

PASTOR RAY'S BIBLE SCHOOL 201

THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

(How To Apply The Prophetic View Of Scripture To The Book Of Genesis)

Session Eight

“The Two Religions”

I. Connecting The Dots

A. Making Sense Of Scripture

1. As you know by now, PRBS is training in the “Big Picture” approach to scripture, a “macro-vision” view of the word.

2. By interpreting the “parts” from a view of the “whole”, we can better understand the Word of God and grow in our revelation of scripture.

3. The ability to “connect the dots” is a skill that can be learned.

B. K.I.S.S.: Keep It Simple, Saints

1. What appears to be incredibly complex is often made simple in the biblical revelation.

2. In this course, we’ve already seen the “either/or” nature of the world as God sees it. Life is not that complicated. There aren’t as many “choices” as we think.

- There are 2 **realities**: God and what God has made; Creator and His Creation; The Eternal and the Temporal; God is altogether “Other” from all else
- There are 2 **“wills”** in the Universe: God’s will and/or the will of any “other” (All the trouble began with the pre-Adamic rebellion of Lucifer, described in Isaiah 14:13-14 as the expression of a “self-will” in opposition to God’s will)
- There are 2 **“kingdoms”**-God’s Kingdom and the “Kingdom of Darkness”. All human beings will be (must be) aligned with one or the other. There is no 3rd “choice”.
- There were 2 **“trees”** in the Garden-Adam had liberty regarding “all the trees of the garden”, including the Tree of Life; only one was excepted. The choices were only two: Life (obeying God’s word) or Death (obeying the voice of “another”)
- There are 2 “seeds” at work in the souls of men-the seed of Adam and the “seed of the woman”, which is Christ.

3. We need to pull down the “illusion of complexity” that confuses and clouds are thinking.

4. In this study, we will see there are only 2 RELIGIONS in the world!

II. The Two Religions

A. The Two “Remedies” For Sin

1. Following the Fall of our first parents, two “remedies” for sin are presented.

2. The first solution for sin is man’s solution, which we might term as “RELIGION”.

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and *they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.*

Genesis 3:7 KJV

3. Here we have man’s remedy for his sin: a “covering” made with the works of his own hands.

a. All the religions of the world, except Christianity, require something of man, whether it be good works, completion of certain spiritual disciplines or courses of study, etc.

4. Therefore, all the religions of the world are really just ONE RELIGION in the sight of God, all being just many expressions of one basic principle...man’s remedy for his fallen condition.

5. This view is confirmed by Jesus Christ in His “exclusive” statements in the Gospels:

Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 14:6 KJV

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:44 KJV

B. God’s Remedy For Sin

1. God rejects man’s “covering”, He sees through all our human attempts to hide our sin behind our good works.

2. In contrast, we then see God’s remedy for sin revealed:

And the Lord God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

Genesis 3:21 New Living Testament

3. Here we have the **first mention** of the great doctrine of *Substitutionary Atonement*, where God establishes the principle of accepting the death of the innocent on behalf of the guilty.

These coats of skin had significance. The beasts whose skins they were must be slain, slain before their eyes, to show them what death is...It is supposed that they were slain, not for food, but for sacrifice, to typify the great sacrifice, which, in the latter end of the world, should be offered once for all. Thus the first thing that died was a sacrifice, or Christ in a figure, who is therefore said to be the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. These sacrifices were divided between God and man, in token of reconciliation: the flesh was offered to God, a whole burnt-offering; the skins were given to man for clothing, signifying that, Jesus Christ having offered himself to God a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour, we are to clothe ourselves with his righteousness as with a garment, that the shame of our nakedness may not appear. Adam and Eve made for themselves aprons of fig-leaves, a covering too narrow for them to wrap themselves in, Isa 28:20. Such are all the rags of our own righteousness. But God made them coats of skins; large, and strong, and durable, and fit for them; such is the righteousness of Christ. Therefore put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew Henry's Commentary on Genesis 3:21

4. In slaying the animals and covering them with skins, God models the “religion” He will accept:

- The blood of the innocent will be accepted as payment for the sin of the guilty
- The innocent dies as a substitute so that the guilty may live
- God accepts innocent blood while rejecting the works of man’s hands as a covering*

**The Bible is silent on the subject, but might the “animals” slain been lambs, foreshadowing the coming of the “Lamb of God” who would be slain on our behalf*

5. Sin requires the death penalty.

"Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. *The soul who sins will die.*

Ezekiel 18:4 NASB

a. Only the death of the sinner can satisfy Divine Justice.

b. God is gracious. But even before that, He is just. So how can God pardon sinners without sacrificing His justice?

c. God can forgive us and let us go free because an “innocent” has received the punishment in our place, has died on our behalf.

6. From Genesis 3:21 we learn:

- Man cannot save himself with the works of his hands or anything he can do
- God must provide him a covering
- God will accept the death of an innocent on behalf of the guilty

- But the work must be done by God Himself!

7. Genesis 3 establishes the basis for the 2 “religions” of the world:

- Man’s remedy-All the “religions” and philosophies of man in all of history are only “one” in God’s sight
- God’s remedy-The provision of God, the death of an innocent that the guilty might go free

8. These 2 “religions” find an immediate expression in the story of Cain and Abel, the first generational descendents of Adam and Eve.

III. The Generational Curse Of Sin

A. Cain And Abel: Effects Of Sin On The Family Line

Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a man-child with the help of the Lord." And again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. And Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard.

Genesis 4:1-5 NASB

1. The contamination of sin is *generational* in nature.

2. Even though fallen, the scripture implies that Adam and Eve attempted to communicate the spiritual basics to their sons.

a. Explaining what happened at the “two trees”

b. How they had tried to deal with their sin

c. How God had dealt with their sin

d. In some way teaching the boys to approach God in worship at the appropriate time*

***The phrases “in the process of time” and “it came to pass” in the King James Version of Genesis 1:4 is curiously omitted from most other popular translations...obviously because the translators did not deem it important. And yet, the two phrases are there in the Hebrew text. Another example of how every “jot and tittle” of the law is important!!!**

3. The text implies that “in the course of time”, probably meaning a day set aside for worship, the two sons approached God in two different ways:

a. Cain brought an offering of the “fruit of the ground”

b. Abel brought a sacrificial offering of the “firstborn” of his flock

4. God was PLEASED with the offering of Abel; He was DISPLEASED with the offering of Cain.

The Offering Of Cain

The Offering Of Abel

The “works” of his hands

Versus

A sacrifice of innocent blood

An “echo” of the fig leaves

Versus

An “echo” of the “coats of skins”

**A product of the ground (which God
had cursed in Genesis 3:17)**

Versus

**The life’s blood of an innocent sacrifice
after God’s model in Genesis 3:21**

5. Surely here we see an “extension” of the principle of the “two trees” in Genesis 2 and the two “remedies” in Genesis 3.

6. This is the first recorded WORSHIP SERVICE in human history:

- attended by two “kinds” of WORSHIPPERS
- bringing two “kinds” of OFFERINGS
- yielding two very different RESULTS

**Cain was no atheist or agnostic...he was totally prepared to worship God...but on his own terms. This is the unchanging pattern of religious man.*

7. We can see here the prototypical representations of the only two “religions” man has ever practiced: The ONE way God accepts; ANY OTHER way that might be invented by man.

B. The Favor And Disfavor Of God

1. In Genesis 4 we find two worshippers, two systems of worship and two responses from God:

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground. 3 When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the Lord. 4 Abel also brought a gift—the best of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The Lord accepted Abel and his gift, 5 but he did not accept Cain and his gift.

Genesis 4:2-5 NLT

2. The New Testament comments on the difference:

By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

Heb 11:4 NKJV

a. In later OT passages, God “testifies” of His pleasure with sacrificial offerings by fire on the altar, and some Bible scholars suggest this is what happened here. God “testifying of his gifts” confirmed the offering of Abel with fire from heaven, consuming the “fat” of the sacrifice.

“(And) Abel...also brought of the firstlings of his flock *and of the fat thereof.*”

Genesis 4:4 KJV

C. The Exchange Between God and Cain

“...and the Lord accepted Abel and his gift, 5 but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected. 6 "Why are you so angry?" the Lord asked Cain. "Why do you look so dejected? 7 You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master."

Genesis 4:4-7 NLT

1. Cain’s response is notable. Cain models the reaction of sinful man to God’s rejection of his “worship”; he is angry and his “countenance fell”, or he appeared downcast.

a. Anger-The emotion sinful man feels when confronted with God’s rejection of their idea of how God ought to be worshipped and the fact that God does accept others who humble themselves to come to God in the manner that God has directed them to come.

b. Downcast in countenance-It is notable that worshippers after the fashion of Cain have a distinct lack of joy, discernible in their faces!

“Cain’s countenance fell. He was furious that all his labors should stand for nothing. He was angry at the thought that he could not approach and worship God according to the dictates of his own mind.”*

Arthur Pink, “Gleanings In Genesis”, Moody Press

***On a personal note, what attracted me to the Reformed Faith, (Calvinism), as opposed to Arminianism, was this very point, how angry Arminians tend to become at the doctrine that our redemption, from beginning to end, is rooted in the sovereign free grace of God; that man gets no credit at any point for the initiation or the maintenance of his salvation. The account of the first worship service in history verifies how the sinful nature simply cannot handle God’s absolute sovereignty over (1) how he is to be worshipped, (2) what sacrifice pleases Him and what doesn’t, and (3) His incredible probationary grace to give the rebellious opportunity to come back and get it right!**

2. God’s response to Cain is reasonable and gracious:

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

Genesis :6-7 NASB

a. From this we learn that although God will NOT accept Cain's worship, He will still "leave the door open" for Cain to get it right! Following false religions is not disqualifying IF the worshipper turns to the right way!

3. The awful effects of failing to get it right:

a. God says "get it right" because if you don't, the sin that is 'crouching at the door', eager to become your master, an enemy you must subdue!

"If you do well, won't you be accepted? And if you don't do well, sin is lying in wait for you, ready to pounce; it's out to get you, you've got to master it."

Genesis 4:7 THE MESSAGE: The Bible in Contemporary Language

b. From this we learn that sin is like a hungry lion, crouching just behind us, longing to devour all of those who do not "do right".

c. The picture here is identical with Paul's description of the Believer's predicament as to just "who" we will be our "master", who we will serve!

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

Romans 6:16-18 KJV

D. The First Murder

1. Now we come to the first MURDER in world history:

- The issue is RELIGION
- The core sin is ENVY
- The result is BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER

2. There are those who hate religion of any kind and blame religion as the basis of all wars. There is a grain of truth in the charge. Man, in his lostness, and knowing he is "naked", will compete with his fellow-man for supremacy.

"And...(Cain) was filled with wrath as he contemplated the exaltation of Abel above him. So it is today. Unless the darkened understanding of man is illuminated by the Holy Spirit and the enmity of the carnal mind be subdued, the human heart rebels against the idea of the impossibility of approaching God save through a bloody sacrifice. The natural man in his pride and self-righteousness hates the truths of substitution and expiation worse than he hates the Devil.

Arthur Pink, "Gleanings In Genesis", Moody Press

3. The great sin of *ENVY*, seen here first in men, was used by the Serpent to entice man against his Creator: “God knows if you eat...you shall...(be like God)...” The heart of the temptation was the serpent’s ability to create envy of God in the heart of God’s man...leading to BETRAYAL.

- We see an “echo” of this in the betrayal of Joseph by his brethren: They envied Joseph’s position as his father’s favorite and the recipient of the “coat of many colors”.

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors...And his brethren *envied* him,,,” Genesis 37:3,11

- **We see an “echo” of envy in Saul’s relationship with David**

6 When the victorious Israelite army was returning home after David had killed the Philistine, women from all the towns of Israel came out to meet King Saul. They sang and danced for joy with tambourines and cymbals. **7** This was their song: “Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands!” **8** This made Saul very angry. “What’s this?” he

said. “They credit David with ten thousands and me with only thousands. Next they’ll be making him their king!” **9** So from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David. **10** The very next day a tormenting spirit from God overwhelmed Saul, and he began to rave in his house like a madman. David was playing the harp, as he did each day. But Saul had a spear in his hand, **11** and he suddenly hurled it at David, intending to pin him to the wall. But David escaped him twice.

1 Samuel 18:6-11 NLT

- **But the greatest “echo” of all was in the delivery of Christ to the Gentiles for judgment before Pontius Pilate...**

17 As the crowds gathered before Pilate’s house that morning, he asked them, “Which one do you want me to release to you—Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” **18** (He knew very well that the religious leaders had arrested Jesus out of envy.)

Matthew 27:17-18 NLT

4. The great sin of envy lies at the root of so much that is wrong in the world. Nations envy other nations. Religions envy other religions. On a personal level, politicians have always used envy as a means of getting collected to political office by appealing to those who “have-not”; raising taxes on wealthy people in a redistribution of wealth justified in the name of what’s “fair”; the manipulation of the masses using the bait of entitlement as an appeal to support. The list goes on.

5. Whether the religion is Christianity, Islam, Judaism or secular humanism, the same conflicts modeled by Cain and Abel operate today on the individual as well as corporate (national) level.

6. A modern phenomenon, observable in our lifetime, has been the general dislike, and even in some cases, hatred, displayed by the nations of the world toward America. Might we remember that America is known as a “Christian” nation. And even though we fall far short of God’s ideal, we are nevertheless a “blessed” and “favored” people by the true God because of

this. No other nation has accepted the God of the Bible and His gospel as has America. Might we suggest that it's this very FAVOR of God and how He has ACCEPTED our worship as the root of why we are disliked (or hated) by the world in general? Might it not be rooted in ENVY?

E. The Blood Of Abel

And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

Genesis 4:8-10 KJV

1. Here we have some awful lessons from history.

- The root cause of hatred, envy and murder is religious in nature
- Lack of being “right” with God is what makes man angry with God and his brother

“Where is Abel your brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done?”

2. Envy is truly the “green-eyed monster” that stalks mankind, in religious and political spheres.

3. The shedding of innocent blood “cries out” to God “from the ground.” Here we have Abel as a “type” of Christ:

- Abel and Christ were both “shepherds”
- As shepherds, they come to God with offerings
- Though giving no cause for it, both were hated by their brethren
- The motive in their deaths was envy
- The blood of both still “cries out to God”

a. The blood of Abel cries, “justice!”

b. The blood of Christ cries, “mercy”!

22 No, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering. 23 You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect. 24 You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel.

Heb 12:22-24 NLT

III. Conclusions

A. The “Two’s” Continue

1. We can see now that the “2 Trees” of Genesis 2 became the “2 choices” of the temptation in Genesis 3, as well as the source of the two “remedies” there.

2. Cain and Abel become the models of 2 “religions” would be practiced throughout history:

- Abel, representing all who would approach and worship God by faith on the basis of blood sacrifice of an innocent
- Cain, who would approach and worship God *in any other way!*

3. A study of the world’s “religions”, (including atheism, agnosticism, stoicism, mysticism, etc.), will reveal the truth of God’s “ONE WAY” versus man’s “OWN WAY”

4. Once we as Christ-followers see this, we’re able to offer the Gospel to all, since “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”!