

The Fall of Man, Cain and Abel (Genesis 3:6-4:16)

Expository Lessons from the Book of Genesis

I. Adam and Eve Disobey God; First Sins of Mankind (Read Genesis 3:1-13)

- a. Eve is deceived by Satan. She falls to the classic three-fold temptation (compare **1 John 2:16**, “do not love the world”), appealing to the flesh *as well as* to the spirit:
 - i. Sees that it is good for food (lust of the flesh);
 - ii. Pleasant to the eyes (lust of the eyes); and
 - iii. Desirable to make one wise (pride of life).
- b. Eve leads her husband into sin, as well.
- c. Question: How can we have God ‘going for a walk’ in the Garden? (**Genesis 3:8**)
 - i. Paul said in **1 Timothy 6:16** that God is “dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see”.
 - ii. God is everywhere at all times, isn’t he? When Solomon dedicated the temple he said, “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain you.” (**1 Kings 8:27**). So how is it possible for God to be ‘going for a walk in the Garden’? Is that to be taken figuratively or literally?
 - iii. Theophilus (c. 180 AD) wrote, “You will say, then, to me: ‘You said that God ought not to be contained in a place, and how do you now say that He walked in Paradise?’ Hear what I say. The God and Father, indeed, of all cannot be contained, and is not found in a place, for there is no place of His rest; but His Word, through whom He made all things... went to the Garden in the person of God and conversed with Adam. For the divine writing itself teaches us that Adam said that he heard the voice. But what else is this voice but the Word of God, also his Son?” (*Theophilus to Autolytus*, ANF v.2, p.103)
 1. Many early Christian writers understood that when it says that God appeared in a form, or someone ‘saw’ God in the Hebrew Scriptures, it was referring to the Word of God (the Son of God), who was divine, unbegotten, but could appear in human form. (Example: God coming down to visit and have a meal with Abraham in **Genesis 18**). For more on this, see article on ‘Theophany’ (appearance of God) in *Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*, edited by David Bercot.

- d. Both hide, ashamed. Both make excuses when confronted by God
 - i. Adam: “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I ate.” (**Genesis 3:12**)
 - 1. He blames the woman. “The woman...”
 - 2. Indirectly blames God, too. “whom You gave...”
 - ii. The woman blames Satan. “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” (**Genesis 3:13**)

II. Consequences of Adam and Eve’s Sins (Read **Genesis 3:14-19**)

- a. Three different sins involved here (by Satan, Eve and Adam); three different consequences.
- b. Consequence to Satan (**Genesis 3:14-15**)
 - i. ‘Serpent’ will crawl on his belly. (Was it like a lizard with legs before?)
 - ii. Enmity between Satan and his offspring vs. the woman and “her Seed”. **Genesis 3:15** has been called ‘the mother of all prophecies’.
 - 1. **Genesis 3:15** in the LXX: “I will put hatred between you (the serpent/Satan) and the woman, between your seed and her seed (singular). He will give heed to your head, and you will give heed to his heel.”
 - 2. Although not directly applied to Jesus in the New Testament, alluded to by Paul in **Romans 16: 20**, “And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.”
 - iii. Seed of the woman (note: not ‘of the *man and woman*’!) shall bruise Satan’s head (fatal). This foreshadows virgin birth of Jesus. Satan brought down the human race through a woman; he would be defeated through a woman; ‘recapitulation’, or full-circle justice.
 - 1. **Psalm 91:13** says that “You shall tread upon the...cobra...the serpent you shall trample underfoot.” Connection to this prophecy was pointed out by Irenaeus, c. 180 AD. (*Against Heresies*, ANF v.1, p.457)
 - a. Ironically, in **Matthew 4:6** and **Luke 4:9-11** Satan quotes **Psalm 91:12-13** when trying to tempt Jesus: “He shall give his angels charge over you...In their hands they shall bear you up”!)
 - 2. Justin Martyr (c. 160AD) says regarding the birth of Jesus, “He became man by the virgin, in order that the disobedience

which proceeded from the serpent might receive its destruction in the same manner in which it derived its origin. For Eve, who was a virgin and undefiled, having conceived the word of the serpent, brought forth disobedience and death. But the virgin Mary received faith and joy when the angel Gabriel announced the good tidings to her...and to her He has been born...by whom God destroys both the serpent and those angels and men who are like him; but works deliverance from death to those who repent of their wickedness and believe upon Him." (*Dialogue with Trypho*, ANF v.1, p.249)

3. Irenaeus (c. 180 AD), overseer of the church in Lyon (Gaul/France today) said regarding this 'recapitulation', "Thus also it was the knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary. For what the virgin Eve had bound fast through unbelief, this did the virgin Mary set free through faith." (*Against Heresies*, ANF v.1, p.455)
4. Irenaeus draws further parallels:
 - a. both Eve and Mary were virgins;
 - b. both had communication with an angel;
 - c. an important tree centrally involved in both stories: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Adam/Eve), the cross (Jesus);
 - d. impact on the whole human race by their disobedience/obedience;
 - e. "Thus, as the human race fell into bondage to death by means of a virgin, so it is rescued by a virgin; virginal disobedience having been balanced by virginal obedience." (*Against Heresies*, ANF v.1, p.547)
- iv. Satan shall bruise his heel (suffering), but he shall bruise Satan's head
 1. Foreshadows suffering of Jesus at Satan's hand, but
 2. Ultimate defeat of Satan by Jesus, seed of the woman.
- v. God reserves for women a special, honored role in the redemption of the human race.
- c. Consequence to the woman (**Genesis 3:16**)
 - i. Pain in childbirth. In LXX: "I will greatly multiply your pain and your groaning, and in pain you shall bring forth children".

- ii. Her 'desire would be for' her husband; but he would rule over her.
 1. From **Genesis 3:16** in LXX: "Your recourse will be to your husband (or 'you will turn to your husband' or 'you will submit to your husband'), and he shall rule over you."
 2. Construction of **Genesis 3:16** is parallel to **Genesis 4:7**, where 'desire for' (NKJV) appears to pertain to control and submission, not to personal attraction. **Genesis 4:7** (NKJV) reads, "sin lies at the door; its desire is for you, but you, but you should rule over it".
 3. *Relationship between man and woman was changed as a result of the Fall. Before, she was the man's helper; now he would rule over her.*
 4. Question: Was this relationship changed by Jesus under the new covenant?
 5. Read **1 Timothy 2:11-15**. Paul says, "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control."
 - a. Must learn in silence. Submission still required.
 - b. Cannot teach or have authority over a man.
 - c. Reasons given by Paul:
 - i. Adam formed first (**Genesis 2**)
 - ii. The woman was deceived, *not Adam!* (**Genesis 3**).
 1. Adam sinned as well (**Romans 5:12**) through which death came to all men. But Adam's sin was simple disobedience. He went along with his wife, however apparently he was not deceived. (He did not believe Satan's lie that they would 'become like God' if they ate.)
 2. While both Adam and Eve were guilty of sin, their sins were not the same.
 - iii. Reasons for women's submission are rooted in the Creation and the Fall; therefore universal to all people, all churches, across all cultures, for all time.

- iv. The requirement of submission of women to men (wives/husbands) was not changed at the cross, and therefore not changed for us today.
6. Consider reasons for head covering / uncovering when praying or prophesying, in **1 Corinthians 11:1-16**.
 - a. Headship. "The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man." (**1 Cor. 11:3**)
 - b. "Man is not from woman, but woman from man" (**1 Cor. 11:8, Genesis 2:21-22**)
 - c. "Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man." (**1 Cor. 11:9, Genesis 2:18**)
 - d. Head covering teaching is rooted in the **Genesis 2 Creation** account; therefore universal across all churches, cultures and times.
 7. **1 Corinthians 14:34** "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; they are to be submissive as the law also says."
 - a. Question: Paul, where in the Law of Moses does it say that women must be submissive?
 - b. Answer: We see from Paul's writings that he sees this rooted in **Genesis 2** & especially **Genesis 3**.
 8. Consider also what it says in **1 Peter 3:1-7, Ephesians 5:22-33** regarding relationships between wives and husbands. Men have a responsibility to present their wives as radiant brides, to live in an understanding way with them, to treat them with honor and even to lay down their lives for their wives. They must not desert their God-given call to serve as the spiritual leader in the household and church.
- d. Consequences to Adam and his descendants (**Genesis 3:17-19**)
 - i. **Hard labor, toil in life**; the ground is cursed. No more just picking fruit in the Garden!
 - ii. **Death**. You came from the ground, and will return to it.
 1. Eve may have sinned first, but all are descended from Adam. Therefore all men face death as a result of his sin (Adam could have said 'no thanks' when his wife offered him the fruit).
 2. *Why must we die?* Methodius (c. 290) wrote about why men die instead of living forever. He compared it to an artisan who created a beautiful gold statue which was later mutilated by an

evil person. So the artist decided to melt down the statue and re-mold it, to restore its original beauty. After giving this example Methodius explains:

- a. “Now, God’s plan seems to be similar. Upon seeing man, his most beautiful work, corrupted by envious treachery, he could not bear to leave the man in such a condition. For he loved man, and did not want man to remain blemished forever and to carry blame for all eternity. So he dissolves man again back to his original materials. In this way, by remolding man, all of man’s blemishes can waste away and disappear. So the melting down of the statue corresponds to death and dissolution of the body. And the remolding of the statue corresponds to the resurrection after death.” (ANF v. 6, p.365)
- iii. Good news for us, though, through Jesus. Read **Romans 5:12-19**. “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned....Adam...is a type of Him who was to come....for if by one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift of grace by the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many....If by one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ...For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.”
1. Death came from Adam, but “all sinned”. Therefore we all bear responsibility for our situation!
 2. Jesus is the ‘Second Adam’, the one man whose decision (obedience vs. disobedience) would change the fate of many who were to descend from him. Adam in that way foreshadowed Christ.
 3. Consider other ways in which Adam may have prefigured Christ. Tertullian (c. 210) mentioned other possible parallels.
 - a. Adam’s sleep (in **Genesis 2**) foreshadowed the death of Christ. During that time,
 - b. “From the wound inflicted on his side might, in like manner (as Eve was formed) be typified the church, the true ‘mother of the living’” (*A Treatise on the Soul*, ANF v.3, p.222)

- c. (Places in the New Testament where the church is referred to as 'the bride of Christ', include **Ephesians 5:22-32**, **2 Corinthians 11:2** and **Revelation 19:7-9**.)

III. Expulsion from the Garden (Read **Genesis 3:20-24**)

- a. God shows kindness and provides clothing for them
- b. Cast out of the Garden; way to the tree of life blocked. Forever?
 - i. Jesus gives us encouraging news in **Revelation 2:7**: "He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

IV. Cain and Abel (Read **Genesis 4:1-16**)

- a. Cain the first son; Abel the younger.
- b. Cain farms the land, brings fruit of harvest to sacrifice to the Lord.
- c. Abel is a shepherd, brings firstborn of his flock to sacrifice.
- d. "The Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering."
 - i. What was the problem with Cain's offering? Was it because it was not an animal sacrifice? Because his heart was not right? In the LXX **Genesis 4:7** says, "Did you not sin, even though you brought it rightly, but did not divide it rightly?" (Maybe the way the sacrifice was presented or divided/cut up was not the way God wanted it to be done? Hard to know for sure.)
 - ii. Cain gets angry, "his countenance fell". He is discouraged, depressed.
 - 1. God's response: "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted?" God's perspective was that Cain was doing something that he knew was wrong. He just needed to repent and do what he knew was the right thing to do.
 - a. Certainly there are many causes of anger and depression (depression is sometimes referred to as 'anger without enthusiasm'). No one-size-fits-all solution.
 - b. However, good place to start is to ask myself, "Is there something I am doing that I KNOW is wrong? Anything that I need to repent of?" That was the source of the first instance of depression in Scripture.

2. Instead of repenting, Cain resents his more-righteous brother. (Similar to opposition later faced by Joseph, Moses, David, Daniel and Jesus.) Plots to kill him.
- iii. After murdering his brother, Cain confronted by God.
1. God: "Where is Abel your brother?"
 2. Cain: (lies) "I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper?" (same word used for a prison guard)
 3. God: "The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground." (assume speaking figuratively)
- iv. Lessons for us from Cain's life.
1. John calls us to love our brothers; do not resent those who are more righteous than we are, but to love all our brothers.
 - a. Read **1 John 3:10-12**: "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. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, 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."
 - i. Do you resent your brother or sister who is more righteous than yourself?
 - ii. We should instead admire, imitate and repent!
 - b. Continuing in **1 John 3:14-17**: "...He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?"
 - i. We need to love our brothers, lay down our lives, share our possessions, be children of God; not like Cain!

2. **Jude v. 11**, warns of ungodly people who creep into the fellowship unnoticed, “Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain.”
- e. Lessons from Abel’s life and death.
- i. In **Hebrews 12**, Christians are admonished to live lives devoted to righteousness, peace with others, and holiness. We have a greater, higher calling than they had under the old covenant. One example: **Hebrews 12:24** says that the blood of Jesus now “speaks better things than the blood of Abel”. Abel’s blood ‘cried out from the ground’, perhaps figuratively, presumably accusing his brother of sin or calling for justice.
 1. As the old song says, “Abel’s blood for vengeance pleaded to the skies; but the blood of Jesus for our pardon cries”.
 - ii. Jesus refers to Abel as the first martyr, a righteous man.
 1. **Matthew 23:34-35** To the Jewish leaders Jesus said, “Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah...”
 - a. **Hebrews 11:4** also clearly refers to Abel as being righteous, through his faith manifested by what he did. “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; and through it being dead he still speaks.” He is an example for us, of what it means to live by faith.
 2. But doesn’t the Bible say in places like **Romans 3:10** (Paul quoting **Psalms 14** from the LXX) and **Isaiah 64:6** that no one is righteous? So where does all this “righteous blood” come from that Jesus was speaking about in **Matthew 23**?
 - a. The word in the NT Greek for ‘righteous’ is **dikaios**. Same word used in the LXX (Greek Old Testament).
 3. Clearly Jesus did not believe that the Fall extinguished all righteousness from the earth. While death reigned after Adam, all commit sins, none are flawless; nevertheless there clearly was something good remaining in man after the fall.

4. The Calvinist doctrine of ‘total depravity’, still held by many Protestants, is clearly wrong. (Calvin taught that the fall was absolute and total; that man could do nothing good after Adam’s sin). Consider:
 - a. Abel (righteous man, who shed righteous blood).
 - b. The term ‘righteous’ is applied to Noah in **Genesis 6:9** (LXX): “Noah was a righteous man, who was perfect (*complete*) in his generation, pleasing to God.”
 - c. Job, whom God described as “blameless and upright, one who fears God and shuns evil”. (**Job 1:8, 2:3**)
 - d. **Ezekiel 18** and **Psalm 34** speak of people who were (and were not) called righteous, in one sense, under the old covenant (living in obedience to God).
 - e. When Jesus calls us to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”, he means we need to live righteous, obedient lives (not just assume that Jesus’ righteousness is imputed onto us regardless of how we live). Certainly we can do nothing without Jesus (**John 15:5**) However, there were people God called righteous in the Old Testament; we need to follow their example and live righteous, obedient lives as well.
- iii. Abel’s martyrdom, like that of other heroes of faith in the Old Testament, inspired Christians during times of persecution.
 1. Cyprian (c. 250) wrote, “Beloved brethren, let us imitate righteous Abel, who initiated martyrdoms. For he was the first to be slain for righteousness’ sake.” (ANF v.5, p.348)
- iv. Parallels between Abel and Jesus:
 1. Righteous man;
 2. Shepherd;
 3. Offered blood sacrifice (firstborn of the flock) that was acceptable to God;
 4. Martyred; murdered by envious brother(s) who resented his righteousness and did not want to repent; and
 5. His blood still “cries out”!