

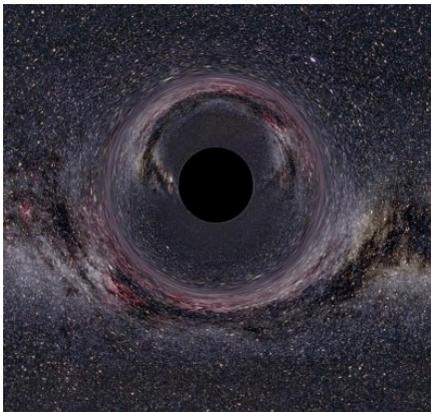
The slippery slope of sin.

At the beginning of the Scarlet Thread of redemption we have breakup of fellowship between man and God. Actually, the original calls it a “dying death.” By some twisted logic Satan suggested to Eve that she and her husband would not die if they ate the forbidden fruit – I think he was deliberately ignoring the wonderful spiritual life that existed with man that allowed companionship with the LORD. He further lied and said that man would not die physically.

Thou shalt surely die — moth tamuth; Literally, a death thou shalt die; or, dying thou shalt die. Thou shalt not only die spiritually, by losing the life of God, but from that moment thou shalt become mortal, and shalt continue in a dying state till thou die. This we find literally accomplished; every moment of man's life may be considered as an act of dying, till soul and body are separated. Other meanings have been given of this passage, but they are in general either fanciful or incorrect.—Adam Clarke's Commentary

There is no escape from the slippery slope of sin.

However, we read elsewhere in God’s word that the redemptive plan for man was already in place – before the foundation of the world.¹ So God in His love has assured us that this dying death would be dealt with *before man’s rebellion even happened*. We have in these two accounts the tragedy of man’s estrangement from Loving God. Once the original sin of pride had taken it’s horrible toll man finds himself on this slope hurtling toward the vortex of sin’s consequence – death, estrangement from the Creator, family tragedy and finally physical death. See my comments of the use of God / the LORD / the LORD God in my endnotes.²



The illustration of the Black Hole. I think most of us are familiar with the phenomenon of the black hole. Notice the graphic³ – near the distortion on the edge of the black hole is a boundary called the “event horizon.” Crossing over this boundary places an object (even light itself) on an inescapable journey to the black hole – to the destruction of the tremendous forces of the black hole. Mankind, in Adam, has crossed that sort of boundary with regard to sin. There is no escape and “destruction” – an eternity in hell – is a certainty. Only God’s Redemptive Plan provides escape from this horrible certainty of hell.

Two Early Accounts of Redemption.

The instant that Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit they died – spiritually. But more than the spiritual connection between God and man was broken. Man’s physical life and environment was broken. Man would no longer be free from disease, physical death, the noetic effect of sin,⁴ indeed, as we will soon see, murder. Man would no

longer be under the perfect environment of Eden – he would barely eke out an existence by sweaty labor. His children will rebel against his authority.

The first account is that of God providing a means of substitutionary atonement for the sin of Adam and Eve by the sacrifice of an innocent animal.

So God in His love has assured us that this dying death would be dealt with *before man's rebellion even happened.*

The second account is that of God confronting Cain's sin of anger (jealousy and premeditated murder – see [1 John 3:12](#)) towards his brother. In this tragic case, Cain refused God's encouragement to seek forgiveness – the result was the murder of his brother and Cain's banishment from the house of Adam.

In these two accounts we have the spectrum of man's response to the redemptive plan of God. The first account teaches the basics of atonement and the restoration of man to fellowship with God. The second account depicts the awful consequences of rejecting the redemptive plan of God.

Man's first Sin – God's first act of Redemption.

⁶ And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. ⁷ 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 3:6-7 (KJV)

The act of sin. The First Couple were living in perfect harmony with themselves, their environment and with God. What more could one ask for? May I suggest that pride was the beginning of their rebellion. Certainly, there was more to this than pride but the very first dark thought that entered the mind of Eve and hence Adam was the same as the serpent – Lucifer.⁵ Lucifer wanted to be like God – completely independent from Him with no obligation to worship Him. This First Sin was horrible in its action. It was the first time man rebelled against his Creator / Companion. In this act was the deliberate turning of man's back on the LORD.

The Consequence of sin, part 1. They immediately died spiritually.

⁷ 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)

¹² Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: Romans 5:12 (KJV)

The Consequence of sin, part 2. Their environment was put under a curse.

¹⁷ And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy

sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; ¹⁸ **Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;** Genesis 3:17-18 (KJV)

Read also Romans 8:19-22 ([KJV](#), [NIV](#), [NAS](#), [AMP](#)).

The Consequence of sin, part 3. They came under the curse of physical death.

¹⁹ **In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.** Genesis 3:19 (KJV) My emphasis.

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: Hebrews 9:27 (KJV)

The Consequence of sin, part 4. Adam became the head of mankind, a dying, cursed race.

¹⁷ **For if by one man's offence death reigned by one;** much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Romans 5:17 (KJV) my emphasis.

The act of God – redemption (atonement). An innocent animal being killed by way of sacrificial death must have been a great shock for the First Couple – this is the first time they witnessed death. Adam Clark suggests that the animal may have been killed by way of instruction by God to Adam to prefigure the Atonement. I may disagree with that thought. I think Wesley is more on the mark.

These coats of skin had a significancy. The beasts whose skins they were, must be slain; slain before their eyes to shew them what death is. And probably 'tis supposed they were slain 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.
—Wesley's Commentary

It may be that the animal was slain by Adam from God's instruction or that God himself performed the act. No matter – the result was the same. This shocking spectacle resulted in an innocent one dying so that the guilty might live. This was properly their first viewing of death being a death of atonement, not a death of deserved punishment which atoning death, of course, prefigured Jesus Christ the Innocent Lamb of God. After I made this last comment I noted that Wesley had had the same view (see above). Refer to insert "[Redemption's View of Death](#)." Use browser "Back" to return to document.

Thus we pick up the Scarlet Thread – the thread of the shed blood of the innocent one prefiguring Jesus Christ, God's Plan of Redemption has been revealed to sinful man for the first time. Many examples will follow – which examples we aim to view in this series.

**The first Recorded Sacrifice – the first Murder.
The first Gospel message rejected.**

The Sacrifice of Abel. Abel offers an innocent one of his flock in faith.

⁴ **And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:** Genesis 4:4 (KJV).

What may not be obvious in the context was a complex of sin's early toll on the First Family. Cain was the firstborn. His name "I have gotten a man from God" signifies that Eve greatly favored Cain and fully expected him to take the place of heir apparent in the First Family. Abel, on the other hand:

"...the other son of Adam and Eve, mentioned in Scripture, was named Abel, that is "breath," or "fading away." —Bible History: Old Testament.

This name certainly suggests a secondary role of expectation from the parents. But I digress. What was going on was a combination of rivalry between siblings and a skirmish – make that battle – between good and evil. Abel had gotten the message that he was a sinner and that he needed to obey the command by the LORD to offer a sacrificial, innocent animal to achieve approbation and forgiveness. Cain, on the other hand, thought his actions and status as firstborn of the family already had him in good standing with God and that the offering was merely recognition and perhaps a celebration of God (if I can put a euphemistic spin on it). The horribleness of this spiritual tug of war was that Cain's heart was filled with unconfessed personal sins – hatred, jealousy, pride and eventually murderous planning which led to ... we'll see that result in a bit.

The Works of Cain. Cain brought an offering out of selfish need for approbation from God and perhaps to win his point of not needing atonement – certainly not out of faith. Here as mentioned in the previous section, Cain thought he had the inside track of favor with God being favored by his parents as firstborn so his act was (as I already mentioned) was more a celebration of an assumed status. Just a thought here – we may be on the dangerous slope of this assumed status in our own lives. There is a danger that we may assume more of our relationship with the LORD if we harbor unconfessed sin in our hearts as Cain did.

Cain's sinful action revealed. Because the LORD did not receive Cain's offering he was angry, not repentant. This result really ratcheted up the on-going argument. Cain was really "ticked off" and it showed on his face. [*Charah heb*] means to have a fire kindled. The visual here is that of when someone really gets angry the color of his face turns color. One of my management bosses was so much like that cartoon thermometer where the color would go from normal complexion to white to deep red and there to almost a purple. It was an indicator that whatever one was doing – back off 'cause you are getting the boss real mad. That's the force of the word "wroth" here.

The LORD's encouraging counsel. Jehovah counsels Cain.

⁶ And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? ⁷ If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. Genesis 4:6-7 (KJV)

First, Jehovah encourages Cain that it was not that He had played favorites between Abel and Cain. Rather, Cain had a problem – sin.

Second, He reminds Cain that he had not lost the advantage of being the firstborn – indeed, promises that he will retain that privilege. This was a word of encouragement by God that Cain was still the favored son but that he was on the slippery slope of unconfessed sin.

Third, the LORD suggests that the means of Cain's recovery of God's favor is lying at his door – the sacrificial animal – to be offered in true repentance to the LORD by Cain. Again, this is the message of the atonement of one's sins. Cain was so angry and truly unrepentant that he rejected God's overture for reconciliation out of hand.⁶ After reviewing the original and the context, may I suggest that *both* interpretations as covered in my endnote might be applied here as almost a double entendre – on one hand, sin crouching (as a quadruped - an tragic irony) could be his unconfessed sin crouching so as to spring on Cain to destroy him. On the other hand, should Cain repent of his unconfessed sin, the very animal that was at the door (a literal reference to a real quadruped) of Cain's flock offered opportunity of an atoning sacrifice so that he could have his sins forgiven and be restored in right relationship with the LORD. I really prefer to think of this phrase as a gracious invitation to restoration in right relationship with the LORD much as the act of Jesus Christ when giving the sop to Judas as a sign to John who was to betray Jesus was also an act of honoring. Thus this act would have double meaning that would include an opportunity for Judas to repent of his horrible intent.⁷ This was the counsel of a loving, caring Companion who desired the restoration of Cain to fellowship with Himself. Not that of a stern lecturing God warning of impending doom although that was more than implied in this counsel.

The first murder. Cain acts out his murderous, sinful mind.

⁸ **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.** Genesis 4:8 (KJV)

Commentary from Wesley might be helpful here:

And Cain talked with Abel his brother - The Chaldee paraprast adds, that Cain, when they were in discourse, maintained there was no judgment to come, and that when Abel spoke in defense of the truth, Cain took that occasion to fall upon him. The scripture tells us the reason wherefore he slew him, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous; so that herein he shewed himself to be a child of the devil, as being an enemy to all righteousness. —Wesley's Commentary

Indeed, this was not a single point in time, so it would seem, but rather this became an obsession on Cain's part that atoning sacrifice **was not** necessary. As a result of this violent, ongoing, argument Cain murdered his brother. John relates that this act came out of a murderous mind and was under the direct influence of Satan.⁸ Thus in this early account we see the results of rejecting God's redemptive plan. Sin is horrible in its consequences – sin will eventually result in eternal separation from God – death.

The Horrible Consequence of Sin – separation from God. Jehovah confronts Cain with his sin. Cain is driven out of the house of Adam – from the face and blessing of God.

The confrontation.

¹⁰ **And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.** Genesis 4:10 (KJV)

Make no mistake about it – God will hold us all from our personal sins – secret or in

the open. The imagery here from the blood-stained ground is that no matter how much we think our sins were adequately hidden Jehovah sees them with His all-seeing eyes. In the field of forensics the ultraviolet light can reveal particles, fingerprints that the naked eye cannot see. Much more so can the eyes of the LORD see all our unconfessed sin.

The Separation.

¹¹ And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; ¹² When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. Genesis 4:11, 12 (KJV).

And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. Genesis 4:16 (KJV)

Cain's punishment was severe but at the same time merciful. He was separated from Adams House. This meant that his original source of pride of self-importance and assumed status in spite of a rebellious mind was dealt with by Jehovah.

Cain was banished from the center of Redemption's Plan. His progeny was NOT to be in the scarlet line of Christ's genealogy – he was banished from the face of God. Was he eventually restored in right relationship with the LORD? That passage does not specifically say. My assumption was no – but in other accounts families removed from the forefront of God's redemptive activity still had opportunity for God's purview.⁹ There would include Cain – there is no biblical confirmation of that.

Endnotes

1. [Eph 1:3-10](#).

2. Partway through this lesson I noticed the scripture's using these several names within the context. I'm not going to go through the lesson right now to match up my comments. Here is the final "analysis:" God, the LORD was very much involved with the First Family in a personal way. The use of these various name reveals the tragedy of mankind being actively involved in a growing estrangement from a very Personal God.

3. From "[Universe Today](#)."

4. See [Study and Exposition of Romans 1:18-32](#), by Greg Herrick, Th. M., Ph.D., footnote 32.

"We note the modernistic, naive assumptions about the process of human knowing involved in the use of evidence in some forms of evidentialism. To be sure, some very good Christian apologists have argued that non-Christians can reason neutrally, but we think that this presupposition creates serious problems with Paul's description of humanity in Romans 1:18-32 and underestimates the noetic effects of sin. Further, to argue that Romans 1:21 does not apply to atheists since Paul was most likely speaking to

polytheists is to miss the point that the ultimate, logical outcome of the "suppression of the truth about God" is indeed atheism. Thus the atheist cannot escape Paul's indictment. Besides, the revelation of God through nature is a universal revelation, given to all men, and all are held accountable for it. The conclusion in 3:19-20 is that all men are sinful and accountable to God."

5. Read [Isaiah 14:12-15](#).

6. There is another view of this passage. Indeed, the one that my theology prof offered – that the image here was not one of an offered solution for Cain's sin but just a statement that Cain's sin was like an animal crouching at his door ready to attack him. This is not preferred as it does not offer a gracious solution as the context suggests but further condemnation without mercy. I prefer the one I offered which also agrees with Adam Clark's view:

"Cain's fault now was his not bringing a sin-offering when his brother brought one, and his neglect and contempt caused his other offering to be rejected. However, God now graciously informs him that, though he had miscarried, his case was not yet desperate, as the means of faith, from the promise, etc., were in his power, and a victim proper for a sin-offering was lying (... robets, a word used to express the lying down of a quadruped) at the door of his fold.—Adam Clarke's Commentary.

7. *"It was the custom for the host at a banquet to take a piece of bread, dip it in the sauce, and present it to the guest of honor. The Lord makes Judas His guest of honor by this gesture. He is extending to him the token of friendship. Judas is at the crossroads. Christ keeps the door open to Judas up to the very last. Even in the garden Jesus will say, ". . . Friend, wherefore art thou come? . . ." (Matt. 26:50) -- still keeping the door open for Judas."*—J. Vernon McGee's Thru The Bible

8. See [1 John 3:12](#).

9. See Hagar's account along with her son in [Genesis 21:9-21](#).