

The High Price of Sin  
Genesis 4-7  
Dellena Ludwig- lecturer

LifeWayResearch.com posted online the results of a survey sent out in September of 2016 that asked Americans if they thought they were sinners. Bob Smletana summarized the findings as follows:

34% of Americans say they are sinners and are working on being less sinful.

28% say they are sinners and rely on Jesus to overcome their sin.

10% say sin doesn't exist.

8% say they are not sinners.

15% said they preferred not to say whether they were sinners at all.

5% said they were fine with being sinners.

But whether we want to admit it or not, Scripture insists we all sin. Romans 3:23 states, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Last week we studied God's creation of the earth and the entrance of sin into His world. In this lesson, we will see: The Separation from God caused by sin; The Need for Salvation from God because of Sin; and The High Price of Sin for all mankind. This lesson will put that survey of modern America's ideas of sin more precisely into the perspective of how God sees sin.

First, we will examine the Separation from God as the price first paid by sinful man. We learned last week that Adam and Eve were cast out of the beautiful Garden of Eden because of their sin. As for Adam, we noticed the discipline was not because he ate from the tree, but because he listened to his wife's counter-counsel when he'd had direct word from God. Where the work of tending the garden was once a part of partnership with God, now Adam would till the soil outside the Garden with the sweat of his brow midst thorns and thistles. And the harsh reality . . . Yes, Satan lied. He is the Father of Lies. Yet Adam would return to the dust of the ground. Adam lived to be 930 years old, but the process of physically dying had begun.

Right up front we need to remember that only a few things are touched upon specifically in today's Scripture and a great many things are left unexplained. The story teller in me wants to add context between the bare facts, but only Scripture is itself without error. So as we seek to understand these chapters, we will trust the original Author for the best clarification of His story.

Scriptures reveal that separation from God experienced by Adam and Eve, was passed on to their children, Cain and Abel. When Eve gave birth to her first son, she gave testimony to the fact that, even while separated from God, she still relied on the Lord as they lived cast away from His presence. She said, "With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man." [Genesis 4:1] And she named her son Cain, which means "a man."

This record of her first words after the fall, showed that Eve was counting on the Lord to fulfill the promise He gave when He cursed her husband, herself and the serpent after the fall. God warned the serpent, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head and you will strike his heel." [Genesis 3:15]

Eve and Adam prayed that this man-child would be the "Seed" of God's promise; the one who could reunite humanity to that precious intimate relationship they had with God in the garden. And then God blessed them with a second son, Abel.

Just as God had originally charged Adam with the jobs of caring for the plants of the field and for the animals around him, his two sons chose similar occupations. Cain began to till the ground and care for the plants the family needed for food, while Abel began to care for the flocks that produced the wool, skins and milk needed for the family as well.

Now, although the first family was separated from God's presence by living outside of the garden, God still communicated with them. In Genesis 4:3-5 we're told that Cain and Abel made an offering to the Lord. E. Stanley Jones stated that "worship without sacrifice" is one of seven deadly sins. When the Lord looked with favor on Abel's offering but not on Cain's offering, Cain became very angry.

"The Lord then said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?'" [Genesis 4:6] Being physically out of God's presence didn't limit God from being involved in their lives, just as He continues today to be involved in our lives. God knew when His people offered sacrifices to Him and knew about their intimate heart attitudes.

Hebrews 11:4 describes that it was the difference in these men's heart attitudes that made their offerings either accepted or rejected. "By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead." [Hebrews 11:4]

Both brothers had probably heard the story of life in the garden and how their parents had walked with God in the cool of the evening. They listened to the regret their parents expressed for their sin against God, and saw how they still had hope in God's promised restoration. But unfortunately, our parent's faith is not passed down genetically. Rather our propensity to sin is passed to each of us born in the likeness of Adam. Therefore each of us must choose to believe in and live for God individually.

Abel gave his faithful sacrifice honoring God. But Cain showed no faith in giving his sacrifice. Remember, the Law of Moses was not yet given. There was no preference to the animal sacrifice versus the vegetable sacrifice. All Scripture reveals is this heart attitude. While living in physical separation from God, Abel kept spiritual faith in God. Cain, on the other hand, was building up a spiritual separation from God. But God, with intimate care, warned Cain what would happen if he did not guard his heart.

"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 rule over it." [Genesis 4:7] Doesn't that sound like God encouraging him? God was teaching Cain that each person must actively repent of their sin and throw it off, or like malignant cancer it would devour him.

However, Cain didn't respond, "Lord, help me! I want to master sin, I want to please You." While Eve had been talked into her sin, Cain would not have even God talk him out of his. So, verse 8 ends with the words, "While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him." [Genesis 4:8b] Cain let his anger against God separate him from his sense of right and wrong.

Even worse, his attitude showed no sorrow for his sin, but rather callousness and sarcasm. In verse 9 "the Lord again spoke to Cain, asking 'Where is your brother Abel?' and Cain replied, 'I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper?'" [Genesis 4:9] But the Lord wouldn't let him get away with this horrible sin. God wanted Cain to understand both the seriousness of the sin of shedding innocent blood and the serious price he must pay. His sin could never be hidden from God.

God went on to tell Cain, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth." [Genesis 4:10-12]

God's concern for the innocent blood of Abel spilled on the ground is seen in the curse, but the mark of protection on Cain is evident of His concern for the sinner. The mark (and we do not know what that was) was a mark/sign not as a stigma but one of safe-conduct. God was the only one who would punish Cain. Cain's departure was both his sentence and his choice.

It seemed that at last Cain felt remorse for what he had done when he said, "My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." [Genesis 4:13,14] When we study his lament closely, we realized he was only sorry about the punishment, not for the sin itself.

So, what was the price for Cain's sin? First was **departure** – he left Adam and Eve and there must have been parental disappointment. One son in a fresh grave, the firstborn turned out of God's presence and cursed. We can only empathize with their hurting hearts. Second, his **dwelling** was to be East of Eden, a world away from God. Most of society today lives East of Eden. Cain did not ask for forgiveness, but wanted God's mercy. His words, when he says "whoever finds me," suggests an expanding population and could also imply that every person encountered would be a near kinsman of Abel.

In the further record of Cain and his descendants, it seems that Cain not only refused to repent of this murder, but he defied God by ceasing his wandering and settled with a wife (who was one of Adam and Eve's many daughters) to build a city which he named Enoch after his first son [Gen. 4:17].

If the Bible were biased to only tell either the good/bad of a person, we'd think of Cain as bad. But the truth is more complex: God makes use of this family in areas of arts, architecture, and metalworking. We should be reminded that we're indebted to the secular world for their gifts, but at the same time be astute so as not to overvalue them. Cain's family is a prime example of technical prowess and moral failure that is a picture of humanity today.

Cain's son, Enoch, began a line of descendants that included Lamech. The boastful poem of Lamech, called the Song of the Sword, not only belittled God's warning that no one should kill Cain for his murder of Abel, but Lamech appeared to brag about killing even more people in his lifetime. By this brag we see that one generation's unrepentant sin will be emulated by the next generation until we reach the terrible epitaph given in Genesis 5:5. "The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time." [Genesis 6:5] It would seem, at this point, that Satan had successfully thwarted God's plan for the promised one by separating mankind from God's presence through sin.

But God's promises are forever true and Satan's defeat has never been in doubt from the time God promised the appointed "seed" to Adam and Eve. In chapter 4 we read the abbreviated genealogy of Adam's third son Seth.

Chapter 4 verses 25 and 26 record Seth's life. "Adam made love to his wife again and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, 'God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him.' Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time people began to call on the name of the Lord." [Genesis 4:25,26]

Although sinful man felt separated from Him, God continued to bless Adam and Eve and gave them this righteous heir from whose line redemption for their sins would come. Seth's lineage seemed to be longing to have relationship with God; while Cain's descendants desired to be separated from God.

God had promised that Adam and Eve would "surely die" if they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is striking throughout chapter five, that each patriarch's lineage ended with the phrase, "and then he died." (v.5, 8, 11, 14 etc.) But it was even more striking when we read about the Enoch from Seth's lineage.

Let's look a little closer at this Enoch for a couple of reasons. It says that when Enoch was 65, he became the father of Methuselah and, after he became a father, he walked with God. That's interesting, isn't it? There's something about children, the increased responsibility, the change of perspective, that can make a man turn towards God. (Just an interesting little side note, Methuselah is the oldest man in the Bible - 969 years. The year he died, the flood came.)

The Bible says that Enoch walked with God for 300 years. I believe that Enoch could literally and spiritually walk with God. Perhaps he would walk the perimeter of the Garden of Eden when God was walking there inside the garden. He could ask forgiveness for his sins and worship God. He could also call on God as his ancestor Seth had.

Think about a "walk" – that's one step at a time, one foot after the other over and over, a daily grind maybe, but a consistent pace. Your Christian walk is not just highs and lows . . . it's the daily-ness of being obedient and faithful to whatever He has called you to do.

Remember during this time Enoch's life had the real challenge of testifying against evil as we read about in Jude 14,15. "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: 'See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones <sup>15</sup>to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.'" [Jude 14,15] Enoch's daily walk reflected God's holiness.

Then Enoch was no more – God took him. The relationship Enoch built with God was so intense that God rewarded him while he was still living, by taking him to be with Him in paradise!

The only other person in Scripture to have that experience is Elijah. It's an Old Testament type and picture of the rapture of the church – a time when Christians will simply disappear from earth and be caught up into heaven. "Altogether Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away." [Genesis 5:24]

God also gave Enoch children on this earth. While the previous patriarchs only named one birthright heir, Enoch's great grandson, Noah, is listed with all three of his sons. This was because all three of his sons would have an important part in establishing a birthright of their own. God was now going to show His terrible wrath on sinful mankind, at the same time that He revealed His amazing grace on the faithful.

The final straw against sinful man is revealed in chapter 6 starting in verse 4. "The Nephilim were on the earth in those days – and also afterward – when the sons of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown." [Genesis 6:4]

Many theories about what is meant by these curious words have been written, discussed and discarded! One theory is that this verse describes the fall of rebellious angels who were cast to earth and became the

demons who then had relations with women. However, as always, Scripture provides the best interpretation of Scripture.

When Jesus was asked by the Sadducees about marriage after death in Matthew chapter 22, He replied, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.” [Matthew 22:29,30] So the angels are asexual. They could not have children with human women, nor could they reproduce.

But the answer to this obscure reference can be found in God’s description of Cain’s descendant, Tubal-Cain, we read about him in Genesis 4:22. “Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron...” [Genesis 4:22a] Lamech’s grandson began to produce sharp tools from metal. Then Lamech boasted of killing more men than his great grandfather, Cain. This was the legacy of the “sons of man.” They prided themselves in violence as “mighty warriors.” [Genesis 4:23,24]

The second part of this puzzle is found in the first verse of Genesis 6. It described the attitude of the “sons of God” about choosing a wife. Verses 1 and 2 state, “When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose.” Earlier versions translate these words, “sons of God” and “daughters of men,” clarifying that both are human groups.

The commentary of Keil and Delitzsh argued that these verses probably are distinguishing between the daughters from Cain’s descendants and the sons from Seth’s descendants. The daughters were sought for marriage on the basis of their beauty (verse 2); but the men were valued because they were “mighty men,” heroes and men of renown. The faithful and the unfaithful were blending through marriage so much that any faith at all became almost nonexistent!

That is why the Lord pronounced His disgust in the next verse. “The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. So the Lord said, ‘I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created – and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground – for I regret that I have made them.’” [Genesis 6:5-7]

Now, reading these words causes our human point of view to think that the evilness of people totally took God by surprise! He couldn’t believe what had happened to His creation so he “changed His mind” and decided to destroy them. But Scripture tells us this is not true.

The prophet Samuel proclaimed, “He who is the glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a human being, that he should change his mind.” [1 Samuel 15:29] To the prophet Malachi, the Lord said, “I the Lord of Israel do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob are not destroyed.” [Malachi 3:6]

From the beginning God knew people would be weak towards sin. Ephesians 1:4,5 explains, “For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.” [Ephesians 1:4,5] God knew sin would separate us from His perfect will, but He always had a plan for Salvation through His grace.

Satan, through the deception of sin, was pushing to destroy all faith in mankind. But hope came through one descendant of Seth, Noah. “But Noah found favor (grace) in the eyes of the Lord.” [Genesis 6:8] How was this faith manifested? Verse 9 goes on to say, “...Noah was a just (righteous) man, perfect in his generation. Noah walked with God.” [Genesis 6:9]

Hebrews chapter 11 records Noah’s life of faith. “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.” [Hebrews 11:6,7]

While the people all around Noah were living separated from God, Noah earnestly sought God. “Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, ‘I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. So make yourself an ark ...’” [Genesis 6:11-14a]

Did you notice that God didn’t come down and “clean up society?” He didn’t do it then and we shouldn’t expect that He’ll do that today. He has appointed us to be salt and light in the world, but it is headed for ultimate

destruction. Again, the good news is that those in Christ will be saved just as Noah's family would be saved in the protection of the ark.

God told Noah that all of life on the earth was going to be destroyed by a flood. At the creation of Adam, God stated that He did not water the earth with rain. Genesis 2:5,6 explains, "...for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground." [Genesis 2:5b, 6]

But in verse 22 of chapter 7, "Noah did everything just as God commanded him." [Genesis 7:22] Although he had never seen rain, Noah took the blueprint God provided him in Genesis 7:14 -21 and built a huge "ark" or box, with three floors, many various sized compartments and storage rooms, a window/vent along the top with only the roof above it and a large door on the side, that probably served also as a ramp.

Noah was 500 years old when his three sons were born. (Gen.5:22) He was 600 years old when the flood came on the earth. (Gen. 7:6) Quite an amazing job for someone in their 5<sup>th</sup> century! But because of Noah's faithfulness, his family and every kind of animal on the earth was saved.

Genesis 7:18-21 described the contents of the ark. Noah took his wife, his three sons and each of their wives, two of every kind of animal, male and female, and two of each kind of bird and "every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive." [Genesis 6:20] And every kind of food, that both the people and the animals needed, to be brought onboard.

Now remember Genesis 1:29 and 30 said that both men and animals would eat plants only for their food. So, not only did every species of animal find a place to stay on the ark, all animals were herbivores and needed plenty of food to sustain them for the duration of the flood. God planned room for all onboard the ark. Genesis 7:2 explained that a few animals were to be brought into the ark in greater numbers than two-by-two.

"Take with you seven pairs of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and one pair of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, and also seven pairs of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth." [Genesis 7:2,3] God also knew the need for domesticated animals after the flood would increase.

Noah and his family obeyed God and, when all of the animals were on board, "Then the Lord shut him in." [Genesis 7:16] The Ark door has obvious literal and symbolic importance. There was one door. The invitation was to "come." There was urgency, yet not haste. There was time for the whole task, but none for postponements.

Jesus used the metaphor in John 10 "I am the door." There is but one way to safety. And God, Himself, shut them in; an expression of God's fatherly touch at the very brink of judgment. The emphasis is not on disaster, death and doom . . . it is the story of faith and survival.

The rains came after seven days. (Gen. 7:10) This was unlike any rainstorm we have ever experienced. The Lord described it. " – on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth for forty days and forty nights." [Genesis 7:11,12]

Where did all that rain come from? I believe that water separated out on the second day of creation had been held at the top of earth's atmosphere, frozen for this moment. When the "floodgates of the heavens were opened," this rained down. God also explosively spewed out water held in underground reservoirs to be released when He let them burst forth. This was an earth-wide cataclysm that covered the earth with water up to fifteen cubits above the highest mountain, which would be the draft of the ark as it floated through the storm.

But above it all, by God's grace, the seeds for repopulating the earth were kept safe, while every other living thing was destroyed. Sin is real, and God's wrath will fall on all who defy Him. The price of sin is great indeed. But God's grace is sure for all who put their faith in Him.

Let me close with three thoughts on these Scriptures:

1. God wants you before He wants what you bring. He describes your acceptable sacrifice in Romans 12:1, "Therefore, I urge you brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship." [Romans 12:1]
2. God wants you as a model for your family. Your walk with God will have long reaching consequences for your descendants.
3. God wants to repair the separation sin has caused in your life. The price of sin is extremely high. But God is waiting to forgive our sin as we approach Him with true repentance and confession. We had that wonderful verse in our lesson, 2 Samuel 14:14: "...God does not take away life; instead, he devised ways so that a banished

person may not remain estranged from Him.” [2 Samuel 14:14] That way is through the “door,” Himself, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

I think that Charles Spurgeon offered a perfect application in summary of this lesson: “May God give you grace to see sin as it really is in His sight, for then you will realize your need of a Savior.”

Let’s pray

Please stand and sing the Doxology with me