



Genesis

Life Outside of Eden

History of the Early World	Patriarchs	Israel in Egypt	Conquest of Canaan	Judges	United Kingdom	Divided Kingdom Exile	Exile	Return	Maccabean Revolt	Jesus the Messiah	Church
----------------------------	------------	-----------------	--------------------	--------	----------------	-----------------------	-------	--------	------------------	-------------------	--------



Introduction

It is time now to return to the story of Genesis. We have been fortified by our knowledge of what the New Testament reveals as the fulfillment of the promise of God in Gen. 3:15. We have allowed ourselves to peek ahead to see if the hope of a restoration and return to Eden, which we felt so strongly when Adam and Eve were expelled, could be possible. Now the challenge for us is to continue our study of Genesis as if we do not know what lies ahead. This will take some discipline, of course, but our study will be better for it.

We are now ready to see what happened to Adam and Eve once they left the sanctuary of Eden. We ought to be full of questions. What kind of relationship will the dis-graced humans have with God? What will they pass along to their offspring? What kind of civilization will develop from these people?

It is necessary for us to pick up the pace in the remainder of our study. Most of the rest of the lessons will cover at least two chapters (Genesis is a big book!). Sometimes you will need to read texts in your own Bible, as re-printing the passages here would take too much space.



Genesis 4:1-26

1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD." 2 And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground. 3 In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, 4 and Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, 5 but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. 6 The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? 7 **If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it.**"

8 Cain said to Abel his brother, "Let us go out to the field." And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him. 9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" 10 And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. 11 And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength; you shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." 13 Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. 14 Behold, thou hast driven me this day away from the ground; and from thy face I shall be hidden; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will slay me." 15 Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! If any one slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who came upon him should kill him. 16 Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

17 Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch; and he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch. 18 To Enoch was born Irad; and Irad was the father of Me-huja-el, and



Genesis 4:1-26 (cont.)

Me-huja-el the father of Me-thusha-el, and Me-thusha-el the father of Lamech. 19 And Lamech took two wives; the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. 20 Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have cattle. 21 His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. 22 Zillah bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

23 Lamech said to his wives: "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, hearken to what I say: I have slain a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. 24 If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

25 And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another child instead of Abel, for Cain slew him." 26 To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time men began to call upon the name of the LORD.



Questions on the Text

First Fruits of the Fall

Read Genesis 4:1-7

1. Look at Eve's comment after the birth of Cain (vs. 1). What do you think prompts her to say it? Why is it a hopeful sign in this new life outside Eden?
2. What is the difference between Abel and Cain as reflected in their offerings? Why do you suppose God had no regard for "Cain and for his offering"?
3. Cain was very angry over God's response to him and to his offering. What does this suggest to you about the kind of man Cain was?
4. What choice does God give to Cain? If Cain refuses God's offer, what problem will he face? What does this suggest is the most dangerous consequence of disobeying God's Word (read also Rom. 6:16)?
5. Cain and Abel were born to the same parents and presumably had the same upbringing. What do you suppose explains the difference between them?

Cain is Cursed

Read Genesis 4:8-16

6. See the details of Abel's murder in vs. 8. What more about Cain do we understand from them?
7. Why do you think God asked Cain where Abel was? Didn't He already know?
8. Read Cain's answer to God's question in vs. 9. What becomes increasingly clear about the type of man Cain was?
9. In vs. 10 is the first mention of the word "blood" in Scripture. What power does blood seem to have?
10. What do you suppose Abel's blood is saying from the ground? Read Heb. 11:4 and 12:22-24 before answering.
11. What is completely lacking in Cain's response to God? What is his primary concern? In this, who does he remind you of?



Questions on the Text (cont.)

Catholic Scripture Study

12. Cain's original problem with God was that he was unwilling to give Him the best of himself or his harvest. Look at the curse God places on him. How is this curse a reflection of Cain himself? What does it suggest about the choices we make in life?

13. Why do you think God marked Cain so no one would kill him?

14. After the fall in Eden, we saw signs of God's continued tender care of His creatures. During this second episode of human rebellion, do you see similar signs of God's love for humans?

Two Cultures Develop Read Genesis 4:17-26

15. Cain departed from the presence of the Lord and began a family. [*Note: Cain must have married a sister of his, as the whole human family derived from Adam and Eve; this practice presumably had to be allowed until it was no longer necessary. Eventually it was prohibited by God.*] Among his descendants, seventh in line from Adam through Cain, was Lamech (a polygamist). What type of man does he appear to be? What does this suggest about the kind of civilization that developed among people who live "away from the presence of the Lord"?

16. What was different about the line of descendants of Adam through Seth (vs. 26)?

Read Genesis 5 in your own Bible; it is not reprinted here. You will see that Genesis 5 gives a detailed account of the descendants of Adam through Seth. Read this passage all the way through, at least once. (It can be hard to read genealogies. Try looking for extra details and highlighting them.) Then answer the questions that follow.

A Contrast in Cultures Read Genesis 4:17-26

17. From the last chapter, remember that Lamech was the seventh in line from Adam through Cain (see Gen. 4:19-24). In this chapter, see that the seventh in line from Adam through Seth is a man named Enoch (vss. 18-24). In the New Testament, read also Jude 14-15 and Heb. 11:5-6. What is the difference between the two men, Lamech and Enoch? What do you think is the significance of that difference?

18. See in 5:24-31 that there is also a Lamech in the line of Seth (which can be confusing). What hope does this Lamech express for his son, Noah? How does this hope perfectly summarize the first four chapters of Genesis?

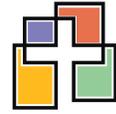


Questions for Reflection

One of the best ways to meditate on God's Word is to take it deeply into your life through memorization. The suggested memory verse is always highlighted in the text in the lesson. Or you may choose one of your own. For further reflection, consider these questions:

1. The Catholic Church preserves in her teachings about sin the very serious warning that God gave Cain and that St. Paul wrote to the Romans. Each time we decide to do the wrong thing, we make it easier for ourselves to do wrong the next time we are tempted. Think about the little sins in your life that you have grown accustomed to. Take seriously God's challenge to Cain, and resolve to turn away from them. Even small sins form calluses on our souls. Ask God to help you find and rid yourself of them.

2. When you give to God, whether it is time or money, service, attention, or anything else, do you give your best or your leftovers? Consider in your heart what has been given you and what you should return out of thanks to God.



Opportunities for Additional Study

Points to Ponder

This first lesson on life outside of Eden packs quite a punch. So much of what characterizes human life through all the centuries of our history appears in embryonic form in Genesis 4 and 5. There is the repetition of a mother announcing the birth of a son, as a gift from the Lord (4:1, 25). The icon of Mother and Son begins to take shape. We see men worshipping God with offerings and that their offerings represent what is in their hearts towards God. There is the clear, loving choice God gives to man to choose to live righteously, keeping the covenant he has with God, which will require self-denial and obedience. There is the warning that sin begets sin and that resisting it will mean a battle. We see that Cain becomes a living example of how sins like jealousy and hatred, if not mortified, give birth to betrayal, murder, lying, and arrogance. Those sins, once committed, harden the soul's soil, leaving it callous and impervious to God's approach. We see that physical death doesn't mean the end of a life; Abel is still able to speak through his blood. Perhaps his voice is one that cries out for mercy for his brother, true evidence of the righteousness that characterized his life and the offering that so enraged his brother. We observe God as the loving Father Who seeks explanations, Who punishes in order to reform, and Who holds open the possibility of reconciliation. We recognize the disastrous consequences for human life and development when men live away from the presence of the Lord. We are cheered by the evidence that sinful men are still loved deeply by God and that they can, in spite of everything, walk in friendship with Him.

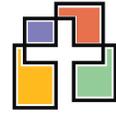
The final scene from Genesis 5, in which Lamech expresses hope for his son, Noah, prints indelibly in our minds this picture of the very beginnings of the community of faith. Even among men who acknowledge God, calling upon His Name and responding to His grace, sometimes heroically, there is still the clear understanding that deliverance from God's curse is necessary, that things are not as they should be, either in the earth or in the heart of man. They are waiting patiently for God to act within human history, accomplishing His purposes through human beings. These chapters perfectly set the stage for the rest of the story of redemption. What we see in outline form here will grow in detail and drama as we wait to see what God has planned for the creation He loves.

Catechism Connection

Excerpted from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

On Gen. 4:3-15 - "After that first sin, the world is virtually inundated by sin. There is Cain's murder of his brother Abel and the universal corruption which follows in the wake of sin....Scripture and the Church's Tradition continually recall the presence and universality of sin in man's history: 'What Revelation makes known to us is confirmed by our own experience. For when man looks into his own heart he finds that he is drawn toward what is wrong and sunk in many evils which cannot come from his good creator. Often refusing to acknowledge God as his source, man has also upset the relationship which should link him to his last end; and at the same time he has broken the right order that should reign within himself as well as between himself and other men and all creatures.'" (401)

On Gen. 4:8-12 - "In the account of Abel's murder by his brother Cain, Scripture reveals the presence of anger and envy in man, consequences of original sin, from the beginning of human history. Man has become the enemy of his fellow man. God declares the wickedness of this fratricide....The Old Testament always considered blood a sacred sign of life. This teaching remains necessary for all time....The deliberate murder of an innocent person is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human being, to the golden rule, and to the holiness of the Creator. The law forbidding it is universally valid: it obliges each and everyone, always and everywhere." (2259-61)



In this lesson, we observed that:

1. From the very start, the discord Adam and Eve's sin brought to the world is evident in their children. The internal conflict that now reigns between will and emotion is dramatized in the conflict between Cain and Abel: Abel gives God his best while Cain gives only his due. Abel's sacrifice pleased God because it reflected a heart of gratitude for and recognition of God's provision and a desire to give Him the best. In contrast, the Lord had no regard for Cain's offering because it reflected his heart's desire to keep the best for himself, as well as the fundamental disregard for God that becomes evident in the subsequent events.
2. Cain's jealousy and anger are apparent to God, Who extends an offer to him to set everything right by choosing to live righteously. God warns him that to capitulate to the rage he feels inside will make him subject to sin, like a slave to a master.
3. Cain chooses his way rather than God's. He murders his brother, tragic evidence of the consequences of the fall of his parents from supernatural grace in Eden. As God approaches him, extending grace to him by making him accountable for his actions, which is the first step to forgiveness and restoration, Cain's heart hardens. The trap sin has laid for him snaps shut.
4. God punishes Cain, allowing him to experience in his own life the effects of the choices he has made. His life will be preserved by God, however, perhaps to make reconciliation possible.
5. Cain leaves the covenant, represented by his becoming a fugitive and wanderer. The civilization that grows from him bears the continuing marks of pride and violence. His descendants become a living picture of human development apart from a humble acknowledgement of God.
6. Seth, the son born to Adam and Eve to replace Abel, is a man who calls on the name of the Lord. Among his descendants are those who live in friendship with God and who patiently wait for deliverance from the curse that rests on man's life because of disobedience.
7. Noah, whose name means "rest," is a descendant of Seth's. He is named by his father in the hope that he will be a deliverer of God's people.

A Message from the Authors

Are you enjoying our study? Would you like this important service to continue? If so, please be aware that Catholic Exchange is a non-profit charitable organization totally dependent on your financial support to maintain both our website and our groundbreaking Catholic Scripture Study. So please make an on-line donation with your credit card at www.catholicexchange.com, call 1-888-477-1982, or mail as generous a donation as possible to:

Catholic Exchange
P.O. Box 231820
Encinitas, CA 92023

Thank you for making the Word of God available to anyone who wants it anywhere in the world.