

**Amazing Truths of the Pentateuch (6)**  
**The First Signs of Life Outside of the Garden**  
**(Genesis 4:1-26)**

**Introduction:-**

*Gospel summaries often mention the importance of Genesis 1-3, and then jump straight into the New Testament! This neglects and overlooks the importance of the way in which the sin of the Garden of Eden begins to reveal and manifest itself for the very first time outside of the Garden of Eden in Genesis 4:1-26. What might this begin to look like, and how might we expect sin to behave and manifest itself for the very first time outside of the Garden of Eden? Not only is this question of the greatest interest for humankind, both past and present, but as scholars have pointed out, there are many important textual links between chapters 3 and 4, showing that they are really meant to be read and understood together, as two sides of the same coin. For example, God's very first question to Adam at 3:9 = "Where are you?", is repeated to Cain at Genesis 4:9 = "Where is your brother Abel?" Then God's curse upon the ground relating to Adam's sin at Genesis 3:17 is repeated with even greater consequences to Cain at Genesis 4:11-14, with both also experiencing the judgment of being "driven" from God's presence, with the main difference being that Cain will become a fugitive and wanderer on the earth, and will no longer be able to work the land in any productive way. In both chapters, there is temptation, desire, conflict, punishment, and exile east of Eden. And so let us now examine Genesis chapter four a little more closely, in order to discover the very first manifestation of sin, and its DNA outside of the Garden of Eden.*

**1. First we notice the Rapid spread of Sin (verses 1-16)**

*This passage begins on a note of faith and grace with Eve acknowledging that the birth of Cain (Hebrew - "begotten" or "acquired") was due to the help of the Lord. Later, Abel was born whose name in Hebrew means "breath" or "temporary", similar to the word translated "meaningless" in the Book of Ecclesiastes (1:2; 12:8). And as such, these opening verses provide a frame for verses 25-26 at the very end of the chapter, where Eve will acknowledge again the provision of God's help with the birth of Seth (Hebrew - "granted") in the place of Abel, who will in turn give birth to Enosh (= "man"), at which time people began to call upon the name of the Lord. It seems therefore that this provision of faith and grace was operating at both ends of this chapter, because our very first introduction to the Cain and Abel story at verses 3-7, assumes that worship and approach to God was both open and possible as Cain and Abel brought their respective offerings to God. When was this made possible after Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden? Well, we do not know. But the fact that this was possible, at this point, means that the possibility of living in God's presence and worshipping him was an act of God's on-going grace and blessing outside of the garden. Obviously, God had not totally withdrawn his presence from the first family of the human race! But suddenly, within the context of worship itself, and how God may be acceptably worshipped, something goes awfully wrong. In the course of time, Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord, but Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. As a result, the Lord looked with favour on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favour. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. At this point, we may be justified in saying that this was a perfectly normal reaction that any of us would have made if we were in Cain's shoes. Notice however, that Cain did not approach God in*

immediate dialogue, and ask why this should be so. Perhaps he had already put two and two together, as he compared his offering with that of Cain's offering. But then the Lord himself stepped in, and said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why are feeling badly about yourself? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it" (cf. 1 Peter 5:8). It would appear that the best solution to the meaning of this situation is not the question of Cain's grain offering versus Abel's blood offering from the flock, because Cain could never have been expected to give this kind of offering from his background. Rather, it would appear to relate to the question of "attitude" in terms of "how" each person finally brought their offerings to the Lord (See Hebrews 11:4 = By faith Abel offered a better offering). This is indicated by the description of Abel's offering as "fat" portions from some of the "firstborn" of his flock, whereas Cain's fruits of the soil is quite non-descript, and certainly not from the first fruits of the harvest. The principle involved here may be seen at 2 Samuel 24:24 = "I will not give to the Lord that which costs me nothing." As a result, Cain's first recorded conversation was tragically not directed to the Lord, but to his brother, with deliberate malice and deceit in mind. At this point, sin is like a pouncing demon, that had mastered Cain. And out in the field, Cain killed his brother Abel, making fratricide the first heinous sin committed by man outside of the Garden of Eden, also making this particular act the very first manifestation of sin in the world. And is this not the chief sin of humankind today, in terms of man's inhumanity towards his fellow man. And where did this all begin? Here with the Cain and Abel story! But if Cain thought that he could also hide from God like Adam and Eve in the previous chapter, he had another thought coming. In verse 9, we have God's first recorded question addressed to man outside of the Garden of Eden - "Where is your brother Abel?" To which Abel replied, "I don't know" (the first blatant lie outside of the Garden of Eden) - to which he then added, "Am I my brother's keeper?" - Which was not only a statement of callous indifference toward his brother Abel, but maybe in this answer Cain was also exaggerating his own sense of responsibility toward his brother with the thought, "Do you expect me to know where he is every minute of the day?" After all, only God himself was truly known as Israel's watchman keeper in the Old Testament, in passages like Psalm 121:1-8. If the sin of Genesis chapter three was turning away from God, in Cain in Genesis chapter four it is turning away from one's own brother and fellow human being. Therefore, both Genesis chapter three and chapter four together, anticipate the two greatest commandments as expressed by Jesus, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and your neighbour as yourself - According to Jesus, these are the two keys to eternal life in the Parable of the Good Samaritan at Luke 10:25-37. And so God's very first question to Adam relates to love of God, and God's second question to Cain, relates to love of one's fellow man. These are also seen together in Genesis chapter four as well. Finally, God's judgment is passed upon Cain, however, God also places his mark upon Cain, indicating God's continuing protection and grace toward him, even though Cain is destined to become a restless wanderer on the earth, away from God's presence, by finally settling in the land of Nod, or the place of "wandering", east of Eden. Thus we begin to see how important it is to love our brothers and sisters as well, because if we do not do so, the awful consequences of Cain are repeated all over again.

## **2. The Sevenfold Genealogy of Cain (verses 17-24)**

Next, Cain's descendants are credited with significant cultural and technological advances, but the fact that these are not credited to Seth's more holy tenfold line in

*chapter five suggest that all human progress is somehow tainted with sin. Perhaps this is also saying that this life is not meant for the body, but for the soul, and our relationship to God. Finally, in Cain's sevenfold genealogy, most attention is centred on Lamech, the seventh in line, who is not only associated with bigamy, in taking two wives, but more significant is his bloodthirsty lust for seventy-sevenfold vengeance, which shows how quickly sin begins to escalate after Cain's first murder of his brother Abel.*

### **3. Light at the End of the Tunnel (verses 25-26)**

*Finally, the long term solution to all of this will be found in the final verses 25-26 in which the "seeking of the Lord" will be identified with the birth of Seth to replace that Abel, anticipating the tenfold line of Seth in chapter five, in which the seventh in line Enoch, will walk with God, and show the world the possibility of eternal life with God (5:24). This genealogy will in turn lead to Noah, and finally to the calling of Abraham, through whom God's blessing will be given the world, ultimately to be fulfilled through Jesus Christ.*

### **Conclusion:-**

*How might we go about answering God's first two questions to us today? Firstly, "Where are you" in terms of God's Will and Word for our lives, and secondly, "Where is your brother", in terms of our responsibility for our brothers and sisters closest to us, as well as to the wider world? Amen.*