

First Things

There are many “first things” in the book of Genesis: The first day, first man and woman, first of God’s promises, first children, and first murder, just to mention a few.

In Genesis 4, we are introduced to two brothers: Cain and Abel. The events therein recorded have a devastating affect upon so many: God, Adam, Eve, Cain and Abel.

Just for a moment, we want to consider the events as they unfold. We are told that in the process of time, both Cain and Abel brought an offering unto Jehovah. “Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect” (Gen. 4:4-5). In the book of Hebrews, chapter 11 vs. 4, we are told that Abel offered his sacrifice “by faith.” As faith comes of hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17), it is evident that both Cain and Abel had been instructed regarding the particulars of their offerings. Abel had complied, while Cain did not.

As a result, “Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.” In response, “Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? And if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door: and unto thee shall be its desire, but do thou rule over it” (Gen. 4:5-7).

In this text, we find the following lessons: (1) Sin is a result of not heeding the commands of God: Cain’s offering was not of faith. (2) Sin generates anger in the heart of the offender, when the consequences come upon them: “Cain was very wroth.” (3) Sin has physical as well as a spiritual consequences: Cain’s “countenance fell.” (4) God is mindful of our sin and provides us with a solution: do well, and one’s countenance will “be lifted up.” (5) When left unchecked, sin will destroy the offender: “if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door.” (6) As a result of sin, the righteous may suffer: “Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.”

The apostle John left this warning for our instruction: “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message which ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another: not as Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother’s righteous” (1 John 3:10-12). Ross Triplett, Sr.