

## Lesson 3

### Cain and His Legacy

#### Sabbath Afternoon, April 9

Christ was the foundation of the whole Jewish economy. The death of Abel was in consequence of Cain's refusing to accept God's plan in the school of obedience, to be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, typified by the sacrificial offerings pointing to Christ. Cain refused the shedding of blood, which symbolized the blood of Christ to be shed for the world. This whole ceremony was prepared by God, and Christ became the foundation of the whole system. This is the beginning of its work as the schoolmaster to bring sinful human agents to a consideration of Christ.

All who did service in connection with the sanctuary were being educated constantly in regard to the intervention of Christ in behalf of the human race. This service was designed to create in every heart a love for the law of God, which is the law of His kingdom. The sacrificial offering was to be an object lesson of the love of God revealed in Christ—in the suffering, dying victim, who took upon Himself the sin of which man was guilty, the innocent being made sin for us.

—**Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1109.**

Since the announcement to the serpent in Eden, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed" (Genesis 3:15), Satan had known that he did not hold absolute sway over the world. There was seen in men the working of a power that withstood his dominion. With intense interest he watched the sacrifices offered by Adam and his sons. In these ceremonies he discerned a symbol of communion between earth and heaven. He set himself to intercept this communion. He misrepresented God, and misinterpreted the rites that pointed to the Saviour. Men were led to fear God as one who delighted in their destruction. The sacrifices that should have revealed His love were offered only to appease His wrath. Satan excited the evil passions of men, in order to fasten his rule upon them. When God's written word was given, Satan studied the prophecies of the Saviour's advent. From generation to generation he worked to blind the people to these prophecies, that they might reject Christ at His coming.

—***The Desire of Ages*, p. 115.**

The Pharisee and the publican represent two great classes into which those who come to worship God are divided. Their first two representatives are found in the first two children that were born into the world. Cain thought himself righteous, and he came to God with a thank offering only. He made no confession of sin, and acknowledged no need of mercy. But Abel came with the blood that pointed to the Lamb of God. He came as a sinner, confessing himself lost; his only hope was the unmerited love of God. The Lord had respect to his offering, but to Cain and his offering He had not respect. The sense of need, the recognition of our poverty and sin, is the very first condition of acceptance with God. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:3.

—***Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 152.**

## **Sunday, April 10: Cain and Abel**

The Saviour's coming was foretold in Eden. When Adam and Eve first heard the promise, they looked for its speedy fulfillment. They joyfully welcomed their first-born son, hoping that he might be the Deliverer. But the fulfillment of the promise tarried. Those who first received it died without the sight. . . .

But like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God's purposes know no haste and no delay. . . . So in heaven's council the hour for the coming of Christ had been determined. When the great clock of time pointed to that hour, Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

**—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 31, 32.**

Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam, differed widely in character. Abel had a spirit of loyalty to God; he saw justice and mercy in the Creator's dealings with the fallen race, and gratefully accepted the hope of redemption. But Cain cherished feelings of rebellion, and murmured against God because of the curse pronounced upon the earth and upon the human race for Adam's sin. He permitted his mind to run in the same channel that led to Satan's fall—indulging the desire for self-exaltation and questioning the divine justice and authority.

**—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 71.**

To encourage the love of amusement is to discourage the love of religious exercises, for the heart becomes so crowded with trifling, with what is pleasing to the natural heart, that there is no room for Jesus. . . .

It requires the faith that works by love and purifies the soul to meet the mind of God. There are those who believe in Christ; they do not think Him an impostor; they believe the Bible to be a revelation of His divine character. They admire its holy doctrines, and revere the name, the only name given under heaven whereby men can be saved, and yet, with all this knowledge, they may be as truly ignorant of the grace of God as the veriest sinner. They have not opened the heart to let Jesus in.

**—*That I May Know Him*, p. 307.**

The time is not far off when the people of God will be called upon to give their testimony before the rulers of the earth. Not one in twenty has a realization of what rapid strides we are making toward the great crisis in our history. . . . There is no time for vanity, for trifling, for engaging the mind in unimportant matters. . . .

You now have an opportunity to attain to the greatest intellectual power through the study of the Word of God. But if you are indolent, and fail to dig deep in the mines of truth, you will not be ready for the crisis that is soon to come upon us. O that you would realize that each moment is golden. If you live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, you will not be found unprepared.

**—*Our High Calling*, p. 355.**

## **Monday, April 11: The Two Offerings**

These brothers were tested, as Adam had been tested before them, to prove whether they would believe and obey the word of God. They were acquainted with the provision made for the salvation of man, and understood the system of offerings which God had ordained. They knew that in these offerings they were to express faith in the Saviour whom the offerings typified, and at the same time to acknowledge their total dependence on Him for pardon; and they knew that by thus conforming to the divine plan for their redemption, they were giving proof of their obedience to the will of God. Without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin; and they were to show their faith in the blood of Christ as the promised atonement by offering the firstlings of the flock in sacrifice. Besides this, the first fruits of the earth were to be presented before the Lord as a thank offering.

**—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 71.**

Cain brought his offering unto the Lord with murmuring and infidelity in his heart in regard to the promised Sacrifice. He was unwilling to strictly follow the plan of obedience and procure a lamb and offer it with the fruit of the ground. He merely took of the ground and disregarded the requirement of God. God had made known to Adam that without shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin. Cain was not particular to bring even the best of the fruits. Abel advised his brother not to come before the Lord without the blood of sacrifice. Cain, being the eldest, would not listen to his brother. He despised his counsel, and with doubt and murmuring in regard to the necessity of the ceremonial offerings, he presented his offering. But God did not accept it.

Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat, as God had commanded; and in full faith of the Messiah to come, and with humble reverence, he presented the offering. God had respect unto his offering. A light flashes from heaven and consumes the offering of Abel. Cain sees no manifestation that his is accepted. He is angry with the Lord and with his brother.

**—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 52, 53.**

He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. Man cannot be saved without obedience, but his works should not be of himself; Christ should work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure. If a man could save himself by his own works, he might have something in himself in which to rejoice. The effort that man makes in his own strength to obtain salvation, is represented by the offering of Cain. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin; but that which is wrought through faith is acceptable to God. When we seek to gain heaven through the merits of Christ, the soul makes progress. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, we may go on from strength to strength, from victory to victory; for through Christ the grace of God has worked out our complete salvation.

**—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 364.**

## **Tuesday, April 12: The Crime**

It is claimed by some that the human race is in need, not of redemption, but of development—that it can refine, elevate, and regenerate itself. As Cain thought to secure the divine favor by an offering that lacked the blood of a sacrifice, so do these expect to exalt humanity to the divine standard, independent of the atonement. This history of Cain shows what must be the result. It shows what man will become apart from Christ. Humanity has no power to regenerate itself. It does not tend upward, toward the divine, but downward, toward the satanic. Christ is our only hope.

—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 25.

Cain did not repent. Instead of censuring and abhorring himself to his unbelief, he still complains of the injustice and partiality of God. And in his jealousy and hatred he contends with Abel and reproaches him. Abel meekly points out his brother's error, and shows him that the wrong is in himself. But Cain hates his brother from the moment that God manifests to him the tokens of his acceptance. His brother Abel seeks to appease his wrath by contending for the compassion of God in saving the lives of their parents, when he might have brought upon them immediate death. He tells Cain that God loved them, or he would not have given his Son, innocent and holy, to suffer the wrath which man by his disobedience deserved to suffer. While Abel justifies the plan of God, Cain becomes enraged and his anger increases and burns against Abel, until in his rage he slays him. God inquires of Cain for his brother, and Cain utters a guilty falsehood, "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?" God . . . says to him, "Thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."

—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 49, 50.

It is not safe for us to linger to contemplate the advantages to be reaped through yielding to Satan's suggestions. Sin means dishonor and disaster to every soul that indulges in it; but it is blinding and deceiving in its nature, and it will entice us with flattering presentations. If we venture on Satan's ground we have no assurance of protection from his power. So far as in us lies, we should close every avenue by which the tempter may find access to us. . . .

The only safeguard against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. It is because selfishness exists in our hearts that temptation has power over us. But when we behold the great love of God, selfishness appears to us in its hideous and repulsive character, and we desire to have it expelled from the soul. As the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ, our hearts are softened and subdued, the temptation loses its power, and the grace of Christ transforms the character.

—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 118.

## **Wednesday, April 13: The Punishment of Cain**

God had given Cain an opportunity to confess his sin. . . . He knew the enormity of the deed he had done, and of the falsehood he had uttered to conceal it; but he was rebellious still, and sentence was no longer deferred. . . .

Notwithstanding that Cain had by his crimes merited the sentence of death, a merciful Creator still spared his life, and granted him opportunity for repentance. But Cain lived only to harden his heart, to encourage rebellion against the divine authority, and to become the head of a line of bold, abandoned sinners. This one apostate, led on by Satan, became a tempter to others; and his example and influence exerted their demoralizing power, until the earth became so corrupt and filled with violence as to call for its destruction. . . .

Upon receiving the curse of God, Cain had withdrawn from his father's household. . . . He had gone out from the presence of the Lord, cast away the promise of the restored Eden, to seek his possessions and enjoyment in the earth under the curse of sin, thus standing at the head of that great class of men who worship the god of this world. In that which pertains to mere earthly and material progress, his descendants became distinguished. But they were regardless of God, and in opposition to His purposes for man.

**—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 27.**

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.

**—*The Great Controversy*, p. 543.**

God has given to every man his work; and if any one turns from the work that God has given him, to do the work of Satan, to defile his own body or lead another into sin, that man's work is cursed, and the brand of Cain is placed upon him. The ruin of his victim will cry unto God, as did the blood of Abel.

Any man . . . who seeks to compel or control the reason of any other man, becomes an agent of Satan, to do his work, and in the sight of the heavenly universe he bears the mark of Cain.

**—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1087.**

## **Thursday, April 14: The Wickedness of Man**

To Adam was given another son, to be the inheritor of the divine promise, the heir of the spiritual birthright. The name Seth, given to this son, signified “appointed,” or “compensation;” “for,” said the mother, “God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.” Seth was of more noble stature than Cain or Abel, and resembled Adam more closely than did his other sons. He was a worthy character, following in the steps of Abel. Yet he inherited no more natural goodness than did Cain. Concerning the creation of Adam it is said, “In the likeness of God made He him;” but man, after the Fall, “begat a son in his own likeness, after his image.” While Adam was created sinless, in the likeness of God, Seth, like Cain, inherited the fallen nature of his parents. But he received also the knowledge of the Redeemer and instruction in righteousness. By divine grace he served and honored God; and he labored, as Abel would have done, had he lived, to turn the minds of sinful men to revere and obey their Creator.

**—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 80.**

To the crime of murder, in which Cain had led the way, Lamech, the fifth in descent, added polygamy, and, boastfully defiant, he acknowledged God, only to draw from the avenging of Cain an assurance of his own safety. Abel had led a pastoral life, dwelling in tents or booths, and the descendants of Seth followed the same course, counting themselves “strangers and pilgrims on the earth,” seeking “a better country, that is, an heavenly.” Hebrews 11:13, 16.

For some time the two classes remained separate. The race of Cain, spreading from the place of their first settlement, dispersed over the plains and valleys where the children of Seth had dwelt; and the latter, in order to escape from their contaminating influence, withdrew to the mountains, and there made their home. So long as this separation continued, they maintained the worship of God in its purity. But in the lapse of time they ventured, little by little, to mingle with the inhabitants of the valleys. This association was productive of the worst results. “The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair.” The children of Seth, attracted by the beauty of the daughters of Cain’s descendants, displeased the Lord by intermarrying with them. Many of the worshipers of God were beguiled into sin by the allurements that were now constantly before them, and they lost their peculiar, holy character. Mingling with the depraved, they became like them in spirit and in deeds; the restrictions of the seventh commandment were disregarded, “and they took them wives of all which they chose.” The children of Seth went “in the way of Cain” (Jude 11); they fixed their minds upon worldly prosperity and enjoyment and neglected the commandments of the Lord. Men “did not like to retain God in their knowledge;” they “became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” Romans 1:21. Therefore “God gave them over to a mind void of judgment.” Verse 28, margin. Sin spread abroad in the earth like a deadly leprosy.

**—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 81, 82.**

**Friday, April 15: For Further Reading**

*That I May Know Him*, “The Day of Final Settlement,” p. 359;

*In Heavenly Places*, “The Church and the World,” p. 309.