

The Old Paths

Volume 15, Issue 51

February 15, 2009

“The Way Of Cain”

Jarrod Jacobs

In Jude’s epistle, he addresses some among the Christians who were turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying God and Christ (Jude 4). As a result, Jude couldn’t write to them about the common salvation like he wanted, but had to write to encourage them to “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3). Jude made it clear that there were some who had “gone in the way of Cain” (Jude 11). In going “in the way of Cain,” their error was seen in what they were doing, or how they were living. Those who had “gone in the way of Cain” were compared to the people in Sodom and Gomorrah before God destroyed them (Jude 7-8). Going “in the way of Cain” meant that they were following the manner or practice of Cain.

Seeing that people several thousand years removed from Cain were acting like him, does it not stand as a warning that we can act like Cain if we are not careful? Of course, it does! What is the way of Cain? We learn what the way of Cain is by reading about Cain in Genesis 4. The way of Cain is:

The Way Of Selfishness

In Genesis 4:1-5, we read about the birth of Cain and Abel, and the time where both offered sacrifices to God. In Genesis 4:3 we read, “In the process of time...”

they came and offered their sacrifices to God. It is uncertain as to the exact definition of that phrase, but enough time has passed to where they knew God and what He expected of them. In other words, *this wasn’t the first time they had offered sacrifices!!* This time however, Cain sacrificed something that displeased God. This is nothing more than selfishness. Cain’s sacrifice was not “by faith” (Heb. 11:4). He was going to “throw up” something, and God was expected to receive it!

This attitude is prevalent today. Consider those who say, “Join the church of your choice.” There is only one church that pleases God — the church of Christ (Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28; Rom. 16:16)!

Others want to use mechanical instruments in their worship to God when God commands singing and singing alone (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15).

Still, others cater to the “Whole Man” Philosophy in religion. God said that “the kingdom of God is NOT meat and drink” (Rom. 14:17; Lk. 19:10; I Tim. 3:15)!!

These errors (and others) are offshoots of what Cain started so long ago. He just expected God to accept anything he offered, and God wouldn’t do it! It is no different today (Jn. 4:24)!! Are we worshipping God “by faith”??

The Way Of Anger

In Genesis 4:5-7, Cain shows his anger toward God. When God refused Cain’s sacrifice, “Cain was very wroth” The word “wroth” means, “it

burned Cain sore” (Keil & Delitzsch, Vol. 1, p. 70). Cain was angry at what happened. Unfortunately, he was angry at the wrong person! God explains that Cain could be accepted when he decided he would do what is right. Otherwise, sin was waiting for him (Gen. 4:6-7). Cain had to learn that it was no one’s fault but his own that he wasn’t accepted! On the positive side, he could change things!!

In like manner, anger is what will keep a lot of people out of Heaven! It is not because they got angry, but how they acted as a result (Eph. 4:26; Mk. 3:1-6). If I don’t have control, anger can be my downfall as it was Cain’s (Col. 3:5-8; Eph. 4:29). Let us make sure we do not follow Cain down the road of anger!

The Way Of Misplaced Blame

After his rebuke, Cain went into the field and killed his brother (Gen. 4:7-8). Why did Cain commit such an unjust and terrible act? Did Abel cause Cain to offer a sacrifice that God did not accept? No! Did Abel suggest Cain go and try something “new” or “different” in worship? No! Why then was Abel killed? Because Cain placed blame on Abel for something that was his own fault.

If the Bible teaches nothing else, it teaches that the sins you and I commit are our own fault, not someone else’s (Jas. 1:13-15; Col. 3:25; Ezek. 18:20). We cannot blame anyone but ourselves for the mistakes we make!! (I understand that someone may have a certain amount of influence on us, but the *ultimate choice* is ours!!) Even if someone could prove that Abel was somehow responsible for “leading Cain astray,” this is still no excuse for the murder that took place!

When we stand before God in judgment, we’ll have no one to blame but

ourselves if we are not right in His sight (II Cor. 5:10; Ecc. 12:13-14). Let us not point a finger and blame others for our own mistakes!!

The Way Of Deceit And Jealousy

“And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen. 4:9). Cain’s jealousy moved him to kill his own flesh and blood, and his deceit moved him to lie. After murdering his own brother, Cain lies to God Himself about it!! (Of course, this is done *anytime* someone lies, Acts 5:3-4). Notice that instead of being pricked in his heart, and feeling remorse, he looked to deceive God and anyone else who might have asked about Abel. Are you guilty of deceiving others?

Deceit is apparent today when our home life is one way, and our public life another. Deceit is apparent when the same mouth that speaks vulgarities at work is the one offering praise and prayers to God on Sunday (Eph. 5:4; Jas. 3:6, 8, 10). No, the preacher will not be the judge (our peers will not be, etc.), but Jesus Christ, the Son of God who sees and knows all that has and will happen is the judge (Jn. 5:22, 29; Acts 17:30-31). Let us make sure we do not let jealousy (and/or deceit) keep us from Heaven!!

The Way Of Pride

In Genesis 4:10-15, God confronted Cain with the Truth concerning the murder of his brother. Notice Cain’s reaction: He was NOT sorry for sinning. He was not upset. He did not pray for forgiveness from God! Instead, Cain’s reaction was “My punishment is too great”!!! In light of this, is there any won-

der why God hates pride??? (See Prov. 6:16-17; I Pet. 5:5-6; Jas. 4:10).

Pride is something we must fight against. Let us be humble as children in God’s sight (Matt. 18:1-4; Isa. 29:15-16, 45:8-9; Jer. 18:5-6). If we are not humble, we will not see Heaven! It is just that simple!!

The Way Of A Bad Example

Looking on in Genesis 4, we read about Lamech, who was 5 generations from Cain (Gen. 4:19-24). Lamech promises revenge to the one who tried to kill him. He promised vengeance greater than the vengeance God promised if someone tried to kill Cain (Gen. 4:15).

Verse 23 is known by scholars as “Lamech’s song.” Once again, his pride was great. He wasn’t upset, but boastful at what he had done: *“Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold”* (Gen. 4:23-24).

Looking back to Jude 11 we see the example of Cain was alive and well; for Jude said that certain people were still following him!! Friends, do not think for a minute that we cannot do the same thing

today!! This is why we must walk in the footsteps of Jesus (I Pet. 2:21-22), and why we should show ourselves to be good examples to those around us (I Tim. 4:12, 16)!!

Like it or not, people are watching us and are being influenced by us (just like some were influenced by Cain). Whether or not they will be won to Christ depends upon whether or not we are willing to let our light shine before men (Matt. 5:14-16).

Conclusion

John said the way of Cain is the way of evil (I Jn. 3:12). Therefore, the question we must ask ourselves is, who are we going to follow? Will we follow Cain or follow God? Will our example lead people to God or lead people to Satan?

Psalm 119:97-100

O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.
Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.
I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.
I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

Add Our Website To Your “Favorites” List:
www.southside-churchofchrist.com



I want the truth, give me book, chapter, and verse!

Come and meet with the Southside church in Owensboro.
Our address: 2920 New Hartford Rd. Owensboro, KY 42303

Meeting Times:

Sunday Bible Study _____ 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship _____ 10:20 a.m.
Sunday Worship _____ 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study _____ 7:00 p.m.

“What Is Written”: Sunday (12:30 p.m.) on 94.7 & 100.5 FM.

Call: 683-9246 (683-WBIO) with your Bible questions.

“The Ancient Landmark”: airs Monday (9 p.m.), Wednesday (5 p.m.), & Thursday (11 p.m.) on channel 72.

Website: www.southside-churchofchrist.com (Updated weekly!)

Preacher/Editor: Jarrod Jacobs Elders: Paul Dubois & Jeff Lankford

Phone: (270) 683-5386