

“The Foundations of Our Faith Revealed, Theme by Theme, Genesis and Sin”

Review: The Testimony of God Regarding Genesis and Its Inspiration: THE OTHERS, James, Jude, and John, Enduring to the End through many Challenges:

- ***The Testimony of James, the Lord’s Brother — Abraham’s Example of “Faith Plus Works” Reveals True Salvation***
- ***The Testimony of John, the Apostle — As the Overcomer’s Example, The Shed Blood of the Redeemer Continues Testifying***
- ***The Testimony of Jude, the Lord’s — For Kingdom Saints, Cain’s Example of Evil Endures***

- ***The Testimony of James, the Lord’s Brother — Abraham’s Example of “Faith Plus Works” Reveals True Salvation***

James 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

Gen. 22:6-12 [First the context]

6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid *it* upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here *am* I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?

8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

11 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here *am* I.

12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son* from me.

James 2:22-23

22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

Gen. 15:5-6

5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

- ***Firstly, there is no question that James is referring to the Genesis account here for he is using some of the very words and similar phrasing. So he considered the Genesis account as inspired and authoritative.***
- ***What is not so clear, however, is what the essence of his teaching is. James, writing to the 12 tribes of Israel, is concerned about obedience to the law and not to salvation by grace through faith alone, independent of works of law. His use of the word “grace” three times (1:11 & 4:6) are about the Lord being a blessing to those who are obedient, submissive and humble or about the beauty of flowers in their prime. This is not at all the same as Paul’s usage in most places in his letters. This should not be surprising to us who have learned to “rightly divide the word of truth”. You might recall that James was sending forth teachers to present the necessity of obedience to the law and to circumcision for Gentile men. Paul confronted him directly about it as recorded in Gal. 2.***
- ***So the message of James seems to be that the works prove the authenticity of one’s faith and therefore that faith without works is a dead faith as verse 24 indicates. He mentions Abraham by name directly as an example and now also Rahab. The idea of this endurance until the end of one’s life is implied, if not outright stated. So salvation is by faith plus works since if there are no works there is no salvation according to James. Enduring until the end is therefore required as for example in the gospels (see Mk. 13:13 & Matt. 24:13). Is it not clear that James is ministering under the terms and conditions of the gospel of the kingdom and not the gospel of the grace of God?***

For James faith is imperfect (v. 22) and incomplete (v. 23) and unable to save (vv. 13-14) apart from the legally required works.

Finally, the works must endure for salvation to be accomplished, not merely assured. The selection of various transgressions of the Mosaic Law in verses 8 through 11 with the reminder in verse 10 that “any transgression” cancels entirely one’s relationship with God makes that so clear.

- ***So the full weight of Moses’s Law is applied here by James. It is no wonder therefore that Luther and many reformers considered this teaching to be in fact proof that the letter of James was not inspired since it conflicted with the Pauline teachings.***

The Testimony of John, the Apostle — As the Overcomer’s Example, The Shed Blood of the Redeemer Continues Testifying

1 John 3:12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. ***[A reference, clearly]***

Gen. 4:8-10

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.

9 And the LORD said unto Cain, Where *is* Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: *Am* I my brother's keeper?

10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

- ***Except for the 1 John 3:12 reference about Cain killing Abel, John does not directly reference Genesis. The two allusions in the Revelation, 2:7 and 13:10, though would not make much sense apart from the existence of the Genesis account and its importance to John is thereby proven.***
- ***So we see from John’s letters [at least as Rev. 2:7 indicates] and the Revelation, the Genesis teaching is foundational and therefore must be inspired by Almighty God.***

The Testimony of Jude, the Apostle — For Kingdom Saints, Cain’s Example of Evil Endures

Jude 1:7, 11, 14

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set

forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. [Reference to Gen. 19:1-38, entire chapter]

...

11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

...

14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, **[A mention of the name only but not with any context]**

- *Jude's teaching here in verse 11 assumes the truth of the Genesis account which therefore cannot be questioned.*

Our Outline:

- ***Sin is Revealed as a Foundational Theme of Our Faith in Genesis***
- ***The Sin Offering is Fundamental in Understanding God's Redemptive Plan***
- ***The Conscience of Sin Is Universal, Whether for Believers or Unbelievers***
- ***Sin in a More General Sense is Also Common in the Old Testament***

I. Sin is Revealed as a Foundational Theme of Our Faith in Genesis:

- *Sin is a fundamental concept in the Bible and it is revealed as such even in Genesis. Sin requires judgment but God provides redemption. This is a great theme of the Bible and is found early in Genesis, in chapter 4 and verse 7.*
- *Note: the "H" numbers below refer to the standard Strong's numbering system found in his commonly used Hebrew dictionary.*
- *[Strong's] "חָטָא (châ'tâ' | khaw-taw')*
Derivation: a primitive root;
Strong's: properly, to miss; hence (figuratively and generally) to sin; by inference, to forfeit, lack, expiate, repent, (causatively) lead astray, condemn
KJV: bear the blame, cleanse, commit (sin), by fault, harm he hath done, loss, miss, (make) offend(-er), offer for sin, purge, purify (self), make reconciliation, (cause, make) sin(-ful, -ness), trespass.
Cognate Group: H2399 (fault), H2398 (bear the blame), H2400 (offender), H2403 (punishment), H2401 (sin)"
- *The primary Hebrew word for sin has a number of what are called "cognates" or alternative forms. Altogether there are six of them*

and although used in the Old Testament nearly 600 times, they are used only 14 times in Genesis. But that does not mean that sin is not fundamental in the first book of the Bible, for it is. We will look at two of those Hebrew words today, together used over 530 times in the Old Testament. Each refers to God or to man with the common use in reference to God, of course. What is most interesting about the first of these words we will consider today is the way this word is used of sin as we normally understand it, or of the “sin offering” so prominently found in Leviticus and Numbers.

Different offerings are mentioned under the Law of Moses. There is the sin offering, the burnt offering, and others as well. But it is not important to our study today to understand the differences between them. But the sin offering is fundamental since it relates to sin, whether that is voluntary or not. The Pauline references to sin are defining and we have already considered them in detail here. So imputed sin, personal acts of sin, and the sin nature are all well known because of Paul’s teachings. But in the Old Testament less is revealed, perhaps because the Hebrew language is not as appropriate for that teaching. That is an introduction to our teaching now regarding that Old Testament revelation with a special focus on the book of Genesis.

II. The Sin Offering is Fundamental in Understanding God’s Redemptive Plan:

[READ] Gen. 4:7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, [the] sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. (H2403) or “chata” translated “sin offering” many times. This is the first use of any of the words for sin and it is found early in Genesis. This is an important verse because it sets the stage and prefigures the redemptive plan of God involving substitution and requiring blood sacrifice.

- ***Some examples illustrate this well from the Law of Moses:***

Lev. 4:14 When the sin, which they have sinned against it, is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation.

Lev. 4:23 Or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge; he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish:

Lev. 4:26 And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.

[READ] Lev. 4:28-29

28 Or if his sin, which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned.

29 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering.

Lev. 4:33 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay it for a sin offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering.

- *The expression “sin offering” occurs 60 times in Leviticus and 35 times in Numbers. But in all cases (if I have properly counted them) it is simply this single Hebrew word that is used there with the word “offering” so often added by the translators.*
- *So the idea here is one of blood sacrifice as substitution for the punishment of the guilty party. There is a ritualistic exchange of the personal sin to the animal being offered. In many cases the sinner's hand was placed on the animal's head signifying that the sin guilt was thereby being transferred to the sacrificial animal. That animal then becomes, as it were, the sin [offering].*

The other uses of this word refer not to an offering but to the sinner himself:

III. The Conscience of Sin Is Universal, Whether for Believers or Unbelievers:

- *This Hebrew word is used 296 times in the Old Testament and here in Genesis, 4 times, the one regarding the animal available for sacrifice, as we have seen, if only Cain would have seen and known as Abel did, but the other references to personal sin itself, a universal reality known by all. But there are few references in Genesis. Why? Perhaps it is as simple as that “sin is not imputed when there is no law”, Rom. 5:13. Genesis was written pre-law. Much more could be said about this but I will reserve that for another time. Let's look at these other references though in Genesis where this word used not for sin offerings but for personal sin:*

[READ] Gen. 18:20 And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous **(H2403)**

[READ] Gen. 31:36 And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me? **(H2403)**

[READ] Gen. 50:15-21

15 And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.

16 And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying,

17 So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. (H2403)

18 And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we *be* thy servants.

19 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for *am* I in the place of God?

20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive.

21 Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

Gen. 50:22-26

22 And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years.

23 And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third *generation*: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees.

24 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

25 And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

26 So Joseph died, *being* an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

IV. Sin in a More General Sense is Also Common in the Old Testament:

- ***Here we refer to the second most used Hebrew word for sin or “missing the mark”. Even unbelievers know of it, do they not? This word is used 238 times but here in Genesis 7 times:***

[READ] Gen. 20:6 And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. **(H2398)**

[READ] Gen. 20:9 Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done. **(H2398)**

[READ] Gen. 39:9 There is none greater in this house than I **[Joseph]**; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? **(H2398) See also 2 Sam. 12:13**

[READ] Gen. 42:22 And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required. **(H2398) See also Gen. 31:39, 40:1, 43:9, 44:32**

- ***We go on to our final verses for today, where other less used Hebrew words based on the same root are used:***

Gen. 13:13 But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly. **(H2400) See Ps. 1:1, 5:** “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful ... Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.”

Gen. 20:9 Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done. **(H2401) See also Ps. 32:1, 40:6**

- ***Ps. 40:6 is memorable:*** “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin [offering] hast thou not required.”

Gen. 41:9 Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day. **(H2399)**

- ***So sin is a common theme in Genesis and throughout the word of God. But the foundations are laid here in Genesis.***

Conclusions:

- *The concept of sin and its essential character is a principle found deep in the heart of all of us that is in its nature contrary to God and man. That is the fundamental teaching of Genesis. That teaching is amplified exceedingly in the Law of Moses. There are hundreds*
- *But in allowing the sin of Adam, God also provided a plan of redemption to be fulfilled in due time by his only son our savior Jesus Christ. But until then he provided a legal system with a sacrificial system and a priesthood. Those sacrifices pointed forward to their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. But they were previewed even in Genesis 4, the first place sin is mentioned as such in the Bible. There are other references to sin as well in Genesis, in fact about 11. So Genesis lays the foundation for a great theme of the Bible, the theme of redemption for sinners through the shed blood of a substitute and the critical necessity of taking that by faith.*