

## The spread of sin

### Introduction

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One of the tragic facts about the sin of Adam and Eve is that the seeds of dissatisfaction, self-centeredness and rebellion against God were sown into the hearts of every one of their descendants. In the words of Paul, through one man sin entered the world and death through sin and so death spread to all men, because all sinned (see Romans 5vs12). Nowhere is this this spread of sin more clearly seen than in the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4vs1-26.

Eve, the mother of all the living (Genesis 3vs20) whose pain in child bearing is part of God's judgement against her for her role in human rebellion, gives birth to two sons 'with the help of the Lord' (Genesis 4vs1-2). The narrative assumes that the boys are raised to know what is right, including the importance of bringing and offering to the LORD, a fact which must surely point back to the provision of skin garments by the LORD in Genesis 3vs21. But as the story progresses we see that there is a marked difference between the Cain and Abel in their attitude to the LORD. Furthermore we note that the idea of sin and sinful desire has entered the narrative (Genesis 3vs7). Untamed anger and un-mastered sin lead to envy, hatred and murder. This attitude of self-centeredness and vengeful anger are passed on from generation to generation culminating with Lamech's terrible statement in vs 23-24.

The story is not devoid of grace however. The LORD accepts Abel's offering despite the fact that he also is a sinner. And the LORD intervenes to warn Cain against the consequences of his actions. Even after Cain murderous deed, God protects Cain from revenge attack and so acts to prevent a terrible cycle of blood-letting and violence. And the LORD grants Eve a son in the place of Abel so that the godly line may be re-established in the world.

At the end of this study you should be able to answer the following questions:

- What consequence did Adam and Eve's rebellion have for the rest of humanity?
- How will God relate to a world which is under the power of sin?

Read Genesis 4 vs1-26



**Observe:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. The parallels and differences between this story and that described in Genesis 3
2. The description of the offerings and the LORD's response
3. The LORD's warning to Cain
4. The reference to Cain as a 'restless wanderer'
5. The spread of humanity and the development of culture and industry
6. Lamech's deed and vengeful words
7. The birth of Seth and the reference to people calling upon the name of the LORD

**?Think:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the significance of the words 'with the help of the LORD' in Genesis 4vs 1
2. What was Cain's response to the rejection of his offering? Why was it rejected? (hint see vs 7)
3. What are the key elements of the judgement pronounced upon Cain?
4. In what way does the story teach us about God's grace to sinful humanity?

**! Understand / Apply** \_\_\_\_\_

1. What answer can you give for our key questions?