

Raising Cain

I. Slide1a Intro: Raising Cain

- A. I choose this title because **this** is a story about **Cain** (not Abel nec).
1. All of **Eve's** hope is in *her 1st born son, Cain*. Read just vs.1,2a.
 2. If Ch.3 describes *sins fall then* ch.4 helps us realize *sins consequences*.
 3. Yet even this **dark message** is brightened by the promise contained in God's **continued love**, and in history's **first sacrifice**.
- B. This chapter introduces the theme of *conflict between brothers*.
1. This theme returns in the story of **Jacob** and **Esau** (ch.'s 25,27)
 2. Again with **Joseph** and **his brothers** (ch.37).
 - a) In each story an older brother is *passed over* in favor of the younger.
 - b) The narrative illustrates the deepening effects of *sin in the world*.
- C. What did **Abel** have that **Cain** didn't? What did **Cain** have that **Abel** didn't?
- D. Here we have *the 2 seeds/offsprings* from 3:15 already coming into conflict.
1. Slide1b **Cain** was a *child of the devil* (1 Jn.3:10-12 *By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. 11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12 We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.*)
 2. **Abel** was a *child of God* (Mt.23:35 *from the blood of righteous Abel...*).
 - a) The marks of **God's children** are *faith, hope, & love*.
 - b) The marks of **the devil's children** are *unbelief, despair, & hatred*. [outline]

II. Slide2a UNBELIEF (1-7)

- A. (4) *1st born of flock & the fat* - later described in Lev as God's heart on the subject.

1. **How did he know?** Well I'm sure mom & dad passed down the story about **God killing animals for them after their sin**. But I don't think this was bringing **the wrong offering** as much as bringing it with **the wrong heart**. [AKA, the not so cheerful heart]
- B. (5) **He did not look with favor on Cains offering (did God say it? did He show it?)** - **How did Cain know? was he watching Abel's life being blessed?** (we don't know).
1. Later laws in Leviticus ask for **both animal** and **plant** offerings, **so** it is highly **unlikely** that Abel's offering was more highly regarded because it was an **animal sacrifice** (see **grain offering** in Lev 2).
- C. Yahweh's favor/regard of Abel's offering may have been related to **something about both Cain and Abel as people** - such as **their intentions**.
- D. (6,7) God's rhetorical questions to Cain is to offer counsel, not rebuke.
1. I think it's God's way of saying He understands Cain's disappointment **and then** encourages him to **overcome** his sinful heart.
- E. (7) **Will you not be accepted?** - The Hebrew phrase literally reads, **lifting up**.
1. Remember **his face was fallen**...so **the lifting of ones head/face** was a common idiom for **showing favor** or **accepting** someone, may be the intended meaning.
- F. **Slide2b Sin is crouching at the door** - **hata** = **to miss the mark** (fall short of the divine standard). **Pesha** = **transgression** (revolt against the standard). **Awon** = **iniquity** (twisting of the standard).
1. **David** uses all 3, in his great confession of his sin w/Bathsheba.
 2. **Slide2c Ps.51:1,2 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions** (pesha). **2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity** (awon), **and cleanse me from my sin** (hata)!
- G. **Slide3 Sin is crouching at the door** - **lying in wait** like a predator does when he is waiting for prey. (Lion/wildebeest (aka spare parts) in Tanzania story)
1. The Hebrew word **ravats** is also associated with the Akkadian word **rabitsu**.
 - a) **Akkadian** = oldest Semitic lang was the **lingua franca** of the the day (3500 bc - 6th cent bc).

2. *Rabitsu* was used in reference to *demons that were believed to guard entrances to buildings*. Thus, it is possible that sin is being personified here as a demonic force, waiting to pounce on Cain.

H. But you **must** rule over it - oh so he can! Meaning, *Cain is able/Abel* (get it?)

I. Slide4a ABEL'S SACRIFICE OF FAITH - Heb.11:4 **By faith** Abel offered to God a **more acceptable sacrifice** than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through **his faith**, though he died, he still speaks.

J. **Cain the 1st born**, started with *favorable beginnings*. He was the child of *Hope* being the *1stborn*. *He received his AG degree at Eden Univ. (well just outside of) so agriculture was his thing*. Their 2nd-born **Abel**, *He went into animal husbandry*.

K. Here we have an important **contrast** of 2 ways of faith: **Man's** way & **God's** way.

1. Abel's faith produced: [1] Authentic Worship [2] Authentic Righteousness [3] Authentic Testimony.

2. **Both were religious men**. And when it came time to worship each brought an *offering appropriate to his profession* (Cain from the **field** & Abel from the **flock**)

a) **Abel's** was **received**, **Cain's** was **not**.

b) **Abel** went out of his way to please God. **Cain** was simply *discharging a duty*.

3. Best we can tell, this was not a **sin offering** or a **trespass offering** but a **Love offering**.

4. Slide4b Abel's sacrifice was **more excellent** (greater, more important) **because** it came from *a heart made righteous by faith*.

5. Many speculate on why Abel's sacrifice was received & Cain's wasn't.

a) This wasn't a **cattle vs. corn** problem (**both** were required later in Levitical law for sacrificing)

b) Throughout scripture it isn't so much about **what** you give, **so much as** to **how** you give it. [i.e. attitude of heart]

c) It doesn't say *God loves the giver*, but that *He loves the cheerful giver*. [the heart he gives from]

6. **He being dead still speaks** – This is a direct allusion to Gen.4:10 **And He said, What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground.**
- We have **not 1 word** of *Abel Preaching*, **yet** his life is still speaking...
 - St. Francis** once called to 1 of his young monks, “Let’s go down to the town & preach.” The novice, delighted at being singled out to be the companion of Francis, quickly obeyed. They passed through the principal streets, turned down many of the byways & alleys, made their way out to some of the suburbs, & at length returned by a winding route to the monastery gate. As they approached it, the younger man reminded Francis of his original intention. “**You have forgotten, father,**” he said, “**that we went down to the town to preach!**” “My son,” Francis replied, “**we have preached.** We were preaching while we were **walking.** We have been **seen** by many; our **behavior** has been closely **watched**; it was thus that we preached our morning sermon. *It is no use, my son, to walk anywhere to preach **unless we preach everywhere as we walk!***”

III. Slide5a **HATRED** (8)

- (8) **Cain spoke to Abel**...but we don’t know what. Later translations into Syriac preserve a brief statement: *Let’s go out to the field.*
- Killed him** - oh so the **good guy** doesn’t always win? *hmmm* (wow, right from the beginning)
- Slide5b** In our counseling classes Dan shares on *low self - high arrogance*.
 - Here Cain hears **his offering** isn’t as good as his brother’s. *Low-self.*
 - But instead of** looking **upward** for help...**instead of** ruling over it...he goes **inward**. **Instead of** dealing with himself, he takes care of what stands in his way (his brother & **kills him**).
 - So Cain’s **low self - turned into high arrogance**, when he thought he was more than Abel :) [**we compensate**. It’s little man syndrome. It’s my anger]
 - The issue is God saying, I Am your rescue!** This is why it matters. **Not**, try to rescue yourself. [**Cain** just humble yourself. **Judas** just humble yourself. *Admit wrong. Turn. Repent.* **Brian**, just humble yourself. Stuff your pride. Look upward]
- We also see **Cain** moving from **anger** to **envy** to **hatred** to **murder**.

- a) Jesus said, *You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not **murder**, and whoever **murders** will be in danger of the judgment.'* 22 *But I say to you that whoever is **angry** with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.* Mt 5:21,22
- b) Slide5c **Danger, danger...anger** can be the 1st step toward **murder**.

IV. Slide6a **DESPAIR (9-24)**

- A. (9) **I do not know** - When God confronted Adam and Eve with their sin, they readily confessed (3:11-13).
- Here, **Cain lies to God outright**, denying any knowledge of his brother's whereabouts.
- B. **My brother's keeper** - Cain not only denies knowing anything about Abel's fate, **but also defiantly objects to the implication that he should be responsible for his brother in any way.** :(
- Do we know where our brothers & sisters are? Do we care? Are we making excuses like Cain did?**
- C. (10) I remember a scary movie as a kid where they would call on their home phone & whisper, *I know who you are & I know what you did.*
- This was **God's** way of telling **Cain** that He knows what he did...*your brother's blood is crying out from the ground.* Abel's blood was the witness to Cain's guilt.
- D. (11-14) **Now you are cursed from the ground** - because Cain spilled Abel's blood on the ground, Yahweh makes Cain's efforts as a farmer...futile (see vs.14).
- E. Slide6b Cain's *unbelief, hatred & deceit* destroyed every relationship in his life. His relationship with his **brother**, with **God**, with all the world around him.
- We say we are pilgrims** on this earth, passing through. **Cain** is a fugitive, a wanderer.
 - Slide6c St. Augustine said, *Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee.*
- F. (19) First mention of polygamy.

V. Slide7 HOPE (25,26)

- A. Seth is God's new Hope for humanity. For in him comes the Savior in Lk.3:38.
- B. Cain tried to *compensate for his despair* by building a civilization in the land of Nod (wandering). He had many fine things in the city, but God rejected the whole thing and gave Adam another son, Seth/appointed, to carry on the godly line.
 - 1. Often we *compensate* through *busyness* also.
 - 2. Ch.4 the *ungodly line*. Ch.5 the *godly line*.
- C. This chapter is about *The Worshiper*. *W/o faith it is impossible to please God*.