

THE FIRST FALSE RELIGION

Genesis 4:1-15

Introduction: The book of Genesis is a book of beginnings. Genesis records the beginning of the universe, the world, the sun, moon, and stars, animal life, plant life, and human life, along with many other important things.

In the first eleven chapters of Genesis many "first" things appear. The first man, the first woman, the first command from God, the first marriage, the first home, the first sin, the first death, the first sacrifice, the first worship, the first murder, the first curse, and so on.

In our text, the Lord give us a glimpse inside the world's first family. Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve, are the focus of the verses before us today.

While there are a great many truths in this passage, one stands higher than the others, at least for me. In the life of Cain, I see a portrait of every lost sinner who has ever lived. Cain is the archetype, the prototype, of every sinner who would follow him into this world. When I look at Cain, I see the embodiment of **Proverbs 16:25**, which says, *"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."*

That verse describes the life of Cain perfectly. It also describes the lives of all those who live, not by faith, but who walk after the flesh. It is a lifestyle the Bible calls, **"the way of Cain", Jude 11**. The passage reveals the characteristics of all those who refuse to live life according to God's Word and will.

When you hear these characteristics, I would ask you to examine your heart. If you see these characteristics in your life, it indicates that you need to be saved. I would encourage you to believe the Gospel, and to look to Christ for salvation. If you are saved, and you see these characteristics in those around you, I challenge you to lift them up in prayer and determine in your heart that you will give them the Gospel of grace.

THE FIRST FALSE RELIGION

Genesis 4:1-15

"The way of Cain!" It is set forth in the Bible as the antithesis of God's way. It is that *"way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"* (Prov. 14: 12).

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1-The False Religion of Cain's (4:1-7)

- A. A Purely Human Scheme (4:1-2)
- B. A Purely Human Sacrifice (4:3-4)
- C. A Purely Human Satisfaction (4:5-7)

2-The Fierce Religion of Cain's (4:8-15)

- A. Characterized by Force (4:8)
- B. Characterized by Falsehood (4:9)
- C. Characterized by Futility (4: 10-12)
- D. Characterized by Fear (4: 13-15)

THE FIRST FALSE RELIGION

GENESIS 4:5--24

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1. **Fathered By Satan (4:5)**
2. **Founded On "Works" (4:5)**
5. **Furthered By Violence (4: 8)**
4. **Fatal For Mankind (4:16-24)**

NOTE: One of the world's great authorities on the religions of mankind has pointed out that all false religions emphasize human good works and merit as the basis for salvation. He came to this conclusion after studying the sacred books of the East, the Koran of Islam, the Tripitaka, the Zend-avesta, and so forth. The same false philosophy animates the false teachings of the various cults and apostate systems of Christendom. It is only in the Bible that the word rings out loud and clear: *"Not of works, lest any man should boast."*

Let's explore *The Way of Cain* for a few moments today. Let me point out, from this text, the characteristics of those who are walking that path.

I. V. 1-5 CHARACTERIZED BY AN UNBELIEVING HEART

This chapter begins with a picture of great hope. After Adam and Eve sinned in Eden, they were cast out of that beautiful garden by the Lord, Genesis 3:23-24a. God placed an angel with a flaming sword at the entrance of Eden to prevent Adam and Eve from reentering the garden and eating from the "tree of life", Genesis 3:24b.

Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden and they were forced to seek out a meager existence by working the ground for their food. Their lives, which had been so perfect before they sinned, changed in every way. Now, their lives revolved around hard work, unending drudgery, and boundless regret. The days of walking with the Lord in the cool of the garden were over. They were consigned to a life of pain, sorrow, toil, and eventually death. All hope seemed gone.

Then, Genesis 4:1 says, *"Adam knew his wife and she conceived..."* Suddenly there was hope! Suddenly, in the face of certain death, there was the wonder of a new life, the hope of a new beginning, and the promise of a better tomorrow.

While I am here in this verse let me say something. The Bible says, Adam "knew" his wife. The word "knew" means "to know fully; to know by experience". The word "knew" is a euphemism for sexual interaction. Adam and Eve came together in a physical union. But, the word expresses something much deeper than that.

The word "know" suggests a far deeper connection between a man and a woman than what is possible in the casual atmosphere that surrounds sex in our world today. We live in a culture which has cheapened and sullied sex. Most people in our culture believe they can engage in casual sex and still experience long-term satisfaction in their relationships. They are wrong. People engage in illicit sexual activity without understanding the deeper meaning behind what they are doing. There is more to the human sexual experience than mere physical pleasure. The view of sex that dominates our society is warped, and it distorts God's intention in the gift of sex to humanity.

When the Bible says that "Adam knew his wife", it refers not just to the physical union, but to "a commitment to know a person in all their dimensions; a commitment to study them and learn everything there is about them". It refers to a union that is not only one flesh, but one heart, one goal, and one life. If people brought that understanding into their physical relationships, pre-marital sex and adultery would cease to be the problem they are in our world.

So, a new life has begun. Eve, like billions of her daughters to follow, must have been excited about the baby growing in her womb. I can imagine her calling Adam over to feel the baby kick against her belly. I can see him placing his ear to her belly, listening to the tiny heartbeat inside. It was a time of new possibilities, renewed hope, and excited expectation.

Then, one day, the wait was over. Eve gave birth to the first baby born into this world. Eve was the first woman to experience the pain of childbirth, and on the heels of that experience, she was the first to experience the joy of holding in her arms a newborn baby.

Eve named the baby "Cain." The name means, "I have gotten". Eve gives God the glory for her new baby. She says, "I have gotten a man from the Lord". She saw this birth as a time of divine blessing in her life, in her family, and in her world. Then, came another baby, whom they named "Abel". His name means "breath, vapor, perishable". The name would prove prophetic, as their second son perished like a breath exhaled into the air.

These boys may have been twins. Verse 2 refers to Abel's birth with no mention of a second conception. Whether they were or not does not matter. What matters is that the sadness of Adam and Eve over their sin, and over their lost fellowship with the Lord, is somewhat mitigated by their children. Those babies brought hope into a world that must have seemed so hopeless. Babies possess that power, don't they? They often bring joy, laughter, and hope for tomorrow when those tiny, wiggling, crying creatures come into the world.

These two boys grew up together in the same home. They had the same parents, received the same instructions, saw the same things, and shared the same experiences. But, as they grew, differences began to emerge.

When it came time to choose a job, they both chose honorable vocations. Cain followed in his father's footsteps and became a farmer. Abel became a shepherd. Both vocations were important and helped to sustain the family.

At some point, probably as they reached young adulthood, these young men came before the Lord to worship. I am sure they had been trained by their parents as to how they were to approach God. Can you imagine what kind of evangelists Adam and Eve would have been? They knew what it was to walk with God, they knew what it was to lose that sweet fellowship. They were there when God confronted them over their sin and killed an animal to provide a covering for their nakedness, Genesis 3:21.

I can imagine they shared that information with their sons.

- . I wonder how many times Adam took them on his knees and told them about God, and how He was to be worshipped?
- . I wonder how many times Eve warned them to listen to the Lord and not to the devil?

So, in verse 3-4 Cain and Abel come before God to make an offering to Him. The Bible says in verse 4 that "the Lord had respect to Abel and his offering". Then verse 5 says, "but unto Cain and his offering He had not respect". The word "respect" means "to look upon something with approval".

Cain brought "of the fruit of the ground", while Abel "brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof". God approved of Abel's offering, while He rejected Cain's. What was the difference?

I have heard all kinds of theories about why one offering was accepted while the other was rejected. God did not accept Abel's offering over Cain's simply because Abel's was a blood sacrifice. God did not reject Cain's sacrifice simply because it was not an animal sacrifice.

While the kind of sacrifice offered here does play some part in why God rejected one and accepted the other, there is more to it than that. When Adam and Eve sinned in Eden, God killed an innocent animal to provide a covering for their nakedness, Genesis 3:21. When God did that, He chose an innocent substitute to atone for the guilty sinners. Yet, in both Deuteronomy and Leviticus, God told Israel to offer grain and food offerings to thank Him

for His blessings and to acknowledge Him as the source of all their provisions.

The “fruit of the field” was, therefore, an offering accepted by God. However, the primary and necessary sacrifices were all blood sacrifices in which an innocent substitute died for guilty sinners.

In the Garden of Eden God established a pattern for approaching Him that has never changed. The ultimate sacrifice was made when Jesus Christ came into the world and gave His life for sinners on the cross, shedding His perfect, sinless blood to redeem the lost, satisfy the demands of God over sin, and wash the sinner clean, 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 1:5. There is only one way for man to come to God.

- . From Genesis through Revelation God’s method for cleansing sin has always remained the same: It takes the blood of an innocent sacrifice to cleanse the sinner from his sins, Hebrews 9:22.
- . You see this in Eden, Genesis 3:21.
- . You see it in Egypt, during the Passover, when the blood of the lamb protected the people of Israel from the death angel, Exodus 12:1-13.
- . You see this throughout the long history of worship in Egypt when the High Priest, on the Day of Atonement, entered into the Holy of Holies with the blood of substitutionary, atoning sacrifice, Leviticus 16:16-28.
- . It culminates at Calvary when the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was judged in the place of sinners, 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24.

While that must be a part of what is happening here, I think something much deeper is taking place. Notice the wording of verse 4, “And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof”. The word “firstlings” suggests “the best”. The phrase “of the fat thereof” speaks of careful preparation.

Abel carefully selected the best animal he had. He took the time to prepare the sacrifice. He brought it before the Lord, and he offered it by faith. It appears that Abel went out of his way to offering a sacrifice that was pleasing to the Lord.

In Genesis 3:21 God set the pattern for sacrifice: blood was required. In Genesis 3:15, God promised that one day a Savior would come. Abel’s sacrifice said that he believed God, and his faith was accepted by the Lord.

The writer of Hebrews said this about Abel’s sacrifice, “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh”, (Hebrews 11:4 KJV) Abel’s sacrifice said, “I believe you Lord! He is coming!”

His sacrifice revealed the condition of his heart. He loved God. He honored God’s Word. He believed in God’s promise to send a Savior. And, according to verse 5, God both accepted Abel and his offering. 1 John 3:12 says that his “works” were “righteous”. Abel’s faith in God translated to God accepting Abel and to God declaring him righteous.

Cain, on the other hand, is said to have “brought of the fruit of the ground”. There is no evidence of faith in the promises of God. There is no evidence of preparation. Cain’s offering said, “I know what You said, but here is what I want to give You. Take it or leave it”. Cain’s offering was an act of false worship that said, “My way will work just as well as Your way”. He found out instantly that it didn’t work that way, because God rejected both Cain and his offering. It seems to me that Cain was merely following a form, and that there as no love in his heart for God, or gratitude to God for His blessings.

In Abel, there is an acknowledgment of sin and of his need of a Savior, In Cain, there is neither. Cain neither acknowledged that he was a sinner or that he needed a Savior. Because of his lack of faith and dependence on self, God rejected him and his offering.

There is a warning here that we need to heed. God will not accept our religion. He will not accept our works. He will not accept anything we can do to attempt to save ourselves. The only thing God will accept is what He has already provided. He will accept nothing but faith in the atoning sacrifice and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, John 14:6; John 16:31; Ephesians 2:8-9.

Cain revealed his lost condition through an unbelieving heart. He refused to come to God God’s way. In short, he rejected the Gospel of grace and God rejected him.

- . What does your heart say about you?
- . Have you believed the Gospel?
- . Are trusting Jesus and what He did as the only hope you have for your salvation?
- . Or, is your hope in other things?
- . Things like good works, religious deeds, a good life, church membership, baptism, etc., will never save, Matthew 7:21-23.
- . God's plan is simple: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:9 KJV)

II. V. 5b-7 CHARACTERIZED BY AN UNREPENTANT HEART

As soon as Cain realized that his offering had been rejected by God, the Bible says "his countenance fell". This means his whole demeanor changed. He was crestfallen. He could not understand why God would accept Abel's offering and reject his.

God knows what is in Cain's heart, so in verses 6-7 God speaks to Cain and asks him why he is upset. The word "wroth" in verse 5 and 6 means "to burn with hot anger or jealousy". God tells Cain in verse 7 that if he did what was right, he would be accepted too. I don't think God is telling Cain to go get the right kind of sacrifice. I think the Lord is calling him to change his heart toward the Lord.

God wants Cain to repent of his attitude toward God and to walk with God in faith, humility, and submission, like Abel his brother. God is looking to produce a change of heart and a change of mind in Cain.

God warns him that sin is like a wild beast crouching, ready to pounce, lying just outside the door. That beast is waiting to pounce on Cain and devour him. If Cain will come to God God's way, then He can have power over the beast. If he doesn't change, repent, and honor God's way, then sin will control him.

We know which way Cain chose. He refused to repent. He refused to love the Lord. He refused to walk in God's plan. And, sin consumed him.

Every unbeliever who has passed through this world since Cain has had the same problem. They possess an unrepentant heart. The lost sinner is the slave of sin and Satan, Ephesians 2:1-3; John 8:44. God calls the lost to repent of their sins, to turn to Him, and to walk in His will, His Word, and His ways. That is the only path that leads to Heaven. All other roads lead to Hell.

If you are lost, you need to know that sin will consume you unless you turn from it and come to God. You may think you are calling the shots in your life, you might think you are the master of your own destiny. The truth is very different. Sin is a deceptive and cruel master. It will lead you along with its pleasures and entice you with its promises, but "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." (Proverbs 23:32 KJV)

The path of sin always leads to disillusionment, defeat, and death. The path of sin always leads away from peace, hope, and joy. The path of sin always ends in the fires of Hell.

There is but one remedy for sin and that remedy is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ went to the cross to die for sin and for sinners. He gave His life so that you might be given a new life. He came for those who, like Abel, understand that they need a Savior. He came for the lost, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Mark 2:17 KJV)

God cannot help someone like Cain. No one can. The person who refuses to acknowledge his spiritual condition and who refuses to repent of sin cannot, and will not, be saved. All those who are lost and remain that way are characterized by an unrepentant heart.

III. V. 8-10 CHARACTERIZED BY AN UNGODLY HEART

These last few verses of our text demonstrate the outcome of sin. In Cain's case, as in the case of every other sinner, the condition of the heart determined the course of the life. The beast of sin pounced on Cain and devoured his heart, his conscience, and even his love for his brother. Notice how sin manifested itself in Cain's life.

. Verse 8 tells us that Cain murdered his brother. How did he kill him? He probably cut his throat the same way a sacrifice was slaughtered. That was the only way Cain had ever seen anything die. Why did Cain kill Abel? He was jealous. Abel had something Cain did not have. Abel had a faith relationship with God, and unbelievers always demonstrate animosity and anger toward people of faith. This is what happened here. Back in verse 5, the Bible says that Cain was angered by God's rejection of his offering. Cain was angry at God, whom he could not kill, and he was jealous of his brother, whom he could kill. Cain's hatred of God manifested itself in his hatred of Abel. The anger toward God in his heart revealed itself in the murder of his brother.

. In verse 9 God comes to Cain and asks about the whereabouts of Abel. This is the same thing God did when Adam and Eve fell into sin. In Genesis 3:9, God came looking for the fallen couple and said, "Where art thou?" Cain answered the Lord with a lie. He said, "I know not". This is another indication that sin has taken control of his heart and life. Then he answers the Lord with pure sarcasm, "Am I my brother's keeper?" This is a play on words. In verse 2 Abel is called "a keeper of sheep". Cain says to God, "I am not his shepherd! He's not my responsibility." Cain is saying to God, "Since you love him so much, why don't you keep up with him?"

. In verse 10 God tells Cain that He knows what Cain has done. He says that the blood of Abel "cries" out to Him from the ground where it was shed. The blood of Abel was not silent. It cried out for justice, and justice was what Cain received.

What I want you to see here is a fundamental biblical truth: The condition of the heart determines the course of the life. What is seen in the life externally is a revelation of the character of the heart internally. In Cain's life, sin manifested its control in anger, jealousy, hatred, murder, and lying. All of those actions proved that Cain possessed an unredeemed heart.

While we are not to stand in judgment of one another, this truth still applies today. The life always reveals the condition of the heart! We can profess to anything, but the truth of what we are is revealed in the way we walk, the way we talk, the way we think, and in the way we approach God.

. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."
(Proverbs 4:23 KJV)

. "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." (Matthew 12:34-35 KJV)

. "And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man." (Matthew 15:16-20 KJV)

What does your life say about the condition of your heart?

Conclusion: Verses 11-13 chronicle the rest of Cain's tragic story. Cain is punished by God. The ground is cursed for him. For a farmer this would be devastating. God is saying, "Your sin has poisoned the earth against you. No matter where you go or how hard you work, the earth that swallowed your brother's blood will stand in testimony against you, and it will not honor your work with fruit. In addition to that, you will be a fugitive and a wanderer for the rest of your days".

Verse 13 lets us know that Cain recognized the severity of his punishment. He paid a high price for his sin all the days he lived in this world. He was banished from home and family. He was consigned to a horrible, desperate existence.

The name Cain appears in the Bible twenty times in seventeen verses. His name appears only three times in the New Testament, and each time it appears it is used in a negative way.

The verse that stands out to me is 1 John 3:12. It says, "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother..." That verses tells us the ultimate fate of Cain. He "was of that wicked one". Here is a sobering thought, Cain was the first child born in to this world. He was born to parents who were obviously not perfect, but who knew God, had walked with God, and taught him the truth. He had a brother who know God, and who knew how to approach God. Yet, Cain was a lost man, and in the end, the first baby born in the world most likely died and went to Hell.

Don't let that happen to you! Don't walk in the "way of Cain". You need a Savior, and there is only One. His name is Jesus Christ. He died on the cross to open a way of salvation for you. If you will come to God through Him, you will be accepted by God, your sins will be forgiven, and you will be saved. If you try to go any other way, you will die in your sins, and you will go to Hell. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." ([John 14:6](#) KJV)

. Do you need to come to Jesus? If you do, the time to come to Him is now.

. Are you saved? You ought to thank Him for His grace, and for His salvation. You ought to come before God and pray for those who do not know Him.

Our world is filled with people who are walking in "the way of Cain". If you are one of them, come to Christ and be saved today!