

# BEGINNINGS

The Tale of Two Seeds  
Genesis 4:1-16  
March 29, 2020

Sin's impact is great... God's mercy  
and grace are greater still!

## I. THE ACCOUNT OF THE TWO SEEDS (vv. 1-5a)

- The Origin of the Two Brothers (vv. 1-2)
  - Eve conceived and bore both Cain, who is perceived to be the one who will crush the head of the serpent, and Abel (v. 1).
    - In God's continued mercy to humanity, Adam and Eve continue to fulfill the creation mandate (cf. Gen. 1:28).
  - Abel was a keeper of the flocks and Cain was a tiller of the ground (v. 2).
    - Neither occupation had inherent superiority, but both were to be means for providing offerings unto the LORD (cf. Gen. 2:15; 3:23).
    - In God's continued mercy to humanity, Cain and Abel continue to fulfill the creation mandate (cf. Gen. 1:26, 28).
- The Offerings of the Two Brothers (vv. 3-5a)
  - Cain and Abel brought offerings consistent with their vocations (vv.3-4a).
  - The LORD looked upon Abel and his offering with favor, but not so with Cain and his offering (vv. 4b-5a).
    - Cain's offering was not offered by faith (cf. Heb. 11:4), which is hinted at in the lack of "firstfruits" as a description of Cain's offering, and was thus sinful (cf. Rom. 14:23; 1 John 3:12; Jude 11).
    - The effect was enmity between the two seeds (cf. Gen. 3:15).

## II. THE ACTS OF CAIN AND THE RESPONSES OF THE LORD (vv. 5b-16)

- The Anger of Cain and the Warning of the LORD (vv. 5b-7).
  - Rather than repentance, anger arose in Cain's heart (v. 5b).
  - The LORD warned Cain of sin's prowess as it waited to strike (vv. 6-7).
    - Take note of the joy that comes with obedience (cf. Pss. 40:8; 119:14-16)!
    - Take note of the fierceness of sin (cf. James 1:13-15; 1 Pet. 5:8)!

- The Murderous Act of Cain and the Judgment of the LORD (vv. 8-12).
  - The first physical death in a post-fall world is the result of murder (v. 8; John 8:44; 1 John 3:12).
  - Cain disregarded both his God and his neighbor (vv. 9-10; cf. Matt. 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-33).
    - Cain's behavior is picked up in the New Testament and directly applied to our love, or hatred, of the family of God (1 John 3:11-15).
  - Cain was directly cursed (as was the serpent), while Adam and Eve felt the indirect effects of the curse (vv. 11-12; cf. Gen. 3:16-19).
- The Cry of Cain and the Mercy of the LORD (vv. 13-16).
  - Cain decried the punishment he received (vv. 13-14).
    - A hardened heart questions the justice of God, while a repentant heart acknowledges the justice of God and cries for mercy.
  - God acts in mercy (vv. 15-16; cf. Gen. 3:24).
    - The mark of the LORD on Cain here may be a type of the LORD's merciful mark in Ezek. 9:4-5 and throughout Revelation.

## III. THE TRUE SEED OF THE WOMAN AND GREAT SERPENT CRUSHER (Gen. 3:15)

- Christ, our greater older brother (cf. Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:10-13), succeeded where Cain failed, and has come to rescue us from our bondage to sin and death and bring us home!
  - Christ offered *himself* up as a perfect sacrifice in perfect faith and obedience (cf. Matt. 26:36-46; John 17; Heb. 9:11-14).
  - Christ overcame sin and temptation, and controlled his anger in all righteousness (cf. Matt. 4:1-11; 21:12-13; Mark 3:5; Heb. 4:15).
  - Christ's shed blood speaks a better word than that of Abel (cf. Heb. 12:24).
    - Abel's blood cried for justice; Christ's blood procured justice and speaks a word of grace!
  - Christ was taken outside of Jerusalem, where he was crucified... where he took our curse and punishment... where he died... where he was buried... and where he conquered sin and death in his resurrection so that we might be brought back from the far country and to the house of God as children of God (cf. Luke 15; John 19:20; Heb. 13:12).

### RECOMMENDED READING:

*The Prodigal God* by Timothy Keller

### SERMON QUESTIONS FOR GENESIS 4:1-16

1. What do you make of Eve's confession in v. 1? Do you agree with the thought that Eve sees in Cain a possible answer to the promise contained in Gen. 3:15? Why or why not?
2. Why was Cain's offering not accepted by the LORD? How does the New Testament help us understand Cain's motives? What are some practical points of application for us today regarding our offerings of worship?
3. Talk through Cain's response to the LORD in v. 9, specifically as it relates to Cain's failure to love both God and neighbor.
4. God showed mercy to Cain in vv. 15-16. Discuss as a group specific ways in which God has been merciful to you this last week. Take some time afterwards to thank God for his mercy.
5. In what ways did Christ succeed where Cain failed?
6. Rejoice with one another that through Christ we are brought into the family of God!