

GENESIS

The Murder of Abel (Genesis 4:1-15)

We begin this lesson by examining Cain's sin in committing the murder of his brother Abel.

Read Genesis 4:1-16 and consider the following questions:

1. Can you identify some parallels between the fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis Chapter 3 and Cain's murder of Abel in Chapter 4?
 - a. ANSWER 1: God asked both Adam and Cain, "Where are you?" In the case of Cain, God asked him where was his brother Abel. In both examples, God of course knew exactly where they were.
 - b. ANSWER 2: God asked both Adam and Cain what they had done—again, even though he knew exactly what they had done.
 - c. ANSWER 3: Adam did not deny that he had sinned. However, Cain would not acknowledge his sin.
 - d. ANSWER 4: Abel has returned to the ground, just as God told Adam that man would return to the dust of the ground.
 - e. ANSWER 5: The ground is now cursed because of the spilling of blood.
2. How do the following verses apply to Cain's life and sin?
 - a. Hebrews 4:13
 - i. ANSWER: When God confronts Cain and tells him he knows that Cain slew able, it shows us that nothing we do is hidden from God, absolutely nothing. *"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."*
 - b. 1 John 2:15-16
 - i. ANSWER: These scriptures tell us that the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are all worldly emotions that drive us to sin; it also asserts that the love for the Father is not in them. We observe that Cain's selfish pride makes him so enraged that God rejected his offering while accepting Abel's, that he murders his brother. Clearly the "love for the Father" was not in Cain, and he was blinded by his own pride.
 - c. Romans 1:20-21
 - i. ANSWER: From the very beginning, God has been plainly known to mankind, including Adam and Cain. But sin darkens our hearts, and our thinking becomes "futile," causing us to turn our backs on God, just as Cain did. Sin drives man away from God, but the blood of Jesus provides restoration, if we will accept it. Adam admitted his sin and continued to walk in God's grace. Cain denied it, did not repent, and spent the rest of his earthly life as a wanderer.
 - d. Luke 21:1-4
 - i. ANSWER: These verses speak to the intent of the heart when it comes to presenting an offering to God. It's not the offering itself, but the heart of the person making the offering that matters to God.
 - e. Psalm 51:16-17
 - i. ANSWER: God doesn't desire a large offering or sacrifice; He desires a contrite heart and genuine love. We should make sacrifices and offerings to Him out of love and for no other reason. Cain never understood this.
 - f. Galatians 5:22-24
 - i. ANSWER: While the ways of the world lead to lawlessness and death, (Romans 1:28-32), God's ways lead to life, eternal life, and provide a model for how we are to live, as articulated in these verses. Cain was following his selfish lusts, which stood in contrast to the fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-24.

As evidenced in this lesson, Cain's heart was not right with God, and when God confronted him with his sin, Cain did not repent. Cain's concerns were for himself, and not about his relationship with God. It is ironic that Cain, who murdered his brother, now fears that the same thing will happen to him. However, God, in His great grace, provides protection for Cain even though Cain has turned his back on God (Genesis 4:16). We need to watch that we do not allow sin to rule over us and in so doing turn our hearts away from God, or we too would be living in the land as a wanderer, never to see God again.

The Exile of Cain (Genesis 4:16-26)

Banned from the land of Eden, Cain becomes a wanderer. He has a wife, and we discover that, in the land of Nod, there are already people living there, people who will not harm Cain because of the mark God placed on him. But, where did all those people come from, and where is "the land of Nod?"

As we examine this text, we note that when God banished Cain, Cain left Eden and went east to wander the land. The name Nod means "wanderer," and is likely named after Cain who wandered this land. Cain would have left Eden with his wife and any children that he had. There could have been many—however we are not told how many. Nor are we provided his wife's name nor how long Cain and his wife had been married. We don't even know Cain's age. However, we do know one thing about Cain...

Read Genesis 4:16-26 and respond to the following questions:

3. What does Genesis 4:17 tell us about Cain, who was now living in the land of Nod?
 - a. ANSWER: Cain was building a city. One moment he is going east leaving Eden, and the next moment, he has a wife and is building a city.
4. How did Cain know how to build a city?
 - a. ANSWER 1: Cain, as mentioned in earlier lessons, like his other brothers, had skills as did all his descendants. For example, from Genesis Chapters 3 and 4, we know that they knew how to worship, and they knew what was proper worship and what was not. They also had a common language; they could talk to each other as we saw in the dialogue between Cain and Abel. As this was all pre-flood, we do not know what kinds of tools and instructions God would have provided to them, but we do know that each person came with skills. See Genesis 4:20-22, for example.
 - b. ANSWER 2: We can see from Genesis 4:17 that the people of that time were organized; they knew what a city was, for example. We also know from later readings in Genesis that at this time, they all spoke the same language. The sense of "race" or "culture" and the presence of multiple languages that we have today did not exist then. During Cain's time they were all directly descended from Adam and Eve and spoke one language.
 - c. ANSWER 3: What is clear from the passage is that time had passed since Cain and his family began wandering, enough time that his offspring, and their offspring, were becoming numerous and Cain was building the city for them which he named after his son Enoch (Genesis 4:17). Meanwhile back in Eden, Adam and Eve continued to have "other sons and daughters." The land of Eden as well as the land of Nod were both growing with people, all having one language.

Where was the land of Nod?

The text tells us that Nod was "east of Eden." So, in order to place Nod's geographical location, we need to understand where Eden was (as the land of Nod would be east of it). For the land of Eden, there are two primary views. One view applies the description found in Genesis 2:10 and applying it literally, using the two existing rivers, Tigris and Euphrates; thereby beginning in northern Turkey, joining together in modern Iraq, and emptying into the Persian Gulf.

The second view also takes a literal approach; however, it views this scripture in consideration of the flood described in Genesis Chapters 6-8. That view posits that the original geography from the time of creation no longer existed after the flood. Correspondingly, it assumes that Moses used the knowledge of the day, and the names of the rivers at the time of the writing, to describe the rivers that flowed through the Garden, wherever it was located. This view recognizes that the rivers, mountains, canyons, and gulfs were likely different before the flood compared to that which we see and know today.

The existence of the Tigris and Euphrates today is probably evidence that they survived the flood and provided Moses good geographical markers for the pre-flood land of Eden and the garden.

Based on the above, the best guess as to the location of the land of Nod would be around the Persian Gulf area eastward.

In summary, we see that Cain's inability to control sin in his life led to his banishment from Eden—and more importantly from God. An unrepentant Cain went on to the land of Nod, and his descendants continued to allow sin to rule them as they slide into a decadent and evil lifestyle, ending the chapter with another murder as recorded in Genesis 4:23-24.

In the closing verses of Chapter 4, we read that Adam and Eve had another son whom they named Seth, and he had a son named Enosh. The chapter closes with, "at that time people began to call on the name of the LORD." (Genesis 4:25-26)

In the next lesson, we will look at Seth and his descendants and see God's great grace displayed once again.

In Christ,

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