

## **Sin that spreads**

### **Genesis 4**

#### **Getting started**

“With good education and upbringing, we might not get rid of sin completely but we could bring it under control.” What do you think of this idea?

#### **Light from the Word**

##### **Read Genesis 4:1-16**

1. What do you think was wrong with Cain’s sacrifice?
  
2. What is the result of Cain’s sin? Consider the results both for him and for his relationship with the rest of the world.
  
3. Is there any sign of mercy in God’s judgement? If so, what?
  
4. Read Genesis 4:17-22.
  - a. What sorts of human activities do Cain’s descendants get involved in?
  
  - b. Comparing Genesis 1:28 and Genesis 2:15 with this passage, why do you think the writer of Genesis might write about these activities?
  
5. Read Genesis 4:23-24. If you were comparing sins, what could you say about Lamech’s sin in comparison with Cain’s?
  
6. Comparing the events of this chapter with the events of chapter 3, what can we say about:
  - a. the nature of sin?
  
  - b. how sin is spreading?

This question, on sin, is very important, and is the key to this study. Sin is against God's word. It is self-centred, selfish and destructive. It controls the sinner, rather than the other way round. It begins with words and ideas, and expresses itself in action. It travels in families; we are like our parents. The idea here is to highlight that sin is not just a matter of external behaviour, but an underlying attitude that rejects God. The attitude of rejecting God and being our own boss is the root of the problem.

Sin is spreading and becoming worse both in the seriousness of its effects, and the number of people affected. Those who trust God are in the minority. Even those who trust God are affected by sin in one way or another—for example, righteous Abel is killed. His death confirms, incidentally, that there is no straightforward correspondence between sin and suffering. Someone may be righteous in God's sight, and still suffer because of sin.

Despite sin, the children of Adam are still in the image of God. The possibility remains that somehow—we don't know how yet—God's plans for humanity will still be fulfilled, and the hoped-for relief from God's curse will still come (Gen 3:15). 5:29 suggests that this relief is not far off.

7. Read Genesis 4:25-5:3, and 5:29. What hope do these verses suggest for the future?

### **To finish**

Go back to the discussion starter. What could you say to your friend, based on what you've learned from Genesis 4?

### **Give thanks and pray**

Thank God that he is patient and loving, and that he provides Jesus as the way of dealing with sin.

Pray that we would take sin seriously, and that we would not be led into temptation.