Genesis 4:1-17

(10/8/14)

Genesis 4:1 (NKJV)
[1] **Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived…**

This is the first specific mention of sex in the Bible.

The term "**knew**" or "to know" is a polite way of saying they had sexual relations—a term that is often used in the Bible in this sense.

In the N.T. we read that Joseph *"didn't know Mary his wife until after she brought forth Jesus".*

Genesis 4:1 (NKJV)
[1] Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived **and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD."**

The name **Cain** basically means, *"I've got him"* or *"Here he is"*.

It would seem from the name Eve chose to name her first born son by that she believed him to be the one that God had promised back in 3:15.

Eve thought she was holding in her arms the deliverer God had promised who would crush the serpent's head and restore them to paradise—that's why she called him *"Here he is".*

Unfortunately she was holding a murderer not the Messiah.

Genesis 4:2-5 (NKJV)
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. 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.

Now between verses two and three over a hundred years have passed so that by this time many people had multiplied upon the earth.

But here we have two brothers who are each trying to approach God—one (Abel) God accepted and the other (Cain) He rejected.

There are many that feel sorry for Cain as if God capriciously rejected him even though he was sincere in his attempt to come into God's presence to worship Him.

What's obvious even though it isn't stated is that God had specified to each the proper way to approach Him—

The issue wasn't that God was being unfair to Cain or that He hadn't made Himself clear about the proper way to come to Him—*"so why did He reject Cain's offering?"*

Well there are many who say that's a 'no brainer'—

It was because Abel brought God a <u>blood sacrifice</u> to atone for his sin whereas Cain brought to God crops from his fields—in other words <u>the works of his hands</u>.

Well first of all we're not told in the passage that these were sin offerings—but let's assume they were.

In the Law of Moses God had said that if a person was too poor to bring to God a lamb or even two pigeons to atone for his sins he could bring a grain offering to make atonement.

I'm sure this didn't happen often—especially because in Lev.17:11 God said, *"I have given you the blood upon the altar to make atonement for the soul, it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul".*

In Hebrews 11:4 Abel's offering is held up as an example of genuine faith whereas Cain's is not which means the real issue here wasn't the offering itself but the <u>heart</u> of each man behind the offering.

Here, once again, the Holy Spirit is making a distinction between "do it yourself" religion and God directed righteousness.

We saw it earlier in the attempt by Adam and Eve to cover their guilt and shame through the works of their hands in sowing fig leaves together but how God rejected their 'religion' and instead covered them with animal skins to teach them and all of us right from the start that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.

Romans 10:1-4 (NKJV)
[1] Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. [2] For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. [3] For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. [4] For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

This applies to everyone who thinks they can approach God and be accepted by Him because they're a good person, go to church, light the candles, pray the rosary, help the poor…etc.

Titus 3:5 (NKJV)
[5] not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

Genesis 4:4-8 (NKJV)
And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, [5] but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry (Hebrew-"burning with anger")**, and his countenance fell. [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." [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.**

At this point we need to read what John wrote about this—

1 John 3:10-12 (NKJV)
[10] In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor *is* he who does not love his brother. [11] For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, [12] not as Cain *who* was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.

These verses in Genesis 4 teach us, as John stated in his first epistle that, starting with Cain killing Abel those who feel their good works should earn them a place in heaven have persecuted and often killed over the centuries those who believe they are saved by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone.

Phony, self-righteous 'Christians' have martyred more of God's true saints than any other group in history.

Abel approached God through faith and obedience to what He had prescribed—whereas Cain came on his own terms and felt that God should be happy he came at all!

Jude 1:11 (NKJV)
[11] Woe to them! **[speaking of apostates]** For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

The **"way of Cain"** is the way of self-styled, do it yourself religion as opposed to those who approach God through faith obeying what He has said <u>as Abel did</u>.

God has prescribed that there is only one way to approach Him and that is through His Son Jesus Christ—all other ways are worthless and unacceptable no matter how sincere the person might be ("There is a way that seems right to a man…")

There are really only two 'religions' in the world—the religion of *human achievement*; and the religion of *divine accomplishment*.

Every religion and religious system in the world apart from Christianity falls under the category of human achievement—what we do for God to earn His favor.

Only Christianity (which is not a religion but a relationship) falls under the category of divine accomplishment—what God has done for us.

Religion says "DO"—Christianity says "DONE" (as in "it is finished").

Religion comes from man and is an expression of his pride (to show he's good enough to work and earn a place in heaven)—<u>it is man-centered and works oriented.</u>

Christianity comes from God and is Christ centered and grace oriented (i.e. salvation isn't something we earn by works it is free gift we receive by faith).

Biblical faith first and foremost believes what God has said and comes to Him the way He has prescribed. (John 14:6)

Those who try to come to God through their works (religion), like Cain, have always hated and persecuted those who, like Abel, come to God through a heart of faith and obedience—

Matthew 23:34-35 (NKJV)
[34] Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: *some* of them you will kill and crucify, and *some* of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, [35] that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

Hebrews 11:4 (NKJV)
[4] By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; <u>and through it he being dead still speaks</u>.

Abel's faith coupled with his obedience to what God said was the proper way to come to Him still speaks to us today that there is a right way and a wrong way to approach God.

And also Abel's blood continues to speak to us testifying to the reality that those who are righteous through their faith will always be hated and persecuted by those who seek to approach God through the works of their hands.

John 16:2 (NKJV)
[2] …yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.

The immediate fulfillment of that was the persecution of the Jews against Christians in the book of Acts—that was followed in history by the persecution of the Roman Catholic Church which today has been replaced by the persecution of Islam against the people of God.

The statement that the Lord said to Cain in verse 7 is important to consider—

Genesis 4:7 (NKJV)
[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."

The Hebrew communicates the idea that sin is like a lion crouching at the door of our hearts ready to pounce on us and take control so that we do what our fallen nature wants us to do instead of how God wants us to live.

God's command to Cain and to all of us—*"Don't give into the temptation to sin but exercise control over the flesh and obey God".*

Of course that will only happen through the power of the Holy Spirit living inside of us—as Paul in Galatians 5:23 said that one of the fruits of the Spirit is 'self-control'.

Genesis 4:8 (NKJV)
[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.

This is the first murder recorded in the Bible and probably the first murder on the face of the earth (if you don't count Satan murdering Adam and Eve spiritually).

Genesis 4:9 (NKJV)
[9] Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where *is* Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. *Am* I my brother's keeper?"

Here God isn't looking for information when He asked Cain where Abel his brother was—He was simply trying to draw a confession out of Cain—and by the way, as Christians, we are our brothers and sisters 'keepers'. (Explain)

Genesis 4:10-12 (NKJV)
[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."

Earlier God had cursed the ground because of Adam's sin and told him that it would only produce through backbreaking labor—

But now God curses Cain himself and says to him that the ground would not produce at all for him no matter how hard he worked the land.

And furthermore that he would be reduced to a fugitive (a criminal on the run) and a vagabond (a person moving about aimlessly without a home)

So obviously Cain couldn't continue as a farmer—all he could do was wander from place to place and eke out a living doing whatever to survive—<u>but the curse God placed upon him went beyond that</u>.

All his relationships with his family were broken—he became a hated man, an outcast among his own people for committing the first murder on the face of the earth—his own brother.

Genesis 4:13 (NKJV)
[13] And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment *is* greater than I can bear!

Notice that Cain didn't say *"my sin is greater than I can bear"*—no he said *"my punishment is greater than I can bear".*

His words only contain remorse over the consequences his sin brought into his life—but demonstrate no repentance at all.

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NKJV)
[10] For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

How can you tell if a person is demonstrating genuine repentance or just worldly regret? → Does it lead to change?

Every criminal in prison is sorry from a worldly standpoint—sorry they got caught but not necessarily sorry for what they did.

"Katherine Power was a fugitive for more than twenty-three years. In 1970, during the heyday of student radicalism, she participated in a Boston bank robbery in which a city policeman, the father of nine children, was shot in the back and killed. Pursued by federal authorities for murder, Ms. Power went into hiding. For fourteen years she was one of the FBI's Ten Most Wanted Fugitives. Finally, in late 1993, she surrendered to authorities.

In a statement she read to the press, Katherine Power characterized her actions in the bank robbery as *"naive and unthinking."* What motivated her to surrender? *"I know that I must answer this accusation from the past, in order to live with full authenticity in the present."*

Power's husband explained further: *"She did not return out of guilt. She wanted her life back. She wants to be whole."*

In a perceptive piece about Katherine Power's surrender, commentator Charles Krauthammer wrote, *"Her surrender—for the sake of "**full authenticity**"—was a form of therapy, indeed the final therapeutic step toward regaining her sense of self."*

John MacArthur in his book The Vanishing Conscience says with regard to this,

"That kind of thinking has all but driven words like sin, repentance, contrition, atonement, restitution, and redemption out of public discourse. If no one is supposed to feel guilty, how could anyone be a sinner? Modern culture has the answer: people are victims. Victims are not responsible for what they do; they are casualties of what happens to them.

So every human failing must be described in terms of how the perpetrator has been victimized. We are all supposed to be "sensitive" and "compassionate" enough to see that the very behaviors we used to label "sin" are actually evidence of victimization.

Victimism has gained so much influence that as far as society is concerned, there is practically no such thing as sin anymore. Anyone can escape responsibility for his or her wrongdoing simply by claiming the status of a victim. It has radically changed the way our society looks at human behavior."

So worldly regret or remorse is self-focused and feelings oriented but it's not true repentance.

True repentance consists of a three-fold action:

First of all involves awareness and understanding of our sin or wrongdoing.

Second, it involves our emotions, we feel bad about what we have done.

Third, it involves the appropriate actions that make for a change of lifestyle.

So Cain didn't repent for his sin—his words only reflect a self-focused remorse over the punishment he now has to endure—and a fear for his own safety.

Cain was afraid that, as he wandered from place to place, any of his relatives (which was everybody) might want to avenge Abel's murder by killing him.

Genesis 4:13-15 (NKJV)
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 (implying God had established a place for people to come and offer their sacrifices and worship Him)**; 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.

Cain should have been executed by God for killing his brother—but God not only graciously spared his life but protected him for the rest of his life from any vigilante justice.

Just what this mark was that God put on Cain to keep people from killing him—we don't know.

One author—

"Some have supposed a tattoo, others a special hairstyle. One of the ancient rabbis argued that the sign was a dog that accompanied Cain on his wanderings. The dog assured Cain of Godprotection and frightened attackers. In my mind I see a giant bull mastiff with a spiked collar!"

Whatever this mark was—it became a symbol of God's amazing grace toward guilty sinners—those who should be put to death for their sins but allowed to live by God's grace.

The question is—*"Did Cain use God's grace wisely and ever repent of his sin?"*

Apparently not—because everywhere Cain's name is mentioned in the N.T. it is always in a negative sense.

God's grace is available to all sinners—but it won't last forever. The day of grace will eventually come to an end and all that will be left is eternal judgment.

"Today is the day of salvation—if you hear His voice don't harden your heart…"

Genesis 4:16-17 (NKJV)
16 Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. 17 And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son--Enoch.

And so the age old question—*"Where did Cain get his wife?"*

He obviously married a sister or cousin or second cousin—which God originally allowed in part because there was no other way to populate the earth than to marry a close relative; and also because at this time it wasn't genetically dangerous to do so.

People read the story and assume that there were only three people of the earth at this time—Adam, Eve, and Cain (Abel was dead)—that being the case they want to know where did Cain get his wife?

The narrative only focuses on those four people—giving the impression that those were the only people on the face of the earth.

However Genesis 5:4 tells us that Adam had many sons and daughters by this time—as I said earlier over a hundred years has passed since Adam and Eve were created.

By this time some estimate that there could have been 200,000 people or more on the face of the earth.