

26-0809a Transcript

26-0809a - *The First Family and Crouching Sin*, Scott Reynolds

Bible Readers: John Nousek and Roger Raines

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The First Family and Crouching Sin

1st Reading (0:04 - 0:44): John Nousek

Genesis 3:15 (0:04) *Good morning. This morning's first scripture reading is found in Genesis (0:11) chapter 3, one verse, chapter 3 verse 15. God says, and I will put enmity between (0:26) you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise you on the (0:36) head, and you shall bruise him on the heel. (0:44)*

2nd Reading (0:49 - 1:27): Roger Raines

Genesis 4:1-2: (0:49) *Good morning. We will continue in the (0:52) book of Genesis chapter 4, the first two verses. Now the man had relations with (1:03) his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, I have (1:09) gotten a man child with the help of the Lord. Again she gave birth to his brother (1:16) Abel, and Abel was the keeper of the flocks, but Cain was the tiller of the (1:24) ground. This concludes this reading. (1:27)*

Transcript (0:04 - 22:51), Preacher: Scott Reynolds

(1:31) Good to see everybody today. We are continuing (1:35) our series through Genesis chapters 1 through 11. We spent considerable time (1:41) in the first three chapters talking about creation, the goodness of God's (1:45) design, the entrance of sin, the curses, and the first bright promise of a coming (1:52) Redeemer in Genesis 3:15, which John read for us.

I normally do a recap, but I'm not (2:02) going to do that this morning. But if you want the full summary of chapters 1 (2:08) through 3, the last time I spoke, which was May 31st, the AM and PM services both (2:16) summarized chapters 1 through 3, and they're available on our website. So (2:23) today we pick up with the historical narrative immediately after Adam and (2:29) Eve are driven out of the garden.

The fall is not an abstract idea. It is now (2:38) lived out in the first family, and what we are about to see is both heartbreaking, (2:45) I view chapters 3 and 4 as truly a sad, truly a sad story, are both heartbreaking (2:55) and instructive. The same sin that entered the world through one man continues to (3:03) crouch at the door of every human heart, and God still speaks to us today.

Let's (3:11) hear the full account. Picking up again in Genesis 4, beginning with verse 1, (3:20) Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, I have (3:27) gotten a man with the help of the Lord. And again she bore his brother Abel.

Now (3:33) Abel was the keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. In the course of (3:39) time, Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and (3:45) Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock, and of their fat portions. And (3:53) the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering (3:59) he had no regard.

So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The Lord said to Cain, (4:07) Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be (4:14) accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. It desires.

I do (4:23) like the translation to say that it desires to have you. It desires you. This (4:29) translation, yes, he says, Its desire is for you.

Or, its desire is contrary to you, but (4:42) you must rule over it. And Cain spoke to Abel, his brother, when they were in the (4:48) field. Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

And then the Lord (4:53) said to Cain, Where is Abel, your brother? He said, I do not know. Am I my brother's (5:02) keeper? And the Lord said, What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood (5:09) is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has (5:17) opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

When you (5:22) work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you in strength. You shall be a (5:28) fugitive and a wanderer on the earth. Cain said to the Lord, My punishment is (5:34) greater than I can bear.

Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground (5:39) and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the (5:44) earth. And whoever finds me will kill me.

And the Lord said to him, Not so. If (5:51) anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord put (6:00) a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him.

And then Cain went (6:08) away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. (6:20) The first family and life outside the garden. Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she (6:27) conceived and bore Cain.

The Hebrew verb yada, for knew, as in K-N-E-W, is the (6:39) common biblical idiom for the intimate union of husband and wife, and it has no (6:45) relation to the English slang yadda yadda yadda. I asked Grok and it told me (6:53) they're not the same. Notice, when this happens, it's after the expulsion, and I'm (7:00) convinced, along with many careful readers of the text, that Cain is the (7:06) firstborn son, and I believe that for two reasons.

First, it is highly unlikely that (7:14) Adam and Eve had children while still in the garden before they sinned, and the (7:20) reason why we have to surmise, by the way, is because the Bible doesn't tell us (7:27) that Cain is their first child. And Genesis 20, sorry, Genesis 2, verse 25, tells us (7:37) that they were naked and they were not ashamed. After they ate, the eyes of both (7:43) were opened and they knew that they were naked.

And notice this knowledge has to (7:48) do with their nakedness. It's part of this knowledge that they got from eating (7:55) the forbidden fruit. Adam later admits to God that he hid from him because he was (8:06) afraid, because he was naked, and God asks, who told you that you were naked? And (8:14) their innocence was real.

They did not yet possess the self-consciousness or the (8:22) knowledge that comes with the fall. It is difficult to imagine them engaging in (8:28) the very act that produces children while still in that state of complete (8:33) innocence. How long were they in the garden before they sinned? Most (8:39) commentators believe they were there only a short period of time, perhaps even (8:46)

merely weeks, mainly because of this issue of when they began having children to (8:52) obey God's command of being fruitful.

They couldn't have been there too long (8:58) because a lot of events take place before Adam fathers Seth, we are told in (9:05) Genesis 5, at the age of 130. Anyway, a second reason why Cain is likely Adam and (9:14) Eve's first son is that in the ancient world they placed enormous weight on the (9:21) firstborn son. To leave the firstborn unnamed while carefully recording Cain (9:29) and Abel would be almost without parallel in the Old Testament.

One (9:34) commentator aptly put it, this would be the only instance in the entire Old (9:41) Testament of failing to mention the firstborn son if Cain is not that son." So (9:50) the first child born into the fallen world is likely Cain, and Eve's response (9:58) is electric with hope. Naming Cain, and I call this the quest for righteousness, (10:08) begins.

Eve names him, Eve names Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help (10:18) of the Lord." And the name sounds like the Hebrew verb for "to acquire, to get, or to (10:25) possess." Can you hear the excitement in her voice? She has just heard the promise, (10:33) as we did when John read Genesis 3.15, the offspring of the woman will bruise the (10:41) serpent's head.

Now she holds a son in her arms and declares, I've gotten him with (10:51) the Lord's help. She believes the Redeemer has arrived. She's anxious for (10:57) the wrong, her wrong, to be righted.

Perhaps she hopes the serpent's defeat is (11:04) near. And then, sometime later, she bears another son and names him Abel. And notice (11:14) the contrast in the meaning of her son's names.

Abel means breath, vapor, mist, (11:29) vanity, something transient, insubstantial, fleeting. It's the same word that saturates (11:39) the book of Ecclesiastes. Vanity of vanities.

All is vanity. All is vapor. Something has (11:54) changed between the time of Cain's and Abel's births, from Eve's perspective.

At first, (12:04) the names seem almost backwards. The one named Acquired, with Yahweh's help, (12:10) becomes a murderer, and the one named Vapor becomes the righteous man whose (12:18) blood still speaks today. Eve will learn, as we all must learn, that God's timetable and God's (12:27) chosen instruments are often not what we expect.

And the offerings come next. Faith's first fruits (12:37) and rejection. In the course of time, both brothers bring offerings to the Lord.

Cain, (12:48) the worker of the ground, brings fruit of the ground. And Abel, the keeper of sheep, (12:54) brings the firstborn of his flock and its fat portions. This is the first occurrence in the (13:00) Bible of humans offering and sacrificing to God.

It's not the first sacrifice. God makes (13:08) the first sacrifice for Adam and Eve when he kills the animals he uses to make coats of skin to cover (13:17) them from their nakedness, to cover their sin. The Lord has regard for Abel and his offering, (13:25) but Cain and his offering, he has no regard.

He rejects. Why? Hebrews 11, 4 tells us, (13:34) by faith, Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was (13:42) commended as righteous. Romans 10, 17 reminds us that faith comes from hearing the Word of God.

(13:50) So somehow, whether by direct revelation or through Adam, God had made known what he desired. (13:59) And Abel's offering, coincidentally, matches the much later pattern of the law of Moses. The (14:06) firstborn and the fat portions for sin offerings.

See Exodus 13, Numbers 18 and Leviticus 3. Cain (14:16) brought something else, but evidently not something acceptable, and apparently not in faith. From (14:24) other passages, we learn that Cain was not a very righteous or nice person either. In 1 John 3, 11 (14:35) through 12, John tells us, for this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we (14:42) should love one another.

We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one. Did you catch that? (14:52) We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one. Another way of saying that, who was of the (15:01) seed of the serpent, and murdered his brother.

And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were (15:15) evil, and his brother's righteous. And Jude 11 tells us, woe to them, for they walked in the way of (15:24) Cain, and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam there, and perished in Cora's rebellion. (15:31) What a group, what a crowd to be grouped in.

The Bible groups Cain, but Balaam and Cora. So, Cain's (15:45) response is telling. Cain was very angry, and his face fell.

And the Hebrew is vivid, his face (15:52) collapsed. Rage and dejection in one expression. Instead of examining himself, he burned against (16:01) God, and against his brother.

And sin is crouching at the door. The expanded reality of sin and death, (16:11) the law of sin and death, actually. This is the first use of the word sin in the Bible.

Here the (16:18) narrative turns from story to direct divine speech. God initiates the conversation. He does not wait (16:27) for Cain to come looking for answers.

Why are you angry? And why has your face fallen? If you do well, (16:37) will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is (16:47) contrary to you. But, you must rule over it.

Three crucial observations from what God tells Cain (16:57) here. God is still offering a way of acceptance. If you do well.

There is still opportunity for (17:07) repentance, and the right offering are possible. Sin here is personified. It reminded me of Romans (17:19) 7, by the way.

But sin here is personified. It's not merely an action. It is pictured as a living (17:28) predator, crouched at the door, waiting to spring.

The language deliberately echoes Genesis 3.16, (17:38) where the woman's desire is for her husband, and he will rule over her. Now, sin's desire is for (17:46) Cain, and he must rule over it. The same Hebrew word for desire appears in both places.

The same tension (17:58) appears in Paul's anguished description in Romans 7. Sin as a power that wages war, yet the believer is not (18:07) left without responsibility, or without the Spirit's help. Sin wants to be our master. And number three, (18:19) responsibility remains.

You must rule over it. Even after the fall, even with sin crouching, the human (18:27) being is still called to mastery, and God is directing Cain at this early date toward the doctrine of (18:38) righteousness. We did a study on the elementary teachings, and in that, you'll come across Hebrews (18:52) chapter 5. And towards that, from 12, verse 13 of chapter 5, and to the end of the chapter, it's talking about (19:07) eating...the believer is given milk or meat, and the elementary teachings are talked about as being milk.

(19:18) And if that's all you know, if all you know is...if all you consume is milk, the elementary teachings, it specifically (19:27) says that. Now, what could it say? You are not acquainted with...you know, Reformation churches would say, you're not (19:36) acquainted with faith alone. You're not acquainted with grace.

You're not acquainted with any kinds of things, but it (19:43) doesn't say that. It says, if all you know of the elementary teachings, you are not acquainted with the doctrine of (19:51) righteousness. And it turns out, when you study Romans, the bookend, I consider them, of Paul's teachings, which (20:03) consider Paul the writer of Hebrews, Romans and Hebrews, Romans is all about righteousness, and grace, and all that comes (20:14) with it, justification, is all explained through the doctrine of righteousness.

That really is the key. And that's what God (20:26) here is expressing to Cain. He's introducing him at this early date to the doctrine of righteousness, a teaching Paul will (20:37) elaborate on thousands of years later, a righteousness not of our own, and not without faith.

The law of sin and death is (20:48) expanding, and we see the addition of apparent new laws on offerings and sacrifice. Now comes the murder. Cain speaks the (20:59) able, and some ancient versions add the words, what he speaks, let's go out into the field.

And when they are in the field, Cain (21:09) rises up against his brother and kills him. So, the first human death recorded in history is not a natural death. It's murder, (21:25) premeditated, fratricide.

God comes again to Abel, I'm sorry, to Cain, where is Abel, your brother? The question is deliberate, (21:39) not requesting information, but allowing the confession for confession and repentance. It echoes, where are you in Genesis 3 to Adam? (21:53) And unlike Adam, who didn't accept responsibility, like Adam, Cain doesn't accept responsibility, but Adam accused God, it's the woman you gave me, (22:12) she's why I sinned. Well, Cain takes it up a notch.

He deflects like his dad did, but Cain's answer here is an outright lie, wrapped in defiance. (22:42) I don't know, am I my brother's keeper? Can you see the attitude? The first murder refuses the most basic human responsibility to guard the life of his brother, and as an older brother, that really is his responsibility, to watch over his younger brothers. (23:04) God's reply is thunderous, what have you done? The voice, and here's how you know God already knew the answer, the voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground, and the scripture continues, at your hand.

(23:23) This is the first occurrence of the word blood in the Bible, and notice blood has a voice, the ground itself has become a witness, the curse that fell on the ground in Genesis 3 is now intensified for Cain, the ground has opened its mouth to receive Abel's blood, and it will no longer yield its strength to Cain. (23:47) He is sentenced to be a fugitive and a wanderer, but perhaps he's a wanderer because the land will not sustain him, he has to move. (24:02) Cain's response is purely

self-pity, he makes himself out to be the victim, listen to it, my punishment is greater than I can bear.

(24:13) He fears for his own life, he never once expresses remorse for the brother he murdered, there is no confession, no grief over Abel, only terror at the consequences for himself. (24:33) Yet, even here, mercy appears, God places a mark on Cain and declares that anyone who kills him will suffer sevenfold vengeance, God's protecting Cain, why protect the murderer, and one possibility is because at this stage in redemptive history there is no formal public law against murder. (25:04) That statute will come after the flood, that it doesn't appear before them, all those that will perish in the flood, the multitude that it grew to, have no law against murder.

(25:24) Romans 5 tells us that sin was in the world before the law and death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, which Cain certainly wasn't, it was totally different, it was worse. (25:45) But, Paul continues in Romans, sin is not counted when there is no law, that is an important principle, I believe that is the principle God uses to take our sins away. (26:07) That is the principle that once we have died in the likeness of Jesus' death, then he can say, there is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Jesus Christ, that's the principle, and it's working here, also, and we see it in practice.

(26:33) This one's a little more difficult because Cain is punished, but certainly not what later is considered worthy punishment for murder. (26:49) God is restraining the cycle of blood vengeance before the legal boundary is given after the flood, and an offspring that we'll talk about tonight, an offspring of Cain, of Lamech, will later twist this very protection into an arrogant boasting when he boasts about him killing two people, (27:18) and we'll see what goes on there. (27:23) So what God intended as mercy, a rebellious man turns into license.

(27:29) So, theological threads in the Gospel hope. (27:34) Several deep currents run through this chapter. (27:37) The promise of the woman's offspring is still alive, but it will not be fulfilled in the firstborn, who looks so promising.

(27:49) We'll talk about that tonight also, because after all, that's the title. (27:54) The seed of the serpent versus the seed of the woman. (27:59) Faith is not mere ritual.

(28:01) It's what God regards. (28:03) Sin is personal, predatory, and must be mastered or it will master us. (28:10) And that is the quest in the Bible for righteousness.

(28:14) How are we made righteous? (28:17) Is it through our merit or some other way? (28:22) And that's all I'll say there. (28:25) So even in judgment, God shows restraint in mercy, and the blood of Abel still cries out. (28:32) Hebrews 12.24 will later tell us that the blood of Jesus speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

(28:40) And Abel's blood cried out for justice. (28:43) Christ's blood cries out for mercy and reconciliation. (28:48) So, the story of Cain is not ancient history only, it's the story of the human heart.

(28:56) When God regards another's offering more highly than ours, do we examine ourselves or do we burn with anger? (29:06) When sin crouches at the door of jealousy, resentment, or bitterness, do we rule over it or do we open the door? (29:15) Do we live as our brother's keeper or do we still answer with Cain's question? (29:25) And the news, the good news, is that the true offspring has come. (29:31) He's not named Cain, his name is Jesus. (29:37) He did not bring an offering of fruit or

of flocks, he offered himself.

(29:43) His blood does not cry from the ground for vengeance, it speaks from the cross for forgiveness. (29:55) If you have never turned away from the way of Cain, still justifying, angry, refusing responsibility, (30:04) and placed your trust in the better blood of Christ, the invitation is open this morning. (30:10) And if you are a believer and you know sin is crouching at the door in your life, (30:17) hear the word of the Lord to Cain, you must rule over it.

(30:22) And hear the greater word of the New Testament, you're not alone in that struggle. (30:29) The spirit of the risen Christ lives in you. (30:34) So, let's not go away from the presence of the Lord as Cain did.

(30:38) Did you notice that? (30:40) When Cain is told that he's going to be a wanderer and then it said (30:47) that Cain went away from the presence of the Lord. (30:51) It was Cain who moved away. (30:54) Let us come near by the blood that speaks better things than ables.

(31:00) So, come while we stand and sing. (31:03)