

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

Lesson Five

BROTHERS AND SISTERS (2): CAIN'S WICKEDNESS AND ABEL'S RIGHTEOUSNESS (Gen. 4:1-16)

Burden to Impart:

In the story of Cain and Abel we see that the way we treat our brothers and sisters and feel toward them is very much related with the way we obey our parents and our relationship with God. Cain ignored both God's example and his parents' teachings. This caused him to become displeased and angry with God. Then he became bitter towards his brother and jealous. Eventually, he was so filled with anger and hatred toward his brother that he committed the worst sin possible, he murdered his own brother. We should always be on guard against any feelings of jealousy, envy, bitterness, anger, or hatred toward our brothers and sisters. These feelings come from the Devil. We need to confess them to the Lord and allow Him to wash away our sins and soften our heart again.

Memory Verse: "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as also God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

Facts to Teach:

1. After Adam and Eve had sinned in the garden, God showed them the only way that their sin could be covered, a pure and spotless lamb had to be killed in their place. They were taught that "without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb. 9:22). The Lord accepted the shedding of animal blood until the time when the Lord Jesus would come and die upon the cross, shedding His own blood in order to wash away all of our sins forever (Heb. 9:26).
2. Adam and Eve had taught their two sons, Cain and Abel, this most important lesson which God had shown them in the garden. Man had only one way by which he could come to God and be saved or please Him, through the sacrifice of an animal, which represented Christ.
3. Abel believed his parents' word about God's way of salvation and service to please Him. Abel spent his time and energy to raise sheep. He took care of them and he offered them to God. God was pleased with Abel's offering and respected it. Abel was happy with God and God was happy with Abel.
4. Cain ignored his parents' teaching about God's way of salvation. Instead of offering an animal sacrifice to God, Cain brought God the work of his own hands, the fruit of the ground. However, his offering had no blood and his offering was not what God had shown them He wanted. Cain had rejected God's way and tried to please God in his own way. Of course, God would not be pleased by that kind of offering. God was not happy with either Cain or his offering.
5. Cain became very angry with God. He felt that God was not fair. Then his "countenance fell," which means he had a sad and bitter expression on his face. As he watched his younger brother happily taking care of sheep and offering them to God he became jealous and envious of him (1 John 3:12).
6. At this point, the Lord tried to touch Cain's conscience so that he would realize his sin and turn back to the Lord and take the way that the Lord had shown to his parents (Gen. 4:6-7).

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS Lesson Five (continued)

7. Cain, however, did not soften his heart and repent. Rather, he hardened his heart even more, so his jealousy turned into hatred. He hated his younger brother Abel (1 John 3:15). Then one day, while they were in the field, Cain rose up and killed his brother.
8. Cain's heart became harder and harder. When God came to him to give him a chance to confess his sin and asked, "Where is Abel your brother?", Cain even lied to God and arrogantly replied, "Am I my brother's keeper?"
9. Some important points that can be applied to brotherly relationships from this story:
 - a. We should believe and practice the important lessons our parents try to teach us.
 - b. If we turn our back toward God, we will begin to have problems with our brothers.
 - c. If we feel jealousy and anger toward our brothers we need to realize that this is completely wrong and hardens our heart. We need to confess any wrong feelings in our heart toward our brothers to the Lord so He can forgive us and wash away our sin. (If we do not know exactly what is causing us the problem we can tell our parents about it. Probably they can help.)
 - d. We should learn to live like Abel did, taking care of the godly instructions from our parents, doing things for God in God's way, pleasing God by doing things for God in God's way, and pleasing God by doing what is right, even though our older brothers and sisters may not be doing so.