

## Lesson 4 – 21 February 2010

### Contrasts Between the Godly and the Ungodly

**Lesson Scope:** [Genesis 4 and 5](#).

#### Lesson Focus

Since the Fall, a tendency toward sin has remained with man. The power of choice has not gone away but all men everywhere begin life toward choosing sin. This inclination often becomes a habit, which only reinforces the strength of sin. Even so, some still choose against the flesh to worship their Maker in holiness and obedience.

This fallen yet free condition of man existed as history began outside of Eden. Cain and Seth represent the only possible types of people, either profane or sacred. The generations of Cain were characterized by lawlessness just as those of Seth appear to have carried the fear of the Lord in their hearts. This difference is the primary point of distinction among all men.

Man's heart determines his response to the issues of life, the godly seek fellowship with the Lord and enjoy His blessing, but the ungodly rebel against Him and fall under His condemnation. The story of Cain and Abel take up the bulk of this lesson. While Seth is less prominent, it was from his family that Enoch and Noah came. There is great importance in having faithful parents, but do not forget that the value of heritage is limited.

Using our free will is not merely an exercise in choosing to not commit sins. God calls us to seek Him and love Him, which is an active choice for something and not simply abstinence from evil. We may not be satisfied with merely outward form. Our worship needs to include all our heart, mind, soul, and strength.

**Lesson Aim:** To contrast the godly and ungodly in their worship and their walk.

**Theme Verse:** [1 John 3:10](#).

In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness in not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

## Lesson Text.

### The Descent of Darkness

#### Genesis 4:1-11

And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. <sup>2</sup>And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. <sup>3</sup>And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. <sup>4</sup>And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: <sup>5</sup>But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. <sup>6</sup>And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? <sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>And the LORD said unto Cain, Where *is* Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: *Am* I my brother's keeper? <sup>10</sup>And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. <sup>11</sup>And now *art* thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

#### Genesis 4:13-16

And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment *is* greater than I can bear. <sup>14</sup>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. <sup>15</sup>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. <sup>16</sup>And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

#### Genesis 4:19

And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one *was* Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

#### Genesis 4:23-24

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. <sup>24</sup>If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

### **A Ray of Hope**

#### **Genesis 4:25-26**

And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, *said she*, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. <sup>26</sup>And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

#### **Genesis 5:22-24**

And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: <sup>23</sup>And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: <sup>24</sup>And Enoch walked with God: and he *was* not; for God took him.

#### **Genesis 5:28-29**

And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son: <sup>29</sup>And he called his name Noah, saying, This *same* shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed.

### **Questions for Study**

#### **The Descent of Darkness**

1. Contrast Abel's offering with Cain's.
2. Enumerate the vices that ruled Cain.
3. Was Cain's punishment equal to his crime? Explain.
4. What can we learn about Cain from his choices in later life (4:16-17)?
5. What does Lamech's speech reveal about him'?

#### **A Ray of Hope**

6. Describe a man who calls upon the Name of the Lord (Gen.4:26).
7. How is the fear of the Lord a fundamental distinction among men?
8. Is godliness a matter of heritage? Explain.

### **Analyzing the Passage**

Eve named her sons Cain, meaning either "to get" or "to make," Abel, meaning "breath" or "vapor," and Seth, meaning "ranted."

The mark given to Cain (Gen. 4:15) was intended as a mark of protection, not a stigma.

The generations of Cain (Gen.4:16-24) were successful in worldly

achievements while the generations of Seth (Gen. 5:6-32) stand out for their piety and many children.

## **Principles and Applications**

### **The Descent of Darkness**

1. All men, despite their fallen state, have the opportunity to choose right (Gen. 4:1-2). There was no difference in the origins of Cain and Abel. They had the same heritage and the same environment. They both took the same opportunity to worship, yet one was accepted and the other rejected. Why? Because one chose to heed God's directives, and the other chose to take his own way.

2. The ungodly man's attempts to worship are marked by self-will (Gen. 4:3). Carnal religious people are ever ready to give God everything except what He wants. The Israelites, after the captivity, were willing to adhere to external rules while never having a true love of God. God calls again and again to such people, "Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar: and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee?" (Malachi 1:7). Apart from repentance, these ungodly religious people will hear the divine words of severance, "I never knew you: depart from Me."

3. The godly man's worship includes obedience (Gen.4:4). Obedience is better than sacrifice. Our whole life is essentially worship. True, we need to set aside time for specific acts of worship. Yet, all we do reflects our heart's condition before God. Our works proclaim who we are and what we love. Jesus denounced those who proclaimed Him "Lord" but failed to do the things He told them to do.

4. Persistent self will prevents the ungodly from responding favourably to divine entreaty (Gen. 4:5-7). "Sow a thought, reap an act; / Sow an act, reap a habit: / Sow a habit, reap a character, / Sow a character, reap a destiny."

Persisting in self-will cannot leave the soul neutral. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient" (Romans 1:28). What an awful condition!

5. A man's, actions, reveal his character (Gen. 4:8). Just prior to murdering Abel, Cain had been told that he would be accepted if he did well.

God gave Cain a second chance, but rather than offer the blood of an animal from pure motives, Cain shed the blood of his righteous brother. 'And

wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil. and his brother's righteous" (1 John 3:12).

6. The shedding of innocent blood polluted the earth (Gen. 4:9-11). We see this clearly in Genesis, but do we see it so clearly in the present day? The destruction of unborn children and frequent homicides cannot remain without consequences. Abortion, euthanasia, crimes that go unpunished—these lead societies to a decadence that likely eclipses that of Cain's haughty City. What judgment lies in wait for these iniquities!

7. The ungodly finally remove themselves from God and His requirements (Gen. 4:15-16). Cain went out from the presence of the Lord. Cursed to be a wanderer, Cain did indeed wander for a time. Then away from God, he established a city and rooted himself in one place, there to pursue an ungodly lifestyle. This is similar to today when God's laws are blatantly ignored. Divorce and remarriage takes place with easy conscience, and ungodly celebrities flaunt their scandals to a watching world. How do we compare? When God asks for repentance and confession, when we are called to love our brother and help the needy, when we are commanded to pray without ceasing and to reject worldliness. do we respond promptly Or do we, as Jonah did, attempt to flee from the Lord?

S. The ungodly seek to justify their perverted course by their perverted circumstances (Gen. 4:19, 23-24). How many carnal excuses is man able to concoct? Everything from so-called mercy-killing to pleading insanity to protecting the life of the mother, justification for sin abounds. Here, Lamech excuses the crime of murder by saying, it was self-defense. To sound minds, justifying sin is complete folly. Let us not blame our own faults on our boss, our spouse, our pastor, our children, or our circumstances in life.

### **A Ray of Hope**

9. The godly allow life's circumstances to direct their lives toward lifers God (Gen. 4:25-26). When Seth was born, Eve expressed her understanding that life is a gift. "For God ... hath appointed [granted] me another seed instead of Abel." By allowing God's providential gifts to lead us to their Giver, we are taught to be grateful for every blessing we have received. Life's trials likewise should draw us nearer to our only source of strength.

10. The godly choose the course of intimate fellowship with God (Gen. 5:22-24). Fellowship with God occurs in times of prayer. Are we praying? Are we praying for the salvation of our neighbors, for spiritual strength in

our congregation, and for peace in our homes? When we stop praying, we lose God Himself.

11. The godly are blessed with a faithful and useful posterity (Gen. 5:28-29). They pass on the faith to their children. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." The godly make disciples and cultivate an awareness of God in others. "Paul, an apostle ... unto Timothy, my own son in the faith." Never give up, for even criminals in the throes of death have been known to enter into paradise (Luke 23:41-43).

### **Answers to Questions**

1. Contrast Abel's offering with Cain's.

Abel's offering was a blood offering; it was a "firstling" of his flock; and God accepted it. Cain's offering was from the ground, and God rejected it.

2. Enumerate the vices that ruled Cain.

Cain was ruled by willfulness, anger, hatred, carelessness, pride, and impiety.

3. Was Cain's punishment equal to his crime? Explain.

Cain's crime was murder; his punishment was exile and material loss. In the much later law of Moses, murderers received capital punishment. Although Cain worshiped in self will, was angry with God, refused to bring a sin offering, murdered his brother, lied to God, and became a vagabond, he was still the object of divine solicitude.

4. What can we learn about Cain from his choices in later life (4:16-17)?  
Cain never returned to the Lord. From what we can tell, Cain lived a life-long boast of the greatness of mankind apart from God.

5. What does Lamech's speech reveal about him?

Lamech was a boaster. It seems that the incident he shared with his wives was one of personal self-defense that resulted in the death of his young attacker. Certainly it was a statement of self-justification.

6. Describe a man who calls upon the Name of the Lord (Gen.4:26).

A man who calls on the Name of the Lord is a man of faith and submission to God. He prays, he is thankful, he leans not on his own understanding.

7. How is the fear of the Lord a fundamental distinction among men?

The fear of the Lord reaches to the deepest part of the soul. It determines the object of worship. It precedes the choice to submit to God. No other trait, whether physical or emotional, is more fundamental than this.

8. Is godliness a matter of heritage? Explain.

Every man will choose his course in life. But no man can remain unmoved by his surroundings. Some, like Joseph, choose to persevere in spite of a fully pagan environment. Others, like Judas Iscariot, turn from God even though privileged more than most. We must pray and labor daily to bring ourselves and our children to a place where faith is gladly embraced.

### **Important Teachings**

1. All men, despite their fallen state, have the opportunity to choose right (Gen.4:1-2).
2. The ungodly man's attempts to worship are marked by self-will (Gen.4:3).
3. The godly man's worship includes obedience (Gen.4:4).
4. Persistent self-will prevents the ungodly from responding favorably to divine entreaty (Gen.4:5-7).
5. A man's actions reveal his character (Gen.4:8).
6. The shedding of innocent blood polluted the earth (Gen.4:9-11).
7. The ungodly finally remove themselves from God and His requirements (Gen.4:15-16).
8. The ungodly seek to justify their perverted course by their perverted circumstance (Gen.4:19, 23-24).
9. The godly allow life's circumstances to direct their lives toward God (Gen.4:25-26).
10. The godly choose the course of intimate fellowship with God (Gen.5:22-24).
11. The godly are blessed with a faithful and useful posterity (Gen.5:28-29).

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

No man can inherit godliness, but every man can choose it. The fear of the Lord is cultivated in the hearts of men by conscious choice. Just so men can cultivate pride and self-will. We truly are building every day. May our life's testimony be that of frequent cheer, undying hope, constant love, and faithful prayers.

### **Research Guide**

1. Study the meaning of the names of the prominent characters in this lesson. See "Cain" in Nave's Topical Bible.