

## Cain, Lamech, and Noah

Early in Genesis we read of these three men. Cain and Noah are well known among Bible students but Lamech not so much. However, each man teaches us a lesson about mankind and God.

Genesis 4 tells us, Cain and Abel were brothers, the offspring of Adam and Eve. Each goes to offer a sacrifice to God. "And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD." (Genesis 4:3) Their sacrifice was aimed at pleasing their Creator and was directed by Him. God accepted the sacrifice of Abel but rejected Cain's offering, Genesis 4.5a. The text does not tell us exactly what was wrong with Cain's sacrifice but we do know what he offered, "the fruit of the ground" Genesis 4.3, and we know it did not please God. Was it the attitude of Cain which caused the rejection? Was it the offering itself as Abel offered the first born of his flock, Genesis 4.4? According to Hebrews 11:4, Abel offered his sacrifice by faith. "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." We know God's word of encouragement to Cain and should learn from those words. "So, the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." (Genesis 4:6-7). Instead of getting angry at God and killing Abel, Cain should have listened.

The same goes for us today. Sin is always close by as we always have opportunities to satisfy our fleshly desires with out consideration of God's Law. In the first century, the Gentiles had their temples and games to be immoral and they showed little regard for human life. Today we have the internet and are just a few words or one click away from all kinds of evil. Many a Christian has fallen prey to sin in the privacy of the home or work place. At the same time the computer and internet can be a useful tool in studying and spreading the word of God. You can do well but you have to rule over it.

Lamech is noted for two things in his life. "Then Lamech took for himself two wives: the name of one was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah." (Genesis 4:19). He is the first one mentioned in the Bible who deviated from God's law about marriage being one man for one woman. In Genesis 2 God created the marriage relation, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his

wife, and they shall become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24) As far as revelation is concerned, Lamech is the first one to have two wives. There is always someone who decides an action for the first time and there will be others to follow. Don't follow others into sin.

Lamech is also noted for his viciousness. “Then Lamech said to his wives: “Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech! For I have killed a man for wounding me, Even a young man for hurting me.” (Genesis 4:23). He was not interested in justice but vengeance and retribution. Later God regulated what was to be done in cases of personal injury. “If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. 23 But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,” (Exodus 21:22-24). Some believe this to sound barbaric but God was not allowing individuals to have their own standard of judgement. Vengeance is not left up to the individual but to the law and God. Today we see lawlessness based on a distorted view of justice. Gang violence is based on gang justice, looting has been called redistribution, reparations, and so on. According to God, it is not left up to the individual to “get even” but for the government to carry out justice.

Finally, Noah as he was spared from the flood. There are two key phrases describing this man and his relationship with God. “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.” (Genesis 6:8). In a wicked and evil world, Noah was righteous and God extended grace to him. God warned Noah of the flood and instructed him to build the ark. We should never minimize God's grace in our salvation. Another phrase is, “Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.” (Genesis 6:22). Noah did not do some of what God said, he did not do most of what God commanded, he did ALL of what God commanded. Many today want to be selective in their obedience and do part of God's commandments. In order to be saved we must do all God says and leave nothing out.

The Bible was written for our learning and admonition. Use it wisely. -- Dennis Tucker