

Sunday School Notes 24 July 2022

Jesus talks about people from the Old Testament

Abel (Genesis 4: 1-16 and Matthew 23:33-36) “Sin is crouching at the door.”

One of the Old Testament people Jesus mentioned was Abel – the son of Adam and Eve. We don't know when or where this story took place. The Bible is not a History book, but His-story book. God wanted to tell us about himself, not to describe how or when people lived, But the fact that Jesus mentions Abel means we know he really did exist at some stage.

When God made the world, it was perfect. However, even then, the devil (sin) “was waiting crouching to attack. Satan seized his chance when Eve admired the fruit. She listened to his lie and she and Adam disobeyed God. They were punished and banished from Eden.

But God knew that the punishment wouldn't solve the problem! The desire to sin was still there. The very next chapter in Genesis tells us that sin attacked their children, Cain and Abel, too.

Cain and his younger brother made time to worship God. That sounds good. Abel came because he loved God. But it seems that for Cain worship was just an act to keep on the right side of God. He didn't really want God to be part of his life at all. However one can't fool God by acting “good”! God knew that their worship was different. He therefore accepted Abel's offering but rejected Cain's.

Cain was furious. His younger brother was preferred – how embarrassing, how silly! It seems he fumed because he invited his brother to go outside with him and there he killed Abel and buried him in the fields. He couldn't bear that his sinfulness was known. Of course his action didn't solve anything. He was just giving in to sin again.

Then he tried to fool God that he knew nothing about what had happened to Abel. But, once again, God was not fooled. He told Cain that “sin was crouching at the door.” Cain would be punished for his sin, but God promised to protect him from a revenge murder.

But it wasn't Cain who Jesus reminded people about even though he could have done so as there is a lot we can learn from Cain's story.

Instead one time when Jesus was speaking about the fact that he was going to die, he reminded the Jewish leaders that, throughout history, people had been killed for worshipping God. He reminded them that Abel had been the first person to die for this reason. Jesus told them that he knew the Jewish leaders would kill him for the same reason.

And that is exactly what happened. The leaders of God's family didn't want to accept that he was close to God – he made them feel 'ungodly' although they were supposed to be the religious leaders. They therefore "arranged" Jesus' death. Jesus knew this was why he would be crucified. He knew that they hated him for loving God – just as Cain had hated Abel.

Sin continues to "crouch at the door" ready to spring out and do evil. It is only with God's help that we can deal with our sinful attitudes. We have to be more like Abel and not like Cain.

