

Building on Biblical Foundations
Genesis 4:6-23

“After Its Own Kind”

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There is a parable that goes something like this:

A grandfather is talking with his grandson.

The grandfather says, “In life, there are two wolves inside of us which are always at battle.

One is a good wolf, who represents things like kindness, bravery, and love.

The other is a bad wolf, who represents things like greed, hatred, and fear”.

The grandson stops and thinks about it for a second then he looks up at his grandfather and says, “Grandfather, which one will win?”

The grandfather replies, “The one you feed.”

Choices. . . we all have choices every day. This is nothing new. We can draw closer to God or further away. We can chose to be sons and daughters of the Light or we can be children of darkness.

The image on your bulletin is a picture of a lamb and a wolf. The lamb represents the Lamb of God and his kingdom – the wolf represents Satan and his dominion of darkness.

You can feed the wolf. Or you can feed the Lamb.

The one you feed is the one that grows. The one you starve is the one that shrinks.

The one you choose to follow, to serve, to obey is the one who will not only take up residence inside you – but we also beget after his own kind in you. This is the fruit that Jesus speaks of. A good tree will produce good fruit and a bad tree will produce bad fruit.

What does any of this have to do with our story of Cain? Ah. . . let’s see.

Genesis 4:6-7

“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 him.”

We see that the Lord gives Cain an opportunity to share his frustration. He already knows the answers – he always does – but the Lord will give us an opportunity to tell him how we feel, to voice our opinion in the matter.

However, before Cain gives an answer - the Lord offers him a way back. Again knowing that Cain’s heart is not right before him, he reaches out to Cain with the way back. . . he offers not only redemption here but instructs Cain on HOW to achieve it. Remember we discussed this last week – the Lord is most concerned with our hearts. And this is something we cannot hide from him.

In essence God’s says to Cain:

If you do well Cain – I will accept you as well as your brother. Therefore repent of this, and lift up your countenance. Stop sulking about.

He warns Cain of sin’s desire to overwhelm him, to master him – it is crouching at his door like a beast seeking to devour him.

Seeing this threat, God gives Cain warning. He gives each of us warnings.

Further, God's acceptance of Abel's offering did not change his birthright. Cain is still the elder and Abel still younger, why then should Cain be so angry?

Cain has no one to be angry with but himself . . .but all too often when we have no one to blame but ourselves we become **all the more angry** with another. We take out our anger on someone else. In anger, jealousy, shame, fear . . . we attack those around us, shifting the blame.

For Cain this anger grows into a murderous rage and . . .

Genesis 4:8

“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.”

They are out in the field together and begin to discuss what happened with the sacrifice. In anger, jealousy, hatred (enmity?) Cain murders his brother.

Wesleys' notes: "The scripture tells us the reason wherefore he slew him, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous; so that herein he [showed] himself to be a child of the devil, as being an enemy to all righteousness. Observe, the first that dies is a saint, the first that went to the grave, went to heaven. God would secure to himself the first fruits, the first born to the dead, that first opened the womb into another world."

There shall be enmity (hostility, hatred) between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent (Satan).

The seed of the woman - slide - *the children of righteousness* -
The seed of Satan - slide - *those who do his bidding*.

Already we see this hostility at work in humanity. Cain is full of hatred for his brother. His hostility finds an outlet and seizes the opportunity to be released upon innocent Abel.

No sooner has Cain killed Abel and the Lord confronts him.

Genesis 4: 9-10

"And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?"

And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." KJV

Here we go again – The Lord asks Cain a question that needs no answer. But how does Cain respond?

He lies. Lest we have pity on Cain – let me ask . . .

Who is the father of lies?

Jesus when rebuking the unbelieving Jews who were seeking to kill him had this say to them. . .

John 8:44

"You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

The devil – Satan – is the father of lies and a murderer.

Cain – by his behavior – is showing us who he is. He is showing us who his father is – of what seed he has come from.

He had a choice. He chose NOT to repent, not to turn away from the sin that was crouching at his door, he chose to surrender to his anger, his rebellion, his WAY.

He dares to lie to God – and what of it? God immediately curses Cain.

Genesis 4:10-12

“And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.”

God curses Cain by sending him forth as a wanderer and a fugitive. He is no longer a farmer. The ground will not yield unto him.

Genesis 4:13-14

“And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.”

Cain believes his punishment is too great. But what do you think?

He is full of pride, rebellion, anger, hostility. He murdered his brother in cold blood, and then lied to God when confronted. Do you think this was too much of a punishment? I personally think this was lenient. Good thing I am not God.

But God, perhaps showing his love for Adam and Eve, perhaps extending mercy upon Cain, offers Cain a concession:

Genesis 4:15

“And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.”

Of course this raises a few questions:

1. What is the mark that is put upon Cain?
2. Who is “out there” to kill him?

Interesting questions. Scripture is silent. So all we have are speculations. I will sidestep those and let your imaginations fill in the blanks. Until God shows us otherwise, we will have to leave this as we found it – with a few unanswered questions. This will not be the last time we leave questions unanswered. I will not entertain from the pulpit theories and musings that cannot be confirmed through scripture or in historical context.

Genesis 4:16

“And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.”

Where is Nod? What is Nod?

Nod also the same word in Hebrew as Nowd means vagrancy.

Nod can be interpreted as a physical location (east of Eden) and a spiritual condition (separation from the presence of God). Both of these are true of Cain.

For the physical location some archaeologists suggest:

That Eden is that it was located somewhere in the Near East (Mesopotamia), sometimes referred to as the Fertile Crescent and cradle of ancient civilization. Adam and Eve would have gone east of this when they were banished from the Garden. . . so starting from east of Mesopotamia and moving further east as Cain was sent. . . puts Nod somewhere in the middle east near present day Iraq or Iran.

The spiritual condition that is Nod:

If Eden was the ideal of God’s plan and good creation, Nod was the complete opposite, a counterfeit, anti-Eden, and a physical and spiritual representation of man’s willful rebellion, disobedience, and separation from the God of creation.

According to Matthew Henry, the land of Nod represents “the restlessness and uneasiness of his (Cain’s) own spirit in ‘the land of vagabonds.’”

God offered Cain the opportunity to turn from his sin. . . to repent before sin consumed him. But Cain rejected God’s offer and instead allowed sin to master him – resulting in the murder of Abel.

Historian Flavius Josephus writes in the Antiquities of the Jews that Cain chose to “increase his wickedness” and “augment his household substance with much wealth, by rapine and violence.”

Genesis 4:17-19

And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch. And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech. And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

Cain builds the city of Enoch - named after his first born son - as an attempt to exalt himself and create his own version of Eden. This is not the prophet Enoch who walked with God and then was taken up into heaven.

As we will shortly see, Cain's children and children's children continue the seed from Cain. . . begetting after their own kind.

As Cain did they build industrialized cities and seek new technology, but to satisfy their own vanity and greed, never for the glory of God.

“Worldly things,” according to Matthew Henry, “are the only things that carnal, wicked people set their hearts upon, and are most clever and industrious about. So it was with this race of Cain.”

Theologian Jacques Ellul writes in *The Meaning of the City*, “instead of a place where humans lived in relationship with God, deeply connected to Him and His creation, Cain built a place where people could live without God and disconnect from His creation.”

So Lamech – the great, great, great grandson of Cain – takes two wives

1. Adah who bears two sons Jabal and Jubal
2. Zillah who bears a son Tubalcain and a daughter Naamah.

Genesis 4:20-23

And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle.

And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.

And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah.

Jabal = Father of tent dwellers and cattlemen.

Jubal = Father of Musicians

Tubalcain = instructor of fabricators in copper and iron

And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.

If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

Lamech is now several generations from Cain but we see the same wickedness in his heart. He mocks God with his statement that she should be avenged seventy and seven fold.

Why? It is apparent by his taking of two wives – the first biblical account of this – and by the fact that all we know of his children is that **they have skills that are industrious and produce wealth** – nothing of the Lord or his instruction is mentioned. The generations from Cain are not improving with succession – they would seem to be degrading even further, as their separation from God increases with time and practice.

What can we take away from today's message?

1. There is always a choice – to submit to God and do life his way or to succumb to sin and let it devour you.
2. God is all-knowing – there is nothing we can hide from him.
3. There are two kinds of people in the world at all times – the seed of righteousness (the children of God) and the seed of unrighteousness (the children who do Satan's bidding)
4. Even when we stumble God is there reaching out to restore us – but we still need to humble ourselves, confess our sin and receive his offer of forgiveness. Even for those who rebel there is an offer to become children of God.
5. If we choose to walk away from God (as Cain did), our separation from him increases with each generation.

Every day there is a choice set before us. Which will you choose today? Will you feed the lamb? Or Will you feed the wolf? Will you submit to the Lord? Or Will you be devoured by Sin?

Each will beget after its own kind.