.N.

(g). The process of mitosis occurs in the **male** reproductive system while the process meiosis occurs in the **female** reproductive system, hence once a month during the females normal cycle she produces hundreds of ovals free from the O.S.N.

(h). The O.S.N. is manifested the instant the polluted sperm from the male germinates the pure ovum of the female.

(i). Thus we can see that since Mary was impregnated by the Holy Spirit *{THE VIRGIN BIRTH}* there was no contamination of the O.S.N. in Jesus.

Matthew 1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: **for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.**{KJV}

Thoughts from IBSE (Theological Interpretation)

Involves All Men: Then also there is the further idea that deeds which so profoundly affect the inner life of an individual in some way have an effect in transmitting evil tendencies to the descendants of a sinful individual <Ps 51:5-6; Eph 2:3>. See HEREDITY; TRADITION. Hence, we reach shortly the conception, not only that sin is profoundly inner in its consequences, but that its effects reach outward also to an extent which practically involves the race. Around these various items of doctrine differing systems of theology have sprung up. Heredity: It is from this thought of the positiveness of sin that we are to approach the problem of the hereditary transmission of evil. The Biblical teaching has often been misinterpreted at this point. Apart from certain passages, especially those of Paul, which set forth the practically universal contamination of sin (e.g. <Rom 5:18>, etc.), there is nothing in the Scriptures to suggest the idea that men are born into the world under a weight of guilt. We hold fast to the idea of God as a God of justice and love. There is no way of reconciling these attributes with the condemnation of human souls before these souls have themselves transgressed. Of course much theological teaching moves on the assumption that the tendencies to evil are so great that the souls will necessarily transgress, but we must keep clearly in mind the difference between a tendency to evil and the actual commission of evil. Modern scientific research reinforces the conception that the children of sinful parents, whose

sins have been such as to impress their lives throughout, will very soon manifest symptoms of evil tendency. Even in this case, however, we must distinguish between the psychological and moral. The child may be given a wrong tendency from birth, not only by hereditary transmission, but by the imitation of sinful parents; yet the question of the child's own personal responsibility is altogether another matter. Modern society has come to recognize something of the force of this distinction. In dealing with extreme cases of this kind, the question of the personal guilt of the child is not raised. The attempt is to throw round about the child an environment that will correct the abnormal tendency. But there can be little gainsaying the fact that the presence of sin in the life of the parent may go as far as to mark the life of the child with the sinful tendency. (from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright © 1996 by BibleSoft)

David stated that we are sinful even before birth

(Ps 51:5) Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Paul stated that Adam caused condemnation upon me

(Rom 5:18) Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

Like Father, Like Son

Fathers hope their sons will imitate only their good and honorable characteristics and habits. Unfortunately, most sons don't exercise such discretion. They become just like Dad, "warts and all." A father's influence on his offspring exerts itself negatively as well as positively. From his father a son may learn dishonesty as well as integrity, profanity as well as purity, laziness as well as ambition. Cain apparently developed shortcomings similar to Adam's. When confronted with his own transgression, Adam tried to shift the blame, refusing to accept responsibility for his own actions: "The woman you put here with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it" (Genesis 3:12). When Cain killed Abel and was subsequently confronted with his sin, he tried the same gambit: "Am I my brother's keeper?" He had learned the "art" of dodging responsibility for his personal behavior and choices. As members of the human race, we are all, in a sense, sons and daughters of Adam. We too have learned to shirk responsibility, to play the "blame game," and to resist repentance and confession of our sins. Christians, however, are "children of God" (1 John 3:1). When we acknowledge our sin and seek forgiveness, we are promised that Christ will "purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Let us pursue the holiness of our heavenly Father so that others can readily identify us as his children.

— RWB (From NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

The Temptation (4:3-5)

3 And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord.
4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering,
5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

Many times it start with a good idea - like bringing an offering

Satan attacks from what seems like a stronghold

Judas - One of the chosen twelve

(Luke 22:3) Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve.

Peter - Another of the Apostles

(Luke 22:31) "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat.

Husbands

(1 Sam 25:32-38) 32 David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. 33 May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. 34 Otherwise, as surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak." 35 Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, "Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request." 36 When Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk. So she told him nothing until daybreak. 37 Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him and he became like a stone. 38 About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal and he died.

Wives

(Gen 16:1-2) 1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar; 2 so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said.

Health

(2 Cor 12:7-9) 7 To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Small insignificant issues grow into full sins

Things that start small in the mind grow to actions that take place

(Ps 7:14-15) 14 He who is pregnant with evil and conceives trouble gives birth to disillusionment. 15 He who digs a hole and scoops it out falls into the pit he has made.

A perceived simple lie can cause death

(Acts 5:1-5) 1 Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. 2 With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. 3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? 4 Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God." 5 When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened.

Acceptable Offerings

Must take care of any reconciliation

(Matt 5:23-24) 23 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

God honors obedience

(1 Sam 15:22) But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

Acceptable Sacrifices

Much later when God revealed the Mosaic law, the farmers of Israel were told to bring grain offerings as part of their worship (Lev. 2:1 -16). Abel "brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof" (Gen. 4:4), that is, "the fattest of the firstlings" (Keil and Delitzsch, Keiland Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Hendrickson). Abel gave the Lord his best animal. The younger brother came to God "by faith" (Heb. 11:4). Perhaps God had given both brothers a revelation that only Abel obeyed. Today God's revealed way is to come to Him through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6). Many try to come to God in other ways, usually by their own works of righteousness (Eph. 2:8-9). The older brother was "of that wicked one" (I John 3:12), that is, the devil. Jude told the apostates of his day that they were going in "the way of Cain" (Jude 1:11), referring to their faithlessness and godlessness. (From Bible Expositor and Illuminator)

Anger and its results

Gives Satan a foothold

(Eph 4:26-27) 26 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold.

I must not let anger lead me to sin

Anger can lead to judgement by God

(Matt 5:22) But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

I can be angry, but I don't have to sin

(Ps 4:4) In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Selah

Anger leads to evil

(Ps 37:8) Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret-- it leads only to evil.

God takes my anger seriously

Have you ever become upset or angry when things did not go your way? It all seems so innocent. After all, when we have time to cool down, we go on with our lives. God takes our anger at not getting our way seriously. Jesus Christ told us in the Sermon on the Mount that anger is akin-to murder (Matt. 5:21-22). Our text for this week will help us see why anger is such a serious matter with God. The beginning of the world system seemed so promising. God had announced that He was very pleased with His creative activities. Into His creation called "man," God breathed the breath of life. All too soon sin entered into this lovely creation. Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, and sin entered the world. Verse 4:7 examines the second generation and shows us how quickly the debilitating effects of sin were evidenced in the human race. The Bible tells us that Cain was so angry that it showed on his face (Gen. 4:6). The incident is familiar. Brothers Cain and Abel had brought sacrifices to God. God accepted only Abel's offering because he gave it by faith (Heb. 11:4). God now took the initiative and talked with Cain about his attitude. It is as though God were counseling His wayward child. God cut right to the heart of the issue, anger would not get Cain what he wanted. God told Cain that sin was lying at his door. The word "lieth" can be used of an animal that is in a crouching position (cf. Gen. 49:9). God pictured Cain's sin as a crouched animal ready to pounce on him. The book of I Peter reminds us that "the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (5:8). The picture is graphic and very real. God was telling Cain to be very careful, for his sin of anger was getting ready to finish him off. (From Bible Expositor and Illuminator)

The Desire, Enticement and Conception (4:6-7)

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

7 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."

Recognition and Conviction by God

God sees, knows and considers all that I do (Ps 33:13-15)

13 From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind; 14 from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth-- 15 he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do.

God knows the thoughts and motives of even the most wise of man (1 Cor 3:19-20)

19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; 20 and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."

The conviction of God is that I am accountable for all that I do (2 Cor 5:10)

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

There is always a warning by God (1 Cor 10:13)

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Sin is always at my door

Satan is like a roaring lion wanting to devour me (1 Pet 5:8)

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Satan spends his time roaming looking for someone to attack (Job 2:2)

And the LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it."

Satan's influence is always around when I want to do right (Rom 7:21)

So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.

Enticement - Asking why not and how can I do it and yet be right (justification)

Enticement starts with my own selfish deceitful desires (Eph 4:22)

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;

Sin causes a hardening of the heart (Heb 3:13)

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

Enticement is wanting something I really shouldn't have (James 4:1-2)

1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God.

Rejecting responsibility is a way of justifying (Gen 3:12)

The man said, "The woman you put here with me-- she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

Conception - completing the details in my mind

Usually conception starts with desiring what I see (Gen 3:6)

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

When I "plot" to do something, I have already conceived it (Micah 2:1-2)

1 Woe to those who plan iniquity, to those who plot evil on their beds! At morning's light they carry it out because it is in their power to do it. 2 They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them. They defraud a man of his home, a fellowman of his inheritance.

Jealousy and vengeance

Leads to resentment which can kill (Job 5:2)

Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple.

The one in authority always has the right to do what they think is right (Matt 20:9-15)

9 "The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius. 10 So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. 11 When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. 12 "These men who were hired last worked only one hour," they said, "and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day." 13 "But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?' 14 Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. 15 Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?"

There is no need to be stubborn and rebellious because of the treatment of others (Luke 15:28-31)

28 "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. 29 But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!' 31 "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.'

Abusive treatment usually follows jealousy (Acts 13:45)

When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying.

God is the only avenger (Rom 12:19)

Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

The Sin (4:8)

8 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.

The Hebrew text literally reads, "And Cain said to Abel his brother." Curiously, the Hebrew words, "said to," are normally followed by what was said, but not here. Thus the *King James Version* translates the verb *talked*: "Cain talked with Abel his brother." However, several ancient versions, including the Septuagint

(the Greek text of the Old Testament), include the expected quotation of Cain's words: "Let's go out to the field." The *New International Version* has followed these ancient versions in producing the reading we find here. Although a Jewish tradition states that Abel's death was the result of an argument that broke out between the brothers in the field, another view is that an angry, jealous Cain invited Abel to go with him to the field with the intent to kill him once they were there. (From NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Definition of Sin

Sin is defined as: any attitude of indifference, unbelief, or disobedience to the will of God revealed in conscience, law, or gospel whether this attitude express itself in thought, word, deed, or settled disposition and conduct. Sin is voluntary transgression of a known law. Sin is a wrong attitude, wrong desires, wrong "set" of the will or self. Sin is unbelief and the centering of the self upon something, or someone less than God himself. (Greater Grace Orientation)

Hence sin is everything in the disposition and purpose and conduct of God's moral creatures that is contrary to the expressed will of God. Sin in its nature is egotism and selfishness. Self is put in the place of God <Rom. 15:3; 1 Cor. 13:5; 2 Tim. (from New Unger's Bible Dictionary) (originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois. Copyright (C) 1988.)

Lawlessness <1 John 3:4> or transgression of God's will, either by omitting to do what God's law requires or by doing what it forbids. The transgression can occur in thought <1 John 3:15>, word <Matt. 5:22>, or deed <Rom. 1:32>. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary) (Copyright (C) 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Premeditation

When a scheme is devised to kill, this is murder (Exodus 21:12-14)

12 "Anyone who strikes a man and kills him shall surely be put to death. 13 However, if he does not do it intentionally, but God lets it happen, he is to flee to a place I will designate. 14 But if a man schemes and kills another man deliberately, take him away from my altar and put him to death.

It is usually hate that provides the motive for murder (Deut. 19:10-13)

10 Do this so that innocent blood will not be shed in your land, which the Lord your God is giving you as your inheritance, and so that you will not be guilty of bloodshed. 11 But if a man hates his neighbor and lies in wait for him, assaults and kills him, and then flees to one of these cities, 12 the elders of his town shall send for him, bring him back from the city, and hand him over to the avenger of blood to die. 13 Show him no pity. You must purge from Israel the guilt of shedding innocent blood, so that it may go well with you.

Transgressions

Definition of Transgression

The violation of a law, command, or duty. The Hebrew word most often translated as transgression in the Old Testament means "revolt" or "rebellion." The psalmist wrote, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" <Ps. 32:1>. In the New Testament every occurrence of the word transgression (NKJV) is a translation of a Greek word which means "a deliberate breach of the law" <Rom. 4:15; 1 Tim. 2:14; Heb. 2:2>. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary) (Copyright (C) 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

From "transgress," to pass over or beyond; to overpass, as any rule prescribed as the limit of duty; to break or violate, as a law, civil or moral; the act of transgressing; the violation of a law or known principle of rectitude; breach of command; offence; crime; sin. (from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (C) 1996 by BibleSoft)

I must acknowledge my transgressions (Ps 32:5)

Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"-- and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah

My prayer is for God to blot out my transgressions (Ps 51:1)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

My transgression of sins are always before me (Ps 51:3)

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

The law was added because of transgressions (Gal 3:19)

What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.

It was God's mercy that saved me from my transgressions (Eph 2:4-5)

4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-- it is by grace you have been saved.

Killing of Abel

Blood was of key importance in the Mosaic law (Lev. 17:11; cf. Gen. 9:4). Since it sustained physical life, it was a key symbol in the atonement ritual that pictured Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice. Animals were slain, and their blood was sprinkled on an altar. Each application of animal blood temporarily covered the sins of believing Israelites, who showed their faith in God by participating in the ritual. The killing of Abel has to be the greatest example of premeditated murder in history! God Himself counseled with Cain, but Cain could not be dissuaded. He was standing at a moral crossroad. There was still time to do the right thing, but Cain's anger and disposition toward sin were so strong that nothina could keep him from expressing what was in his heart. Genesis 4:8 tells us that "Cain talked with Abel his brother." This seems to indicate the cold calculation of Cain. "Abel was unsuspecting so Cain approached him naturally and talked with him. We do not know what he said, but it was designed to lure his brother to a lonely place and disarm his suspicions" (Bamhouse). As the prophet has written, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9). (From Bible Expositor and Illuminator)

The Consequences (4:9-16)

9 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

10 And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground.

11 So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

12 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."

13 And Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is greater than I can bear!

14 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."

15 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.

16 Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden.

Adam's Reactions

Lying (vs 9)

Lying can get me killed

(Acts 5:8-10) 8 Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price." 9 Peter said to her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also." 10 At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

One of the greatest lies I could tell is to "fake" fellowship with God

(1 Jn 1:6) If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.

Rejecting responsibility (vs 9)

(Genesis 16:5) Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my servant in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the Lord judge between you and me."

Complain (vs 13)

(Exod 14:10-12) 10 As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD. 11 They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"

Asking for mercy (vs 14)

(Ps 51:1) Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

God's Reactions

Conviction (vs 10)

(Luke 19:8) But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

Curse (vs 11)

Definition of Curse:

779 'arar (aw-rar'); a primitive root; to execrate: KJV-- X bitterly curse.

A prayer for injury, harm, or misfortune to befall someone. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary) (Copyright (C) 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

When a curse is pronounced against any person, we are not to understand this as a mere wish, however violent, that disaster should overtake the person in question, any more than we are to understand that a corresponding "blessing" conveys simply a wish that prosperity should be the lot of the person on whom the blessing is invoked. A curse was considered to possess an inherent power of carrying itself into effect. Prayer has been defined as a wish referred to God. Curses (or blessings) were imprecations referred to supernatural beings in whose existence and power to do good or inflict harm primitive man believed. (from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (C) 1996 by Biblesoft)

These divine maledictions are not merely imprecations or the expressions of impotent wishes, but they carry their effects with them and are attended with all the miseries they denounce or foretell. (from New Unger's Bible Dictionary) (originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois. Copyright (C) 1988.)

God alone truly "curses." It is a revelation of His justice, in support of His claim to absolute obedience. (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words) (Copyright (C) 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

'alah basically refers to "the execution of a proper oath to legalize a covenant or agreement." As a noun, 'alah refers to the "oath" itself. (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words) (Copyright (C) 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Commentary

Verse 11,12. The curse (<Gen. 9:25>, note) which now fell on Cain was in some sense retributive, as it sprang from the soil which had received his brother's blood. The particulars of it are the withdrawal of the full strength or fruitfulness of the soil from him, and the degradation from the state of a settled dweller in the presence of God to that of a vagabond in the earth. He was to be banished to a less productive part of the earth, removed from the presence of God and the society of his father and mother, and abandoned to a life of wandering and uncertainty. The sentence of death had been already pronounced upon man. (from Barnes' Notes)

Because the earth has been compelled to drink innocent blood, it rebels against the murderer, and when he tills it, withdraws its strength, so that the soil yields no produce; just as the land of Canaan is said to have spued out the Canaanites, on account of their abominations (<Lev. 18:28>). In any case, the idea that "the soil, through drinking innocent blood, became an accomplice in the sin of murder," has no biblical support, and is not confirmed by <Isa. 26:21> or <Num. 35:33>. The suffering of irrational creatures through the sin of man is very different from their participating in his sin. "A fugitive and vagabond ([waanaad (heb 5110) naa` (heb 5128)], i. e., banished and homeless) shalt thou be in the earth." Cain is so affected by this curse, that his obduracy is turned into despair, "My sin," he says in v. 13, "is greater than can be borne." [ʿaawon (heb 5771) naasaa' (heb 5375)] signifies to take away and bear sin or guilt, and is used with reference both to God and man. God takes guilt away by forgiving it (<Ex. 34:7>); man carries it away and bears it, by enduring its punishment (cf. <Num. 5:31>). (from Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament)

Displayed Love and Mercy (vs 15)

God is to be praised for His eternal love and mercy

(Isa 63:7-9) 7 I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the LORD has done for us-- yes, the many good things he has done for the house of Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses. 8 He said, "Surely they are my people, sons who will not be false to me"; and so he became their Savior. 9 In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

God does not stay angry forever, but delights in showing mercy

(Micah 7:18) Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.

Next Steps: Life goes on

I must learn an important lesson and recognize evil coming my way (Prov 27:12)

A prudent man sees evil {and} hides himself, the naive proceed {and} pay the penalty.

Realize that my foolish decisions can ruin my life (Prov 19:3)

The foolishness of man ruins his way, and his heart rages against the LORD.

Know that God's wrath is temporary if I repent and humble myself before Him (Isa 26:20)

Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until his wrath has passed by.

When I live righteously, Jesus will provide the endurance to the end (2 Cor 4:8-11)

8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 10 We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. 11 For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.

Remorse is not enough

Cain is typical of many sinners in that he had not considered the consequences of his actions. Now that the deed was done and the consequences had been revealed, Cain showed remorse. He was sorry not for what he had done but for the price he would have to pay for his sin. (From Bible Expositor and Illuminator)

Three Lessons of Cain's Punishment

God presented three lessons in the exile of Cain. First, Cain's sin produced temporal consequences. He would experience additional frustration in his chosen profession (Gen. 4:12). Second, Cain would be out of favor with God, something that, even as a rebel, filled him with dread (vs. 14). By this time there must have been other like-minded people, for Cain found a wife in exile (vss. 16-17). Third, God's punishment gave Cain more of a most precious possession time. By protecting Cain from harm, God gave him time to repent. Let us find encouragement and renewed spiritual desire in God's patience with us. (From Bible Expositor and Illuminator)

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

The Fruit of the Fall in the Life of Cain (4:1-15)

The sexual union of Adam and Eve produced a first child, a son whom Eve named Cain. This name is probably to be understood as a play on words. It sounds similar to the Hebrew word, *Qanah*, which means 'to get' or 'to acquire.' In today's vernacular this son would probably have been named 'Got.'

The significance of the name is that it reflects Eve's faith, for she said, "I have gotten (*Qaniti*, from *Qanah*) a manchild with the help of the Lord" (Genesis 4:1).

While there is some discussion among Bible scholars as to the precise meaning of this statement, Eve acknowledged the activity of God in the gift of her son. I believe that Eve understood from the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 that one of her offspring would bring about her redemption. Perhaps she looked upon Cain as her redeemer. If so she was destined for disappointment.

While she may have been mistaken in her hopes for a speedy victory over the serpent by her firstborn child, she was correct in looking for God's deliverance through her seed. She was, therefore, correct in general but mistaken in particular.

Eve's optimism seems to have waned by the time of the birth of her second son, Abel. His name meant 'vanity,' 'breath,' or 'vapor.' Perhaps Eve had learned by this time that the consequences of sin were not to be quickly done away with. Life would involve struggle and a good measure of seemingly futile effort. Cain was the symbol of Eve's hope; Abel, of her despair.

Abel was a keeper of flocks, while Cain was a tiller of the soil. Nowhere does Moses imply that one of these occupations is inferior to the other. Neither is this account some kind of predecessor to the television shows which have worn thin the theme of the struggle between the dirt farmers and the cattlemen.

Cain's problem is not to be found in his means of livelihood, but in the man himself:

So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. And 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; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard ... (Genesis 4:3-5a).

The Israelites who first read these words of Moses would have little difficulty in grasping the problem with the sacrifice of Cain. They received this as a part of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. As such, they understood that man could not approach God without the shedding of sacrificial blood. While there were non-bloody sacrifices, man could only have access to God through shed blood. Cain's offering fell short of God's requirements of the Law.

"But Cain did not have such revelation!" someone may object. Quite true. But then we must all admit that none of us knows what revelation he did have. Any speculation on the subject is just that—mere conjecture.

Having said this, I must point out that it is not necessary for Moses to have told us. His contemporaries had more than sufficient basis to grasp the significance of shed blood, because of the meticulous prescriptions of the Law regarding sacrifices and worship Christians of our own time have the advantage of seeing the matter much more clearly in the light of the cross, and from the realization that Jesus was "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

While we do not know what God revealed to Adam or to his sons, we are assured that they knew what they were to do. This is clear from God's words to Cain:

Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, 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 (Genesis 4:6-7).

God's question clearly implies that Cain's anger was ill-founded. While we do not know the specifics of what 'doing well' involved, Cain did. Cain's problem was not one of lack of instruction, but of insurrection and rebellion against God.

Cain, like so many people today, wanted to come to God, but he wanted to do it his way. This may work at the hamburger stand. They may let you do it 'your way' as the commercial says, but God will not. As a friend of mine says, 'You can go to heaven God's way, or you can go to hell any way you please.'

Notice that Cain was not an irreligious person. He believed in God, and he wanted God's approval. But he wanted to come to God on his terms, not on God's. Hell, as I have said before, will be populated with religious people.

Cain did not want to approach God through shed blood. Cain preferred to offer God the fruit of his labors. He had a green thumb, and bloodstained hands had no appeal to him. Men today differ little. Many are those who, like the demons (cf. James 2:19), believe in God, and who acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God. But they refuse to submit to Him as Lord. They refuse His sacrificial and substitutionary death upon the cross as the payment for their sins. They wish to come to God on their own terms. The message of the gospel is very clear: there is no approach to God except through that which Christ has earned through the death of the cross.

Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me' (John 14:6).

... And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

... And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22).

... but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ (I Peter 1:19). (Cf. also Luke 22:20; Acts 20:28; Romans 3:25; 5:9; Ephesians 1:7).

How gracious God was to seek out Cain and to gently confront him with his sinful anger. How clear was the message of restoration and the warning concerning the danger he faced. But the counsel of God was rejected.

This week a friend of mine pointed out to me the wisdom of God's rebuke. How easy it would have been for God to have corrected Cain by comparing him with Abel. That is the way we parents often handle the discipline of our children. But God did not say "Why don't you worship me like your brother Abel does?" God pointed

Cain to the standard which He had set, not to the example of his brother. Nevertheless, Cain made the connection. Cain's offering was not accepted; Abel's was. God gently admonished Cain and instructed him that the way to win His approval was to submit to the divine pattern of approach to God. Cain concluded that the solution was to eliminate his competition—to murder his brother.

One thing must be clear. It was not just the sacrifice that was the problem. Much more, it was the person who sought to present the offering. Moses tells us,

And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering, but for Cain and his offering He had no regard (verse 4b,5a).

The source of the problem was Cain, and the symptom was the sacrifice.

Verse 7 is pregnant with implications:

If you do well, 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 (Genesis 4:7).

The way to get over his depression was to change his performance. He would feel better as he did better. In one sense Cain was right in being angry with himself. He was wrong in his animosity toward his brother and his God.

If Cain chose to ignore God's gentle prodding, let him be fully aware of the dangers ahead. Sin lay waiting for him like a crouching animal. It wanted to master him, but he must master it. Cain is faced with a decision and held accountable for his choice. He need not succumb to sin, just as we should not, because God always gives sufficient grace to resist temptation (cf. I Corinthians 10:13).

When the two men were in the open field (seemingly where there could be no witness, cf. Deuteronomy 22:25-27), Cain killed his brother. God now came to Cain in judgment.

Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?' And he said, 'I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?' (Genesis 4:9).

Cain's insolence is incredible. Not only does he lie in denying any knowledge of Abel's whereabouts, he seems to rebuke God for the question. There may even be a sarcastic play on words to the effect, "I don't know. Shall I shepherd the shepherd?"

The ground was cursed on account of Adam and Eve (3:17). Now the earth has been stained with the blood of man, and that spilled by his brother. That blood now cries out to God for justice (4:10). God, therefore, confronts Cain with his sin. The time for repentance has passed and now the sentence is passed on Cain by the Judge of the earth.

It is not the ground which is cursed again, but it is Cain.

And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you cultivate the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you; you shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth (Genesis 4:11-12).

Cain had been blessed with a 'green thumb.' He had attempted to approach God through the fruits of his labor. Now God cursed him in the area of his strength and sin. Never again will Cain be able to sustain himself by tilling the soil. While Adam had to earn his living by the sweat of his brow (3:19), Cain could not survive by farming. For him the curse of chapter three had been intensified. For Adam farming was difficult; for Cain it was impossible.

Cain's response to the first rebuke of God had been sullenness and silence, followed by sin. Cain is no longer silent once his sentence has been pronounced, but there is no indication of repentance, only regret.

And Cain said to the Lord, 'My punishment is too great to bear! Behold, Thou hast driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Thy face I shall be hidden, and I shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and it will come about that whoever finds me will kill me' (Genesis 4:13-14).

Cain's words have a familiar ring to any parent. At times a child is truly sorry for his disobedience. At other times he is only sorry that he was caught, and bitterly bemoans the severity of punishment he is to receive. All Cain does is to repeat his sentence bitterly, and express his fear that men will treat him as he did his brother.

God assured Cain that while human life meant little to him, He valued it highly. He would not even allow Cain's blood to be shed at this time. We cannot be sure about the exact nature of the sign that was appointed for Cain. It could have been a visible mark, but it seems more likely that it may have been some kind of event that confirmed to Cain that God would not allow him to be killed.

Verse 15 has a two-fold purpose. The first is to assure Cain that he would not die a violent death at the hand of man. The second is a clear warning to anyone who should consider taking his life. Notice the words, "Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold" (Genesis 4:15), are not spoken to Cain, but of Cain. God did not say, "Whoever kills you," but "Whoever kills Cain."

A partial genealogy is given of the line of Cain. Moses employed this, I believe, to evidence the ungodliness of Cain (and the sinfulness of man commenced at the Fall) in his descendants, and to serve as a contrast to the genealogy of Adam through Seth in chapter 5.

Cain settled in the land of Nod. After the birth of his son, Enoch, Cain established a city named after his child. It would seem that the founding of this city was an act of rebellion against God, who had said he would be a vagrant and a wanderer (4:12).

Lamech manifests mankind at his lowest point of descent.

And Lamech took to himself two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other, Zillah. And Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. And his brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. As for Zillah, she also gave birth to Tubal-cain, the forger of all implements of bronze and iron, and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah. And Lamech said to his wives, 'Adah and Zillah, Listen to my voice, you wives of Lamech, give heed to my speech, for I have killed a man for wounding me; and a boy for striking me; if Cain is avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.' (Genesis 4:19-24).

Lamech appears to be the first to have departed from the divine ideal for marriage as described in chapter two. One wife was not sufficient for him so he took two, Adah and Zillah.

We would expect Moses to have only condemning words for Lamech. Surely nothing good could come from such a man. And yet, it is from his offspring that great cultural and scientific contributions come. One son became the father of nomadic herdsmen, another was the first of a line of musicians, and another was the first of the great metal workers.

We must pause to observe that even man at his worst is not without the ability to produce that which is deemed beneficial to mankind. We should also hasten to say that man's contributions can quickly and easily be adapted to the ruin of men. Music can entice and allure men into sin. The skills of the metal worker can be used to produce implements of sin (e.g. idols, cf. Exodus 32:1ff.).

To the ungodly, the line of Cain was the source of much that was praiseworthy. But the real fruits of sin are revealed in the words of Lamech to his wives. Adam and Eve had sinned, but repentance and faith are implied after their sentence was pronounced. Cain murdered his brother Abel, and while he never fully repented, neither could he defend his actions.

Lamech brings us to the point in the history of man where sin is not only committed boldly, but boastfully. He bragged to his wives of his murder. More than this he boasted that his sin was committed against a mere youngster who had only struck him. This murder was brutal, bold, and volatile. Worst of all, Lamech shows a disdain and disregard for God's word: "If Cain is avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold." (Genesis 4:24).

God had spoken these words to assure Cain that he would not be killed by the hand of man. He also warned men of the seriousness of such an act. These words were spoken to reveal the fact that God valued human life. Lamech twisted and distorted them as a boast to his violence and aggressive hostility toward man and God. Here man has quickly plummeted to the bottom of the barrel!

(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/5-fruits-fall-genesis-41-26>)

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

1. All life is precious, for God is the source of all life (Gen 4:1-2)
2. God honors our faith in Him as we give Him the best we have to offer (vss. 3-5)
3. We must be on guard at all times not to allow our emotions to leave us vulnerable to sin's control (vss. 6-7)
4. Nothing in our lives can be hidden from God (vss. 8-10)
5. Our life's work becomes fruitless and difficult as sin separates us from God (vss. 11-12)
6. God is merciful to protect us from the full weight of our sin (vss. 13-16)