

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2022: *Genesis*

Lesson 3 “Cain and His Legacy”

Read for this week’s study

Genesis 4; Hebrews 11:4; Micah 6:7; Isaiah 1:11; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 3:12; Genesis 5; Genesis 6:1–5.

Memory Text

“ ‘If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it’ ” (Genesis 4:7, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Cain and Abel
- III. The Two Offerings
- IV. The Crime
- V. The Punishment of Cain
- VI. The Wickedness of Man
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. In Genesis what follows immediately after the Fall is mainly births and deaths followed by the Flood story. But this section of Genesis has many parallels with the Creation and the Fall, often serving like the fulfillment of “prophecies” implied in the specific wording of the earlier accounts. In this particular lesson we look below the surface at the story of Cain and Abel, seeking the deeper meanings implied in the Hebrew of Genesis. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Genesis 4:1-7. The traditional verse division in this part of Genesis 4 is not particularly helpful. Blocking the verse divisions out of your mind, how would you divide the first seven verses of the chapter? Read Genesis 4:1-2. What are the three main things that this passage tells us about Eve, Cain and Abel? How do you discover the difference between the things that matter and those that don’t? How do you prioritize the things that matter in life over those that don’t so much? (Sunday’s Lesson)

3. Read Genesis 4:3-5. Why do you think God accepted Abel's offering and rejected Cain's? What is wrong with the offering of food and drink? Did Abel bring one offering or two? What does it mean in verses 4 and 5 that the Lord respected, had regard, for Abel's offering but had no respect, no regard for Cain's offering? What light does Hebrews 11:4 shed on the reason Abel's offering was accepted? Read Micah 6:7 and Isaiah 1:11. Why did God require sacrifices in the first place if He didn't really like them? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Read Genesis 4:6-8. What is happening between God and Cain in verses 6 and 7? What counsel is God giving to Cain? How do you understand the turn of events in verse 8? What does this encounter between God and Cain tell us about God? How does this story look different when you read it in the universal perspective? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Read Genesis 4:9-16. Why does God ask the question, "Where is your brother?" What do we learn about Cain from his response to the question? How does God respond in turn? What is the connection between Cain's sin and its consequences? How does Cain view the losses he sustained as a result of murdering his brother? What was the ultimate consequence of Cain's sin? How does God treat Cain after Cain's refusal to repent? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read Genesis 4:17-24. What was Cain's legacy? How did his crime open the way to increasing wickedness in the human race? Read Genesis 4:25-26. How does God respond to this increase in evil? Read Genesis 6:1-5. What does this tell us about the nature of sin? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. Elie Wiesel offers the following speculation regarding the reason Cain killed his brother. "Why did he do it? Perhaps he wanted to remain alone: an only child and, after his parents' death, the only man. Alone like God and perhaps alone in place of God. . . . Cain killed to become God. . . . Any man who takes himself for God ends up assassinating men." Do these thoughts make sense to you? Does God invite us to worship out of His own need or ours? Does worship somehow protect us from becoming our worst selves? (Friday's Lesson)
8. Comparing Genesis 5 with Genesis 11, the biblical account tells us that human life span decreased rapidly after the Flood. How would you explain this? How does it fit with scientific theories of human development?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now when, for the first time, did the whole universe see this awful second death that is the result of sin? I would understand that the first death they saw was the death of that lamb, and they'd say, "Well, is that what you mean?" No, Adam killed that one. That's not the wages of sin. When Abel was killed by his brother, the angels would say, "Well, is that what you were talking about?" No, partly, but that's not the awful, final consequence.

Then at the Flood, when God drowned all but eight, can you imagine the angels saying, “Is that what you mean, that if people are wicked beyond the point of restoration, you will drown them all?” And God says, “No.” The devil says, “Yes, it surely is. If you don’t love and obey God he’ll drown you.” Then came Sodom and Gomorrah. Can you hear the devil saying, “That’s what he means! If you don’t obey him, he’ll burn you up, or he’ll turn you into a pillar of salt, or he’ll swallow you up, or have you stoned, or send she-bears to tear you,” and all those other stories in the Bible. And none of those was the real, awful death that is the consequence of sin. Hasn’t that only occurred once in the history of the universe? Isn’t that the death that God, not willing that any of us should perish, he has not asked any of us to demonstrate that death, it’s such an awful death. He came as a human so he could die that death, and in Gethsemane and on Calvary he died the awful death of separation from God, which is the consequence of sin. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Genesis, recorded October 1981, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/1MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/2MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan’s control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}

The only condition upon which the freedom of man is possible is that of becoming one with Christ. “The truth shall make you free;” and Christ is the truth. Sin can triumph only by enfeebling the mind, and destroying the liberty of the soul. Subjection to God is restoration to one’s self,—to the true glory and dignity of man. The divine law, to which we are brought into subjection, is “the law of liberty.” James 2:12. {DA 466.5}

Satan is constantly urging men to accept his principles. Thus he seeks to counterwork the work of God. He is constantly representing the chosen people of God as a deluded people. He is an accuser of the brethren, and his accusing power he is constantly using against those who work

righteousness. The Lord desires through His people to answer Satan's charges by showing the result of obedience to right principles. {6T 11.2}

But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled, "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." Hebrews 10:16. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship. Thus the Scripture says, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John 5:3; 2:4. Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience. {SC 60.2}

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—service that springs from an appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience; and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {PP 34.3}

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. "Come now, and let us reason together" is the Creator's invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}

If in our ignorance we make missteps, the Saviour does not forsake us. We need never feel that we are alone. Angels are our companions. The Comforter that Christ promised to send in His name abides with us. In the way that leads to the City of God there are no difficulties which those who trust in Him may not overcome. There are no dangers which they may not escape. There is not a sorrow, not a grievance, not a human weakness, for which He has not provided a remedy. {MH 249.1}

There is no power in the whole satanic force that can disable the soul that trusts, in simple confidence, in the wisdom that comes from God. {ML 316.3}

Christ is our tower of strength, and Satan can have no power over the soul that walks with God in humility of mind. The promise, “Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me.” In Christ there is perfect and complete help for every tempted soul. . . . If we will look to Jesus as the One in whom we may trust, He will never fail us in any emergency. {ML 316.4}

The Holy Spirit will not compel men to take a certain course of action. We are free moral agents; and when sufficient evidence has been given us as to our duty it is left with us to decide our course. {RH, July 17, 1888 par. 4}

Through the ministry of the angels the Holy Spirit is enabled to work upon the mind and heart of the human agent and draw him to Christ. . . . But the Spirit of God does not interfere with the freedom of the human agent. The Holy Spirit is given to be a helper, so that man may cooperate with the Divine, and it is given to Him to draw the soul but never to force obedience. {TMK 57.2}

In the very fact that men are free moral agents, God teaches us not to be forced or compelled into any course of action, also that as responsible beings in copartnership with God we are to represent God in character. We are to have an interest in our brother, in our neighbor, in all around (Letter 65, 1895). {5BC 1098.1}

Today the truths of Scripture are to be brought before the great men of the world in order that they may choose between obedience to God’s law and allegiance to the prince of evil. God sets everlasting truth before them—truth that will make them wise unto salvation, but He does not force them to accept it. If they turn from it, He leaves them to themselves, to be filled with the fruit of their own doings. {AA 241.2}

Our will is not to be forced into co-operation with divine agencies, but it must be voluntarily submitted. Were it possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influence of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. {MB 142.1}

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. {GC 541.3}

Christ does not drive but draws men unto Him. The only compulsion which He employs is the constraint of love. {MB 127.1}

God, the One infinite and all-wise, sees the end from the beginning, and in dealing with evil His plans were far-reaching and comprehensive. It was His purpose, not merely to put down the rebellion, but to demonstrate to all the universe the nature of the rebellion. God's plan was unfolding, showing both His justice and His mercy, and fully vindicating His wisdom and righteousness in His dealings with evil. {PP 78.3}

The holy inhabitants of other worlds were watching with the deepest interest the events taking place on the earth. In the condition of the world that existed before the Flood they saw illustrated the results of the administration which Lucifer had endeavored to establish in heaven, in rejecting the authority of Christ and casting aside the law of God. In those high-handed sinners of the antediluvian world they saw the subjects over whom Satan held sway. The thoughts of men's hearts were only evil continually. Genesis 6:5. Every emotion, every impulse and imagination, was at war with the divine principles of purity and peace and love. It was an example of the awful depravity resulting from Satan's policy to remove from God's creatures the restraint of His holy law. {PP 78.4}

From the opening of the great controversy it has been Satan's purpose to misrepresent God's character and to excite rebellion against His law, and this work appears to be crowned with success. The multitudes give ear to Satan's deceptions and set themselves against God. But amid the working of evil, God's purposes move steadily forward to their accomplishment; to all created intelligences He is making manifest His justice and benevolence. {PP 338.2}

Men put God out of their knowledge and worshiped the creatures of their own imagination; and as the result, they became more and more debased. The psalmist describes the effect produced upon the worshiper by the adoration of idols. He says, "They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them." Psalm 115:8. It is a law of the human mind that by beholding we become changed. Man will rise no higher than his conceptions of truth, purity, and holiness. If the mind is never exalted above the level of humanity, if it is not uplifted by faith to contemplate infinite wisdom and love, the man will be constantly sinking lower and lower. . . . God had given men His commandments as a rule of life, but His law was transgressed, and every conceivable sin was the result. The wickedness of men was open and daring, justice was trampled in the dust, and the cries of the oppressed reached unto heaven. {PP 91.2}

In sparing the life of Cain the murderer, God gave the world an example of what would be the result of permitting the sinner to live to continue a course of unbridled iniquity. Through the influence of Cain's teaching and example, multitudes of his descendants were led into sin, until "the wickedness of man was great in the earth" and "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." Genesis 6:5, 11. {GC 543.2}

Sin not only shuts away from God, but destroys in the human soul both the desire and the capacity for knowing Him. Through sin, the whole human organism is deranged, the mind is perverted, the imagination corrupted; the faculties of the soul are degraded. There is an absence of pure religion, of heart holiness. The converting power of God has not wrought in transforming the character. The soul is weak, and for want of moral force to overcome, is polluted and debased. {PK 233.1}

In his sinless state, man held joyful communion with Him “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” Colossians 2:3. But after his sin, he could no longer find joy in holiness, and he sought to hide from the presence of God. Such is still the condition of the unrenewed heart. It is not in harmony with God, and finds no joy in communion with Him. The sinner could not be happy in God’s presence; he would shrink from the companionship of holy beings. Could he be permitted to enter heaven, it would have no joy for him. The spirit of unselfish love that reigns there—every heart responding to the heart of Infinite Love—would touch no answering chord in his soul. His thoughts, his interests, his motives, would be alien to those that actuate the sinless dwellers there. He would be a discordant note in the melody of heaven. Heaven would be to him a place of torture; he would long to be hidden from Him who is its light, and the center of its joy. It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven; they are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship. The glory of God would be to them a consuming fire. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. {SC 17.2}

God could employ only such means as were consistent with truth and righteousness. Satan could use what God could not—flattery and deceit. He had sought to falsify the word of God and had misrepresented His plan of government, claiming that God was not just in imposing laws upon the angels; that in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, He was seeking merely the exaltation of Himself. It was therefore necessary to demonstrate before the inhabitants of heaven, and of all the worlds, that God’s government is just, His law perfect. Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe. The true character of the usurper and his real object must be understood by all. He must have time to manifest himself by his wicked works. {PP 42.1}

The discord which his own course had caused in heaven, Satan charged upon the government of God. All evil he declared to be the result of the divine administration. He claimed that it was his own object to improve upon the statutes of Jehovah. Therefore God permitted him to demonstrate the nature of his claims, to show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. His own work must condemn him. Satan had claimed from the first that he was not in rebellion. The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked. {PP 42.2}

Even when he was cast out of heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since only the service of love can be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a

conviction of His justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of heaven and of the worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted out of existence, some would have served God from fear rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages, he must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, and that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might be forever placed beyond all question. {PP 42.3}

Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages—a perpetual testimony to the nature of sin and its terrible results. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy beings, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its penalty. {PP 42.4}

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. {DA 761.4}