

January 3

Scriptures: Read Genesis 4 & 5

Key Verse: “If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door.” (Genesis 4:7)

Overview

The murder of Abel by his brother Cain is a tragic account and the direct result of the sinful condition of man due to the Fall. Cain represents all those who try to please God through their own efforts, without total obedience to Him. The Bible seems to imply that God gave Adam and his family instructions on the type of sacrifice which was acceptable and pleasing unto Him. Obedience to the Lord is required in order to be acceptable.

The key verse is a rhetorical question meaning “yes, if you do well (by obeying the Lord), you will indeed be accepted.” Cain’s offering was given out of a proud, boastful, and disobedient heart and it was from the fruit of the earth, which had been cursed. But Abel’s offering was one of blood, and the shed blood of the Old Testament sacrifices was a symbol of the blood that Christ would shed for the remission of sin (see Hebrews 9:22). Along with that, Abel’s offering was given from the right kind of heart, one which by faith believes and obeys God. His offering, as Hebrews 11:4 explains, is a witness that he was righteous.

God gave Cain the opportunity to repent and have a second chance; but rather than doing so, his anger and jealousy arose to the point of planning his own brother’s murder. Cain did not “do well” and obey God, nor did he heed the Lord’s warning; therefore, sin did indeed lie at the door. Full of jealousy, deceit and guile, Cain approached Abel and convinced him to go out to the field with him. Abel, a trusting, honest man was the first victim of such a crime, for there his brother murdered him.

In order to give Cain an opportunity to confess and repent, God asked him for the whereabouts of his brother. Once again he does not repent, but rather expresses the wrong attitude that sadly some believers have today – “Am I my brother’s keeper?” God’s judgment was considered unbearable by Cain, but God is just and holy, and sin must be punished. The land that Cain loved so much would now no longer yield abundance as it did for him before. Now he would be forced to roam about as a vagabond. He feared that out of vengeance he might be killed and so God put a mark upon him to warn other men not to kill him, for it was not until after the Flood that capital punishment was instituted (see Genesis 9:6). Cain’s descendants proved to be an ungodly lot who were worldly and wicked. But God blessed Adam and Eve with many sons and daughters and one son in particular was given to replace Abel... this was Set. His descendants were godly and from his line came such men as Enoch who walked with God and was translated by Him, and Methuselah whom God blessed with the longest life, and Noah, the only man in his generation who found favors in the sight of the Lord. God’s blessings for the righteous are passed down even to their descendants. If we live obedient, holy and righteous live, we can have confidence that our families and descendants will also be blessed by God. Of course, the most important blessing is spiritual, that our loved ones, and even those yet unborn, will one day experience the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Lord, enables us o glorify You today by walking with You as Enoch did, and grant that our children will follow You. Blessed be Your Name O Lord.