



SoulShare

February 8, 2020 9:00—10:30 am Breakfast & Discussion

Cain

My name is Cain. Let me reach into memory to reconstruct the significant events of my upbringing. I was a pampered child. When I first became aware of myself and the world around me, I had the feeling that Mom and Dad held great expectations for me.

I recall hearing them say things like, “How will he crush the serpent’s head?” and, “What does ‘bruise his heel’ mean?” They were talking about a promised offspring and believed that it was me. Then Abel was born.

If any of you have younger siblings, you know that it is traumatic to no longer be the center of attention. But in my case, I went from some sort of super-hero to “ordinary child.”

I asked questions as all children do. When I saw them sacrifice a lamb and burn it on an altar, I wondered why, and they simply said that it was giving of their best to honor the LORD God who created them. I later realized that there was more to the story and they were withholding information, probably because each was protecting the other.

So, I did not really get the details about their sin and the blood sacrifice first performed by the LORD himself, to make clothes for them before expelling them from the garden. They did tell of the pleasant talks they used to have with the LORD when living in the Garden and how they missed those days.

I wanted to please the Creator and brought some of the best of my crops as a sacrifice. Abel brought lambs. When the LORD was pleased with Abel’s sacrifice and not mine, I should have asked for an explanation but I didn’t. Instead, I got angry. And I *did* experience a conversation with my Creator—not a pleasant one but a warning. “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”

I lured Abel away and killed him. I had never before seen a human die. I knew it was wrong and then the LORD asked me, “Where is your brother Abel?” I responded with what apparently is a family tradition of feeble excuses, “I don’t know. Am I my brother’s keeper?”

Mom and Dad were heartbroken and so was I. It changed my life. I was to become a wanderer, and literally be a “marked man.” The mark was actually to protect me from revenge killing. But I “went out from the LORD’s presence.”

But even though my sin affected my descendants, we still have special abilities for building and creating. I built the first city and named it for my son. One grandson invented the first musical instruments and with

them, of course, the first instrumental music. Another grandson invented metalworking and all the objects that can be made with those techniques.

I was away when Seth was born and did not feel motivated to reconnect with the family. I had my own life. I had my family and my projects and responsibilities. There was also no great desire to reconcile with the God of my parents.

As I watched my great-grandchildren grow up, it became obvious that there were two kinds of people in the world, those who called on the name of the LORD and those who did not. Did it make a difference? I was not convinced.

Genesis 4

Remember that these monologues are essentially historical fiction, based on the Scripture but filling in plausible subjective details, both emotional responses and motivations. Your first task is to decide if they are reasonable.

Can we learn from the “bad guys” of Scripture?

Are there reasons why we often do not?

What is added to our spiritual development when we empathize with a character like Cain (or Judas)?

Is it reasonable that Cain may have been spoiled as a child?

Does Eve’s excitement at the birth of Cain indicate that she may have thought he was the promised one?

Does the text imply that Cain did not really understand the importance of blood sacrifice?

Might Adam and Eve have been negligent in teaching him?

Did God give Cain a fair chance?

How is Cain’s temptation similar to temptations we experience?

Could he have been forgiven?

What prevented confession and atonement?

How do excuses deprive us of God’s mercy?

Do we know what the “Mark of Cain” actually is?

Is “Where did Cain get his wife” a legitimate objection to the truth of Genesis?

What do the accomplishments of Cain’s descendants tell us about the nature of God?

How did Adam and Eve probably feel about the murder and then about the long term sequelae?

Do you think they hoped and prayed for reconciliation?

Would they have found comfort in the prophecy regarding future crushing of the serpent’s head?

What is the lesson we should take from these events about the long-term effects of sin?

Do we tend to think that our response to the temptations we face only affects us?