

Genesis

Creation, Covenants, All Grace – study 8



INIQUITY'S INCLINE

Then Yahweh saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. -- Gen. 6:5

TWO TYPES OF RELIGION (4:1-15)

4:1-8 *The character of both true and false religion appear in the first generation. How are the two great commandments shown to be inseparable?*

(1) Cain brought as an offering the perfect result of his own toil. Abel also brought an offering which was connected with his calling; but in his offering there was evidence of a consciousness of the need of sacrifice, resulting from a sense of sin. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *Analyzed Bible The Book of Genesis* p. 38

(2) ... we may fairly say that these two aspects represent two attitudes today -- the attitude of the man who responds to God's revelation and submits to His will, and the attitude of the man who will only come to God on his own terms, refusing to do what does not suit him or commend itself to his judgment. -- **W.H. Griffith Thomas**, *Genesis* p. 60

(3) Moreover, in the person of Cain is portrayed to us the likeness of a wicked man, who yet desires to be esteemed just, and even arrogates to himself the first place among the saints. Such persons truly, by external works, strenuously

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Cain's religion only too common to men –
Coming to God on our own terms



labour to deserve well at the hands of God; but, retaining a heart enwrapped in deceit, they present to him nothing but a mask; so that, in their laborious and anxious religious worship, there is nothing sincere, nothing but mere pretense. When they afterwards see that they gain no advantage, they betray the venom of their minds; for they not only complain against God, but break forth in manifest fury, so that, if they were able, they would gladly tear him down from his heavenly throne. Such is the innate pride of all hypocrites, that, by the very appearance of obedience, they would hold God as under obligation to them; because they cannot escape from his authority, they try to soothe him with blandishments, as they would a child; in the meantime, while they count much of their fictitious trifles they think that God does them wrong if he does not applaud them; but when he pronounces their offerings frivolous and of no value in his sight, they first begin to murmur, and then to rage. Their impiety alone hinders God from being reconciled unto them; but they wish to bargain with God on their own terms. -- **John Calvin**, *Genesis* p. 197

4:9-15 *Observe the new designation of Deity (vv. 1,3,4,6,9,13,15). What is the astounding character of Deity's dealings with Cain? (cf. 9:5)*

(4) ... the liberal arts and sciences have descended to us from the heathen. We are, indeed, compelled to acknowledge that we have received astronomy, and the other parts of philosophy, medicine, and the order of civil government, from them. Nor is it to be doubted that God has thus liberally enriched them with excellent favours that their impiety might have the less excuse. -- **John Calvin**, *op.cit.*, p. 218

The DESCENT of MAN (4:16-24)

4:16-17 *Is there a lesson in Cain's (and Adam's) form of escapism? (cf. 3:23,24; 4:1; cf. Romans 1:21-32)*

(5) This Cain who wants a home, and can have none, who is forever the man going somewhere, but where? The seed of all man's questings is to be found in Cain's life in the land of wandering, always searching for a place where his need for security might be satisfied. But the only place he finds is that very country characterized by being uninhabitable. ... Once settled in his country, Cain does two things to make his curse bearable: he knows his wife sexually, who then gives him a son; and he builds a city. The first act does not concern us. Only notice that it is the same as Adam's when he is expelled from Paradise, the act which had the result of bringing Cain into the world. It is man's desire to find life, eternity, again. He transmits his life to his children. -- **Jacques Ellul**, *The Meaning of the City* pp. 3,5

(6) Many details emphasize the depth of Cain's crime, and therefore of the Fall: the context is worship, the victim a brother; and while Eve had been talked into her sin, Cain will not have even God talk him out of it; nor will he confess to it, nor yet accept his punishment. -- **Derek Kidner**, *Genesis* p. 74

4:18-24 Is it coincidence that the arts of civilization are credited to Cain's lawless offspring? (compare the achievements of Noah's 3 sons -- 9:25-27)

(7) ... the immediate conversion of metal-working to weapon-making is equally ominous. **Cain's family is a microcosm:** its pattern of technical prowess and moral failure is that of humanity. -- **D. Kidner**, *op.cit.*, p.78 (emphasis added)

(8) Abel chose the pilgrim-life, Cain that of settled possession and enjoyment of earth. The nearer their history lay to the terrible event which had led to the loss of Paradise, and to the first giving of the promise, the more significant would this their choice of life appear. Quite in accordance with this, we afterwards find Cain, not only building a city, but calling it after the name of his own son, to indicate settled proprietorship and enjoyment of the world as it was. -- **Alfred Edersheim**, *The Bible History: Old Testament* p. 28

(9) This line was devoted to things earthly and lived absolutely apart from God. Natural ingenuity characterised the race. There was art and civilisation, but no religion. Not that they were all necessarily flagrantly

Cain's family as microcosm –
civilization and the arts at the
cost of morality and
brotherhood

sinful, but just living without God (Eph. ii. 12). Is it not suggestive that the first time art, trade, and manufactures are mentioned they are associated with godlessness? Is it, or is it not, an accident that art has often flourished most when religion has been at its lowest? Is it not a fact that there is that in music, art, and civilisation which easily panders to the very lowest in man? And while these things should be, and can be, devoted to the highest interests of human life and the glory of God, the possibilities of evil which they contain must never be overlooked. As for regarding them as substitutes for God, this is utterly impossible. -- **W.H. Griffith Thomas**, *Genesis* p. 70

DEATH, NOT ADAM, REIGNS AS KING (4:25-5:31)

4:25-26 Though man is out of fellowship with His Creator (note the Name switch, v.25), what type of religion is indicated for Seth's line?

5:1-20 Is there method in the monotony of these dirge-like verses?

(10) Quietly and persistently through the centuries the Divine sentence was carried out; and as this section is carefully read, the continued repetition of the phrase, 'and he died', indicates the vindication of God against the lie of evil. God is always vindicated in the coming and going of the centuries. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *op.cit.*, p. 42

(11) The best part of human history is never written at all. Family life, patient

service, quiet endurance, the training of children, the resistance of temptation; these things are never mentioned by the historian. -- **Joseph Parker**, *People's Bible, Genesis* p. 155

5:21-31 How is grace emphasized in the meagre biographies of Enoch, Methuselah and Lamech?

(12) ... his transition was a peculiar privilege, such as that of other men would have been, if they had remained in their first state. For although it was necessary for him to put off what was corruptible; yet was he exempt from that violent separation, from which nature shrinks. In short, his translation was a placid and joyful departure out of the world. -- **John Calvin**, *op.cit.*, p. 232

GRACE SPURNED, JUDGMENT EARNED (6:1-8)

6:1-4 It has been well said that God never destroys his creations till they have destroyed themselves. How is universal depravity emphasized? (Jude 6-7)

(13) In the line of Cain we have cleverness, culture, and civilisation; and yet with all these manifest advantages everything was purely earthly, selfish, and sensual. God was ignored, and they lived their life entirely apart from Him. Self-contained, occupied with their own intellectual and social pursuits, they simply ignored the claims of God, and lived and died without Him. -- **W.H.G Thomas**, *op.cit.*, p. 78

6:5-8 Is Yahweh's judgment an expression of petulant vindictiveness? (Isa. 63:7-10)