

EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

Message #17

Genesis 4:1-7

In this 4th chapter of Genesis, we come face to face with the first ultimate antisocial act - cold blooded murder and the motive for it was a jealousy that resulted in a refusal to respond to God on His terms.

FAILURE TO RESPOND TO GOD ON HIS TERMS WILL RESULT IN LOSING THE FAVOR OF GOD AND BEING DOMINATED BY SIN.

NARRATIVE PART #1 - The birth of Cain and Abel. 4:1-2a

The word “knew” or “relations” refers to a legitimate physical intimacy which was honorable in God’s sight (Genesis 1:28), not like the abominable homosexuality of Genesis 19:5. As a result of the physical union, Eve gave birth to Cain, but she also knew that this life was from the LORD.

As the book of Genesis develops, those right with God always see the hand of the LORD in the conception of a baby - Genesis 4:1; 29:33; 33:5. Those who support abortion had better prepare themselves for the day they will face the LORD God, having murdered life Divinely Decreed by Him. According to the Bible, babies come from God - Psalm 127:3.

NARRATIVE PART #2 - The occupations of Cain and Abel. 4:2b

Cain and Abel were two distinct personalities with God given differences in interests, abilities and talents. Abel tended sheep and Cain tilled the land. Of the two occupations, tilling is more physical and tending is more mental, but both were good jobs.

NARRATIVE PART #3 - The worship of Cain and Abel. 4:3-4a

The phrase “in the course of time” seems to refer to a special time when both of these men were aware of offerings they needed to present to the LORD. The word “offering” is a Hebrew word which refers to something offered as a gift to God. What this immediately tells us is that both work and worship are an important part of a life properly related to God.

Cain brought fruit of the ground as an offering and Abel brought the fattest of his flock of sheep. Both brought things that pertained to their specific work and both brought offerings on the basis of their specific faith (Hebrews 11:4). Both boys had the same parents, both worked for a living, both were interested in worshipping the LORD and bringing an offering to the LORD, but one was interested in pleasing the LORD on His terms and the other wanted it on his own terms.

NARRATIVE PART #4 - The reception of the offerings of Cain and Abel. **4:4b-5a**

The LORD respected or had regard to the offering of Abel, but did not respect the offering of Cain. The word “respect” or “regard” means to look at something with a high regard which leads to the blessing of an individual by aiding him. The LORD viewed Abel’s sacrifice with high regard, as something acceptable and pleasing to Him. However, Cain’s sacrifice was not viewed in the same way - it was not acceptable to God and would not bring His blessings. We may assume that both Cain and Abel knew the requirements of the shedding of the blood of an animal in order to have a proper relationship with the LORD. **This account of Cain and Abel clearly teaches that the worship of God must be on God’s terms and not our terms.**

NARRATIVE PART #5 - The reaction of Cain. **4:5b**

We do not know for sure how God informed Cain that his sacrifice was not acceptable - perhaps he did not consume the sacrifice by fire, like He typically did (Leviticus 9:24; Judges 6:21; I Kings 18:38; I Chron.21:26; II Chron.7:1) or perhaps He just spoke directly to Cain. We do not know the method of communication, but we do know Cain’s reaction - he became very angry.

When the text says Cain’s “countenance fell” it is not just a reference to something facial, but also something theological. Cain’s relationship to God, his status, his position fell from that which was once honorable, to that which is sinful.

NARRATIVE PART #6 - The response of the LORD. **4:6-7**

God gives Cain two choices:

Choice #1 - Do what is right and be blessed. **4:6-7a**

The “do well” of verse 7 contextually refers to bringing an animal sacrifice to the LORD on His terms.

Choice #2 - Do what is wrong and be dominated by what is sinful. **4:7b**

The end of verse 7 may refer to sin or the sin offering. Some view it as meaning if you don’t do well before God sin will end up dominating you. Others View it as meaning if you refuse to offer the proper sin offering, you are sinning against God and will never be right with Him. Actually both interpretations are true.

When a person refuses to properly respond to God’s Word, he opens himself up to a great deterioration in sin. There is a downward spiral that can reach such an antisocial level that one may even commit murder.

Cain was no atheist. He, metaphorically speaking, went to church to worship God. His problem was he wanted to worship God his own way. God will not accept this. He demands that a relationship with Him be on His terms.

The only sacrifice acceptable to Him is the sacrifice of His own Son. Without a relationship with Jesus Christ, one is sold under sin. Will you accept terms or your own?