



In the Beginning

A study of Genesis Chapters 1 - 11

Christian Life Assembly

Jim Hoffman

The Journey 2018

In the Beginning

- Genesis 4:1 Now Adam had sexual relations with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When she gave birth to Cain, she said, “With the Lord’s help, I have produced a man!” 2 Later she gave birth to his brother and named him Abel. When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground. 3 When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the Lord. 4 Abel also brought a gift—the best portions of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The Lord accepted Abel and his gift, 5 but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected. 6 “Why are you so angry?” the Lord asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? 7 You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”



In the Beginning

- Imagine the hope, the wonder of Adam and Eve when Cain was born – all of the normal amazement at the tiny fingers and toes PLUS “could this be the promised One?”.
- If anyone has ever known the difference between light and darkness it would have been Adam and Eve.
- They had God’s promise that “the seed of the woman” would crush the head of the devil and then try to grasp how desperately they wanted to regain Paradise.



In the Beginning

- We know how this story goes – Cain and his offering are both rejected.
- Do not think for a minute that Cain was somehow in the dark as to what God required – God is going to judge him harshly and He would not do that unjustly.
- There are no verses between Genesis 3 and 4 to tell us all that Cain and Able were told, but we know they had been instructed by God's reaction to their offerings.



In the Beginning

- Hebrews 11:4 It was by faith that Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God than Cain did. Abel's offering gave evidence that he was a righteous man, and God showed his approval of his gifts.
- Abel is commended for his faith – his faith in what? Would it not have to be his faith in God's word?
- Adam and Eve saw the proper offering for sin right after the fall, and it would seem inconceivable to me that the first parents would have kept such eternal truth from their sons.



In the Beginning

- And then we read this, “but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard”. (NASB)
- God had no regard for what? “for Cain, and for his offering” – we expect that God had no regard for his offering, but no regard for the person Cain as well?
- The Hebrew word for “regard” is “shawaw” and it has several meanings.



In the Beginning

- “shawaw” can be translated to mean a couple of things that fit what is going on.
- “to gaze upon with compassion”, “to look away, cause gaze to turn away”, “to look upon in dismay”.
- We rightly get the sense that Cain and his offering were disgusting to God – so much so that He didn’t even want to look at him.



In the Beginning

- Here is where the liberal theologian might say, “why can’t God be the bigger one here and just overlook Cain’s mistake?”.
- For one, Cain did not make a mistake – he knew what God required, but he decided that he knew better.
- Secondly, remember what the offerings are for – they are for the covering of sin and sin is a big, big, deal!



In the Beginning

- Cain is the first person in history to fall into the trap of thinking, “I know what God said, but”.
- Cain and his offering are rejected because he knew what God required and ignored it.
- Hardly any different than the one who thinks they know better how to please God than God does – Cain does what every sinner does, he brings the work of his hands.



In the Beginning

- Cain's offering was rejected by God because it was the wrong thing.
- Cain was rejected because he didn't obey God – Cain could have benefited greatly perhaps by what Samuel would write centuries later.
- 1st Samuel 15:22 But Samuel replied, "What is more pleasing to the Lord: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! *Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams.*



In the Beginning

- The question becomes this, “why, were Cain and his offering not regarded by God?”.
- There was a standard for the offering - it had to be as Abel brought, “the best portions of the firstborn lambs from his flock.”
- The blood of the best “innocent” the sinner had available.



In the Beginning

- And was there a standard for the one bringing the offering – yes, the one offering a sin offering had to be willing to give his best as a sacrifice to God.
- In other words, the one offering the sacrifice had to have regard for God.
- Cain's offering showed what was in his heart – He had an “I know better” than God attitude, or at best one that cried out, “my preferences are just as good as God's”.



In the Beginning

- Again, why is it that God had no regard for Cain or his offering?
- Because it was not as though Cain didn't know how to approach God, it was that He didn't care how he approached God.
- Cain was not just mistaken, he was willful in rejecting the word of God and started to sing the Frank Sinatra song, "I Did It My Way".



In the Beginning

- One of the biggest criticisms the Christian church endures is that we are not inclusive enough in our doctrine of salvation – just One way.
- What Cain did was what all of the false religions of the world do – they invoke the doctrine of “there are many ways if we are sincere”.
- Cain brought what he could produce and the best we ever produce is “filthy rags”.



In the Beginning

- The Lord asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? 7 You will be accepted if you do what is right.”
- Cain is not sorry that he brought the wrong offering, he is angry – as if to say to God, “how dare you accept my brother’s offering and reject mine?”
- Though he is angry at God for his own sin, look at God’s posture towards Cain – God offers him a “do over”.



In the Beginning

- “You will be accepted if you do what is right.”
- Look at God’s offer to Cain – you sinned, you’ve been exposed and rejected, but there is this thing called “repentance” that is open to you.
- This was God’s posture towards Cain and remains His posture towards all sinners even to this day - “You will be accepted if you do what is right.” (an offer that never expires until we do)



In the Beginning

- “But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”
- 1st Peter 5:8 Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.
- Sin is “crouching at the door” – it is always around, will always be enticing, and will rule you if you let it.



In the Beginning

- Genesis 4:8 One day Cain suggested to his brother, “Let’s go out into the fields.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him. 9 Afterward the Lord asked Cain, “Where is your brother? Where is Abel?” “I don’t know,” Cain responded. “Am I my brother’s guardian?” 10 But the Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground! 11 Now you are cursed and banished from the ground, which has swallowed your brother’s blood. 12 No longer will the ground yield good crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth.” 13 Cain replied to the Lord, “My punishment is too great for me to bear! 14 You have banished me from the land and from your presence; you have made me a homeless wanderer. Anyone who finds me will kill me!” 15 The Lord replied, “No, for I will give a sevenfold punishment to anyone who kills you.” Then the Lord put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him.



In the Beginning

- Cain is not persuaded by God's admonition – he decides instead to murder his brother. (no accident, he attacked his brother and killed him)
- Cain killed Abel for one of the same reasons the Jews killed Jesus – he couldn't stand the exposure of his sin against the righteousness of his brother.
- Like the Jews of Jesus' day, he could have repented, but he wouldn't.



In the Beginning

- God comes after Cain – “Afterward the Lord asked Cain, “Where is your brother? Where is Abel?”
- God never asks questions to gain information – He asks questions to expose the truth.
- Cain gets defensive, lies, and then asks if he is responsible for the whereabouts of his brother and in this case, he is responsible for Abel’s body being in the ground.



In the Beginning

- A quick sidebar – Abel is now the first person in history to learn by experience what he had believed by faith.
- The first person in history to go to heaven.
- Hebrews 11:4 It was by faith that Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God than Cain did. Abel's offering gave evidence that he was a righteous man, and God showed his approval of his gifts. Although Abel is long dead, he still speaks to us by his example of faith.



In the Beginning

- God continues to pursue Cain, “But the Lord said, What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground!”
- The phrase, “from the ground” is why it seems likely that Cain quickly buried his brother.
- Having never seen death before, he probably buries Abel in a shallow grave to cover up his crime.



In the Beginning

- God pronounces His judgment on him and Cain's reaction is classic – “My punishment is too great for me to bear! 14 You have banished me from the land and from your presence; you have made me a homeless wanderer. Anyone who finds me will kill me!”
- Why is it that, in the mind of Cain, when he is judged, it is somehow God's fault that his life will now be in jeopardy and be so hard?



In the Beginning

- It is likely that at the Great White Throne, similar scenarios will play out. (weepers and gnashers)
- The wicked will be judged by their works – what could be more fair than to receive what you have earned?
- And yet, if Cain is the typical sinner, God will probably be blamed in some twisted way as the unsaved dead are cast into the Lake of Fire.



In the Beginning

- Cain complains that now everyone he meets will want to kill him and that is just more than he should have to bear. 😊
- So, where did all of these people come from who will now want to kill him?
- There can be only one answer – they are his brothers, sisters, nieces, and nephews.



In the Beginning

- This goes again to the lack of information we have regarding the amount of time that passes between the births of Cain and Abel and the events of Genesis 4.
- This is why I tend to believe Cain and Abel were not as young as many think – if enough time had passed for Cain to be worried that anyone who finds him would want to kill him, then there must have been a considerable population in the world.



In the Beginning

- If Cain and Abel were not young men when the Genesis 4 events happened, then it is also likely that this was not their first offerings.
- It is therefore, quite likely that Cain had brought the right offering before – perhaps many times before.
- What changed that he is now rejected by God – just one big nasty, ugly thing, sin.



In the Beginning

- Cain and Abel were probably both married with children and perhaps even grandchildren at the time of the murder.
- Later in chapter 4 we will read of the birth of Seth, but Seth could not have been only the third child of Adam and Eve.
- He became the appointed one from whom the “seed of the woman” would arise, but he may have been their 50th child for all we know.



In the Beginning

- God continues to be gracious to this sinner named “Cain” and marks him so that others would know that vengeance is not for them to exact.
- Romans 12:19 Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, “I will take revenge; I will pay them back,” says the Lord.
- And everyone wants to know what the “mark” was on Cain, but we are just not told.



In the Beginning

- Some have thought that it was a scar or a tattoo, but what the mark was is not as important as what it signified.
- It signified and teaches that God will not allow others to take vengeance on Cain – that is never to be a personal thing.
- Later on in history the right of punishment for crimes is given to human governments with the ultimate justice against criminals coming from God Himself.



Questions

