

Sabbath School Lesson #3 – Cain and His Legacy – 9-15 April 2022

Christ would have us not follow Cain and his legacy. “And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over it” (Genesis 4:6-7). Notice at that point in time when the Lord spoke these words to Cain, here Cain had not yet committed his great sin, but he was envious of Abel. Those envious feelings if not repressed would result, as they finally did, in murder, for in envy murder lies concealed. So the Lord represented sin as a wild beast, just ready to spring upon its prey. It was there beside Cain’s door, and its desire was to him; but as yet he had the power to rule over it, and drive it away. In this we are taught to shun the beginnings of sin. “Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:14-15). Therefore, the thoughts should be carefully guarded. Now, “keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23).

Sunday: Cain and Abel – What was the name of the first son of Adam and Eve? “And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord” (Genesis 4:1). What was the name of the second son? “And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground” (verse 2). How do Eve’s words in Genesis 4:1 show she hoped Genesis 3:15 is fulfilled? Christ is the Seed that God promised should bruise the serpent’s head. From the very beginning, when the promise was first made, those who believed it watched eagerly for the coming of the promised Seed. When Cain, the first little baby, was born, and his mother Eve said, “I have gotten a man from the Lord,” she earnestly hoped that she held in her arms the One who was to be her Saviour. But, alas, how sadly disappointed she must have been when, as he grew up, his pride and jealousy and hatred of his brother showed all too plainly that he “was of that wicked one” (1 John 3:12). Instead of the Son of God, they had got a son in their own image; for we learned how they themselves became “the children of the wicked one” (Matthew 13:38), through receiving his word in the place of the Word of God. Many years passed before the promise of God was fulfilled, and no doubt many a mother, like Eve, longed that the precious Seed might be given to her care. So that is people should not lose hope, God often repeated through His prophets the promise of the Seed. And at last, “when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son; born of a woman” (Galatians 4:4).

Monday: The Two Offerings – What offering did Cain bring to the Lord? “And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord” (Genesis 4:3). What was Abel’s offering? “And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof” (verse 4). How did the Lord regard Abel’s offering? “And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering” (verse 4). How did the Lord regard Cain’s offering? “But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell” (verse 5). What made Abel’s offering more acceptable than Cain’s? “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain by which he, obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead yet speaketh” (Hebrews 11:4). What was the defect in Cain’s offering? “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood there is no re-mission” (Hebrews 9:22). Then since Cain did not take the proper steps to secure the remission of sins, what lay at his door? “If thou doest well, Shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him” (Genesis 4:7). Through whose blood alone may remission of sins be obtained? “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Romans 3:23-25). Then since Abel was accepted, in whom must he have had faith? “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at naught of you

builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:10-12). What is attained by faith? "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). In summary, what was the difference between the two offerings? "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." The difference between the two offerings was in the matter of faith. That is, it was faith in Abel, and a lack of faith in Cain, that made the offerings different. By bringing "of the firstlings of his flock," Abel showed faith in the fact that "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22) – faith in "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29).

Tuesday: The Crime – What did Cain do to Abel? "And 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 slew him" (Genesis 4:8). Why did he do this? "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (1 John 3:11-12). What do the godly like Abel suffer for truth? "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12). Is it any wonder if the world hates the righteous? "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you. The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also" (John 15:18-20). How should the righteous feel when they are persecuted for their faith? "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matthew 5:11-12). What consolation in tribulation do Christians have? "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the Lord ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Wednesday: The Punishment of Cain – The blood of Jesus, "the blood of sprinkling," "speaketh better things than *that of Abel*" (Hebrews 12:24). God to Cain, "What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (Genesis 4:10). What did Abel's blood say to the Lord, as it cried from the ground? It cried for vengeance. A life had been taken, and nothing but life could satisfy the demand of justice. All the innocent blood that has been shed on the earth, cries to the Lord for punishment which will be meted out to the violent ones who have shed it; "for, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain" (Isaiah 26:21). But what about "the blood of sprinkling," what does it speak? It speaks peace and pardon. Christ, like Abel, was put to death because His works were righteous, but His blood calls not for vengeance. On the contrary, that blood is the only means by which even those who shed it can be saved. What a marvellous thing!

Thursday: The Wickedness of Man – How does the wickedness of unrepentant Cain show up in his offspring? "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain" (Jude 11). The sin of Cain shows itself in the life of Lamech the fifth in descent from Cain. "Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, I have slain a man, for wounding me, and a young man for hurting me. If Cain shall be avenged seven-fold, truly Lamech seventy and seven-fold" (Genesis 4:23-24). His argument is: Cain slew an innocent man, one who had done him no hurt at all; and any slaying him would be avenged seven-fold. But this man wounded me, this man hurt me. If, then, Cain was protected and avenged seven-fold, who slew an innocent man, a man who had done him no hurt, truly I shall be protected and avenged seventy and seven-fold, when the man whom I slew had wounded me, and had hurt me. Thus God's great mercy to the sinner was used only for the sanction of the sin; "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the Lord God, and our Lord, Jesus Christ" (Jude 4). Lamech was going "in the way of Cain" – still unrepentant and hardened.