

More Beginnings:—Births, two different sons, Man's Religion, Murder, another Curse, another Banishment, "The World," another murder, then Separate lines: Fleshly/Worldly vs. the Godly.

Banished from Paradise, its peaceful beauty and easy living, and denied access to the Tree of Life, the ruined couple begin to make a go of life together. But they find themselves on a cursed earth, with sinful natures, and consciences to boot. Now self centered people, of opposite gender in a marital relationship looking forward to painful and dangerous pregnancies and birthings. Naked and not ashamed at first, their sin had destroyed that innocent simplicity and brought them into a "sticky" competitive relationship, with each vying for dominance and personal rights. That contention is still going on today. But Christ has given the solution and the power toward loving, respectful relationships that glorify God and mirror His desired relationship with His Assembly. We don't really know if the couple had intimate relations before they sinned. But what a blessing they didn't have children before they sinned. A mixture of innocent and sinful humans on one earth would have been disastrous for the innocent. The one occasion when a sinless Man was born and raised on the earth led to His crucifixion by those who could not stand His righteousness.

By the end of chapter 4 we find the earth being populated by two lines of humans—worldly and godly—but both lines are born sinners and much in conflict. That conflict has never passed off the scene and is still active today. The Bible documents man's sordid history. And it tells the long marvelous story of God's patience and His faithful ways seeking to draw the wayward to Himself. If you are at odds with God, won't you heed Him and humbly come to him in repentance?

Not only is the sin nature in man inherited, sinning is contagious through association with sinning people. As we saw in Romans 3:23, "All have sinned and [continually] come short of the glory of God." Cain was the example of the born sinner who considered himself independent of his Creator. All of us are born that way. Abel was the example of a born sinner who through some intervention of God and others realized his sinfulness. He saw his rebellious heart and his responsibility to remember his Creator. He not only repented but brought an offering appropriate to his sinfulness.

Why did the sons of Adam bring offerings? We don't read of any command from God, or by their parents. But they had at least observed their parents' godly reverence and their offerings. Offerings? Yes, they had to slay and skin their domestic animals from time to time to clothe their children and make fresh clothing for themselves. It was a necessity, a covering against the weather, the thorns, and shame of their nakedness. But Cain seemed to be thinking "I'll gain favor with this God if I bring Him the best of the produce of the ground I till." Symbolically he was returning

to the insufficient fig leaves his parents first donned to cover themselves. But God in His mercy and grace had provided a better more useful and durable covering, animal skins. How did Abel know what would please God? He and Cain surely had watched Adam slay the animals—living souls. They had noticed with horror the butchery and bloodshed involved in providing a covering for their nakedness. They could have thought "my sin wasn't that bad." The parents surely had. Was it? It was worse, far worse. The clothing to cover their bodies was really a prophetic token of the covering they needed to cover their sins. Death of a perfectly righteous Man was necessary to cover their sinfulness.

Note, the coats that God tailored for them would have been nothing like those seen in popular illustrations of "cave men." I first realized this upon seeing finely tailored suits of leather clothes exhibited at the State Fair. Not that men since then haven't worn rough un-tailored skins as refugees or as prophets such as John the Baptist, Mark 1:6. For example: *Hebrews 11:36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. 39b And these all, having obtained a good report through faith,*

The act that brought death upon Adam and the whole race could be truly and permanently covered only by the blood of a sinless man. For Cain to bring vegetation from the cursed ground he had cultivated was at least a show of profound ignorance. It was indeed an insult to God's thoughts of His own Son as seen in the slaying of an innocent domesticated animal from the flock. While God used the skins to make clothing He may have disposed of the remains by burning the carcass. If so, this was the model for all burnt offerings down through the ages. Notice 2500 years later, while giving the Law, the Lord instructed Moses when offering a burnt offering all of it was to be burned except the skin was to be preserved for the Priest, Leviticus 8:8. This is consistent with the original act of providing clothing for Adam and Eve.

Note the grace of God who did not immediately punish Cain for his insolence. He first treated it as ignorance, offering Cain an acceptable sin offering to bring. Cain refused, insulted that his own offering was not good enough. Who is god here? Not only insulted he was incensed that his brother's offering had been accepted. Do we know how God showed this? Perhaps. Naturally the fire didn't catch on the green vegetation and the smoke did not rise into the air. The hot burning fat of an animal's flesh would ascend toward heaven. The Hebrew word for "burnt offering" means "an ascending offering" a "holocaust" (as going up in smoke).

While the Serpent [Satan] was instrumental in the Fall of

God's creation and its human head he dropped out of sight in scripture for centuries. The next time we read of him is in Job's account probably around the time of Moses, 2500 years after Adam and Eve lost possession of the earth to him. He was not openly involved in the activities of Cain and his line of descendants but was certainly egging them on in their development of independence, and applauding. That is still his pitch today. We see it all around us, in the all of the "rights" movements. Mankind easily adopts Cain's attitude toward God, against His authority and rightful due as Creator. They mimic that of Satan when he rebelled and fell. What a horror awaits them.

Cain's callous response to God's merciful inquiry about Abel echos down through the ages, repeated in attitudes or inaction, if not in words, **"Am I my brother's keeper?"** Christ's response is a resounding **of course!** Christ is the ultimate example of the "keeper" of His brethren.

Romans 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. 6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

John 10:15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . 17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

And He expects us to act like Him.

John 15:12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. 15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. 16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. 17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

1 John 5:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. 15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. 16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

Cain refused God's way of salvation. And he refused God's way of life, substituting his own. He made his choice,

independence from God His Creator, then complained his punishment was too great to bear. He whined that his life would be in danger as he wandered abroad. Why would anyone want to kill him? Who? His own offspring? His father? His brothers as yet unborn? In God's compassion, which should have broken his proud heart, he received God's mark of protection. Yet he still would not take and offer the God given offering for his sin. Millions have followed in his tracks and perished, more will. Have you accepted the Offering God has provided for your sin? How much we owe Him for His infinite love.

Cain went out on his own from the presence of the God who loved him, and built a city. Cities are wonderful places of community, protection, subsistence and social interactions. God provides cities in the future for His people both in heaven and on earth. But Cain established a city and a civilization without God. All men's cities, despite their obvious benefits humanly speaking, sooner or later become dens of iniquity. From time to time God has intervened in destroying them, but not without fair warning. Examples: Sodom and Gomorrah were warned by angels and destroyed by fire from above. Nineveh was warned by Jonah and repented for a while but was finally destroyed by Babylon. Jerusalem was warned by many prophets and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and later again by the Romans.

Cain and his descendants created a culture of mutual self sufficient independence from God. Lamech, the fifth generation from Cain, had two wives in defiance of God's order and boasted in his murder of a young man who he fancied had insulted him. Truly a "chip off the old block," Cain. Lamech's three sons and one daughter established what scripture terms "the world" as we know it today. Commerce, Arts, Manufacturing, and Ease in pleasant charming surroundings. (Naamah means "charming" or "pleasantness.") Satan, intervening as a god to Adam's descendants, substitutes "the world" for what Adam had lost. But John implores us to "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," 1 John 2:15. Read more about it:

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind,

1 Corinthians 3:19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

2 Corinthians 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not,

Galatians 1:4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world,

1 John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

The choice is ours, the world, its systems, its ways, its god and hell. Or Christ, His salvation, His love, His Church and heaven.

By Ronald Canner, March 24, 2010