

In Step with Jesus 201

May 31, 2026

Key Text: “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

Introduction

The book of Genesis is foundational to our understanding of the entire bible. One bible teacher said that the way to understand the bible is to start reading from Genesis. There is so much to learn from Genesis and so much to reflect on, so we will try not to rush through the book.

Last week we reflected on the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, the faith of Abel, the anger of Cain, God’s warning to Cain and Cain’s disregard for God’s warnings and his murder of his brother Abel. Today we will dig a little deeper to gain more understanding about God’s way of dealing with sin. At the end of today’s lesson, we will know more about God’s consistent character of love, the eternal nature of His law and the destructive nature of sin. The key lesson is that God is not willing that any man or woman should die but sin is the destroyer. Sin alters the loving harmony that exists in nature. When one sins, nature revolts against the sinner to get rid of the disharmony and the sinner is eventually destroyed if he or she does not realign him or herself to God’s law of love and harmony. Let us read Genesis chapter four verses eleven to sixteen and see what God will show us.

Genesis 4:11-16

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 work 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, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.” ¹⁵ Then the Lord said to him, “Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. ¹⁶ Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Reflections

Genesis Chapter four continues to reveal the love of our heavenly Father to fallen humanity. He neither judges nor condemns us without giving us a chance to answer for ourselves. In Genesis Chapter three we saw God going in search of Adam, asking Adam, “where are you?”. Here in Genesis chapter four, God asks Cain, “where is Abel your brother?” In all of God’s dealings with humanity, He repeats these two questions. They are foundational to, and the very essence of the ten commandments. The first four

commandments ask each one of us “Where are you?” And the last six commandments ask “Where is your brother? God knows that our sins have separated us from Him, He also knows what we have done to our brothers and sisters, but He questions us to give us opportunities to acknowledge and confess our sins and plead for pardon. But unfortunately, some of us are like Adam and Cain. We either blame others for our choices, or we chose the path of evasiveness and defensiveness, and we worry more about the consequences of our sins rather than accept accountability for what we have done.

Even as a cursed sinner, Cain still had the opportunity to negotiate with God, but He misused the opportunity. Cain was unrepentant. When he found out that he could not hide his sin from God, he shifted his focus to the consequences of his sin. He complained that his punishment was too heavy. Interestingly, the very act he committed against his brother was what he dreaded most. He killed his brother, but he was afraid that someone would find him and kill him.

God’s response to Cain’s sin reveals how God will deal with the sin problem at the end of time. God does not just banish us from His presence because we have sinned. What banishes us from God’s presence is sin that is not acknowledged, confessed and repented from. Recall that Adam was not cursed for disobeying God, but Cain was cursed. But note that God did not say, “I curse you for killing your brother.” Rather, God said “You are cursed from the ground ...” In other words, the ground is against you. When we read Genesis chapter three, we identified that the major consequence of sin was damaged relationships. Adam and Eve’s relationships with God, nature and each other was marred by their disobedience. Here in Genesis chapter four, we see further damage in humanity’s relationship with nature. Because of Cain’s sin, the ground would be less fertile. Now the question is, who destroys the sinner? Is it God or sin itself? From reading Genesis chapter three and four we can see that it is sin that destroys. God’s universe is guided by a law of love and harmony. Disobedience to God’s law causes disharmony in nature that brings negative consequences to the sinner. Even God’s dealing with Cain shows us that He is slow to anger and unwilling to kill but sin will eventually kill the sinner.

God’s response to Cain’s sin also shows us that God’s law existed before the pronouncement of the ten commandments at Mount Sinai. Before Sinai, killing was a sin and God warned Cain against sin. “Where there is no law, there is no sin?” For God to be talking about sin and addressing sin in Genesis means there was a law. This tells us that God’s law is eternal. His law is the law of love; that is, perfect love for God and loving our neighbours as ourselves. The law of love governs heaven and earth today, and even in the new heaven and earth, the law of love will abide forever. All through the ages of eternity, the question will remain, “where are you? And where is your brother?”