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As we resume now in Genesis chapter 4, this very important statement that God makes to Cain is the place of decision that all of us throughout human history have faced. After the fall in the garden, sin is an inevitability. There is no way around it.

There are two categories of people on the planet and these are not so much positional categories as functional categories. We know the difference between positional truth and experiential truth. You can be a son of God positionally by faith in Christ and yet you can be a son of the serpent in terms of behavior and action.

You can hold the position in Christ, that's what we call positional truth, in which by virtue of the work of Christ and wholly and entirely through grace, God assigns us righteousness, He assigns us eternal life, He assigns us a name, He enters us into union with Christ positionally. But that does not automatically eventuate in experiential parallel things. We do not automatically inherit as sons.

We do not automatically achieve victory over sin because we've been assigned righteousness and because our sins positionally were taken care of at the cross. We talked about that Friday night. That's one of the reasons that unbelievers who have also had their sin penalty taken care of at the cross aren't any better off for that because there are other factors that enter in that require their choice.

There are other factors that enter in for us beyond positional truth that require us to make a choice. This is where Cain stands. The fact that Cain brings a gift to God, the fact that he has conversations with God, the fact that he receives a covenant promise from God, and the preservation of his life by God, as we're about to see, indicates to me that Cain is a believer, he has a relationship with God, he knows who God is, he acknowledges God, he disobeys God.

He is very similar. In fact, he is the archetype for Israelites who came out of Egypt under the blood of the Passover lamb, who have not only had their positional sin problem removed through propitiation in the prospective sense, but have been redeemed, redeemed under the blood, and yet disobey, who long for the leeks and garlicks of Egypt, and who do not make the decisions that deliver them experientially in the way that they've been delivered positionally. And these are the great masses of those who will see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob sitting down in the kingdom with the Gentiles from the north, east, south, and west, and many of them will be outside.

And it's a sad thing, but it is a choice that we face. Cain faces a choice. If you do well, is there not forgiveness of sin? And if you do not do well, God just doesn't say, and if not? He says, if you do not do well.

God emphasizes choice, volition. This is not predetermined. It's not inevitable.

It's not fate. We choose. We choose daily whether we are going to claim forgiveness, whether we are going to resume a walk in the light, or whether we are going to yield ourselves and our members as instruments or slaves to unrighteousness, to sin.

It's our choice. Sin is going to be there, and the croucher is always going to be at the door in this life. But we choose whether we walk out that door and submit ourselves to him.

There is no good reason for us to do so. There's no good reason for Cain to do what he is about to do. He has the advantage.

He's the firstborn. He is the fulfillment of God's promise of a seed to Eve. And the language ties that together.

Eve says so when he's born. And God reminds him of it in verse 7. Satan has a desire for him to fall. And this word for desire, as I mentioned before the break, is the same word that is used of Eve's desire for her husband.

It is a strong desire. And it is a very unusual word. I said it's used three places.

It's used in Genesis 3.16, along with the word for rule over. Same combination of verbs is here in verse 7 of Genesis 4. And the third passage is very unusual. The third place where this verb for desire is used is in the Song of Solomon, or Canticles, depending on who you talk to.

Turn with me to the Song of Solomon, chapter 7. Part of this is just perversity on my part. How often do you get to go to the Song of Solomon in the middle of a study? Like Ecclesiastes, I think one of the most understudied and one of the most misunderstood portions of the Bible are the books written by Solomon. What do we know about Solomon? He's David's son, the third king of Israel.

He dedicates the temple, prays a beautiful prayer on that occasion. He has a conversation with God personally in which he is offered anything that he desires. God says, ask and it shall be given.

Just tell me what you want, I will do it for you. And Solomon makes an amazing choice. He asks for wisdom.

And God grants it. And God says, that is an excellent choice. And because you have chosen wisdom, because you have chosen and expressed your desire to know the truth, I'm going to give you all the things you didn't ask for.

I'm going to give you riches and honor and pleasures and glory beyond any king that has ever been or will ever be on the earth, greater than his father David. And it foreshadows the Lord Jesus Christ, David's greater son, who for the joy that was set before him

endured the cross, who lived not on bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. And the grandeur and the glory and the blessing that God gives to Solomon is a foretaste and a foreshadowing of the glory that belongs to Jesus Christ because of his choice.

But the books of Solomon, therefore, are written by the man to whom God has given more knowledge of Bible doctrine than anybody else in history. I think Solomon understood more truth in his day than any believer in the Old Testament, perhaps more even than believers in the New. He had a tremendous gift of wisdom from God.

Well, he wrote books. He wrote Ecclesiastes, and he wrote the Song of Solomon. And I think some of the worst massacring that has ever occurred of Scripture are the studies of Ecclesiastes that say, well, much of what Solomon is saying here, that this was him when he was an unbeliever or this is him when he was out of fellowship or when he wasn't thinking the thoughts of God because he appears to say, eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die, and so forth.

And it is a gross underestimation of what's being communicated in those books. Well, the other book that he wrote besides Ecclesiastes is the Song of Solomon. And similarly, it is one of the most misunderstood books.

I am not going to be able to say much about the Song of Solomon except to tell you don't believe the captions that you read in your Bible when it says, well, this is the chorus singing, and this is the bride talking, and now this is the groom talking. And without any clues in the text whatsoever, people have tried to make sense out of this very potent piece of Scripture. And they've said, well, it's a play, and this is the script of the play, and you've got to figure out who the actors are and assign them their parts.

So they just go in and hack this all to bits and say, well, these are the bridesmaids talking, and now this is Solomon, or this is the shepherd lover. Well, hopefully, Lord willing, one of these days we'll tackle the Song of Solomon. All I'm saying is those little italic captions that divide up your text, treat those with a great degree of caution.

But look at Song of Solomon chapter 7. All I want to point out to you this morning is you know that there are parts of the Song of Solomon that are very famous. You know, schoolboys love to go look at the Song of Solomon and read about body parts and so forth. Obviously, involved in this is a love story, and there is the expression of beauty and of desire and of intimacy.

And that's all we need to know for our purposes this morning. Look at chapter 7, beginning in verse 9. Just so I can skip over some of those parts and not read them aloud. The roof of your mouth is like the best wine.

The wine goes down smoothly for my beloved, moving gently the lips of sleepers, or the

lips and the teeth, depending on which text you want to use there. And look at verse 10. I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.

Same phrase in Hebrew that you have in Genesis 3 and Genesis 4. Only other place in the Bible where it occurs. Now, the interesting thing is not just that it occurs, but I would like to invite your attention to some of the other words in this context. What's in the very next verse? Do you see anything familiar in the next verse? Come, my beloved, let us go forth to the field.

That's the missing phrase in Genesis chapter 4 that dropped out, but is preserved in the Samaritan Pentateuch and in the Septuagint and in all of the early versions. And Cain said to his brother Abel, dot, dot, dot. Well, that missing phrase is this same phrase right here.

Let us go forth to the field. Then it goes on here in Canicles. Let us lodge in the villages.

Let us get up early to the vineyards. When's the first place we see a vineyard? In Genesis, right after the flood. Noah plants a vineyard, and it's an occasion for stumbling.

It's the occasion for a sin to be committed. It's the occasion of a curse. Cursed be Canaan, God will say, on that upcoming occasion.

So, just watch for the resonance of language here. We have, his desire is toward me, this rare word. Nowhere else in Scripture except Genesis 3 and 4 does it occur.

Let us go forth to the field. It's what Cain says to Abel. Let us get up early to the vineyards.

Let us see if the vine has budded, whether the grape blossoms are open and the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you my love. The mandrakes give off a fragrance.

If you've been lately in Genesis and you remember the birth of Jacob's sons, who are Jacob's wives? You have Rachel and Leah. To put them in chronological order, you have Leah, and seven years later you have Rachel. Remember back in Genesis chapter 30? Turn back to chapter 30 real quick.

Keep your finger in Song of Solomon. Turn back to Genesis 30. Why do mandrakes come up here in the Song of Solomon? I should explain to you perhaps as we turn to Genesis 30 that mandrakes... Does anybody know what mandrakes are? Have you ever run across mandrakes? I didn't know any better, and I thought it was some kind of a duck.

They found these birds in the field. Mandrake is a plant. I think it came from drakes.

But mandrake is a plant. It's actually from the potato family if you look at it by genus and species and so forth. But it produces a fruit that looks a lot like a tomato.

The fruit of the mandrake is poisonous. It looks inviting. It even tastes sweet, but you can't use it for food because it's poisonous.

But the mandrake is an aphrodisiac, a very famous aphrodisiac since ancient times. That's what's going on here in Genesis chapter 30. Josephus makes reference to this.

A lot of ancient literature makes reference to mandrake as an aphrodisiac. So when you get to Genesis 30, and you get there in the early... You've got Bilhah and Zilpah and some of the sons being born, and you get down to verse 14 of Genesis 30. Now, Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Leah.

Why? Well, there's sort of a contest going on about which is the more valuable wife. Who can have children and please Jacob? Well, Leah hasn't had any children, and that's why the whole maid substitute thing has happened. So Rachel sees these mandrakes come in that Reuben brought, and she says to Leah, please give me some of your son's mandrakes.

But Leah replies and says, is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Even though she's having the children, she knows that Jacob really favors Rachel. Would you take away my son's mandrakes also? Rachel says, therefore, he will lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes. You give me the aphrodisiac plant, I'll let you go sleep with Jacob tonight.

So what is Rachel doing here? Well, she's turning to a sort of a man-made solution to her problem. She says, if I could get Jacob more excited physically, maybe I would have a child. So she's looking for something that she can do to solve her barrenness problem.

So she sees the mandrakes come in. She says, boy, if I had those mandrakes, I could get pregnant. And she's willing to trade.

It's ironic that she says, well, you can go in and sleep with Jacob so that I can have the mandrakes. Well, what happens? Is this plan of hers going to work? It doesn't. So when Jacob came out of the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, you must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes.

So he lays with her that night. God listened to Leah. She conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son.

Leah says, God has given me my wages because I have given my maid to my husband. So she called his name Issachar. Then Leah conceives again and bore Jacob a sixth son.

Then Leah, and she talks about naming him Zebulun. Verse 21, she bore a daughter, called her name Dinah. Then God remembered Rachel.

So how long would this have taken to have three more children? Well, three or four years at a minimum. And so the mandrake idea did not work for Rachel. Human solution to a problem.

But finally, Leah apparently turns to the Lord because in verse 22, God remembered Rachel and God listened to her. Now she's appealing to God. And God opens her womb.

She conceived and bore a son and said, God has taken away my reproach. And this, of course, is the birth of Joseph. And she has the belief that she will have yet another son.

And says, the Lord shall add to me another son. But these are mandrakes. But what do mandrakes speak of in this passage? Everything that we're seeing in this Song of Solomon passage is a pointer back to bad things that happened in the Old Testament.

You've got the vineyard and the wine pointing back to Noah. You've got, let us go to the field pointing back to Cain. You've got, his desire is for me going back to those two instances of the verb.

You've got mandrakes going back to Rachel's futile attempt to solve a problem in a human way. Turn back to Song of Solomon 7. The mandrakes give off a fragrance. The encyclopedia, by the way, says that mandrakes have sort of a narcotic fragrance.

A very heady fragrance. So, 7.13 of Canticles. The mandrakes give off a fragrance.

And at our gates are pleasant fruits. All manner, new and old, which I have laid up for you, my beloved. And this word for pleasant, you remember what Eve thought when she looked at the tree? When she saw that it was pleasant to the eye and desirable to make one wise, she partook.

And you can look earlier in 7 and we'll tread somewhat carefully here. The thing that I want to point out to your attention is that, let's see, there's a reference to ruling in here in verse 5. Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel, and the hair of your head is like purple. A king is held captive by your tresses.

The king who is supposed to rule because he is the king. Mashal, the word for rule over or rule, is the common verb that's associated with the melek, with the king. And yet, he says the king is held captive by her tresses.

What does God tell Eve? Your desire will be unto him and he will have the rule over you. Well, in this case, it's topsy-turvy. The king is held captive by this woman's beauty.

And without going into all the details of the Song of Solomon, you have a lot of resonant language here that goes back. And if we ever get a chance to study this, we'll see in the context of this book why that is so significant. This, in a nutshell, is an illicit, this is not the bride and the bridegroom.

This is the king looking at a woman he should not be looking at and being held captive by desire for her and she's tantalizing him and so forth. And all of these things are going to lead to ruin. And that's why you have all of these references back to ruin.

The ruin of Eve, the ruin of Cain, the ruin of Noah. The curses that are associated with each of those episodes are all alluded to here in the middle of chapter 7 of Song of Solomon. But you get the idea here when you read the language of Song of Solomon about how powerful this desire is.

This isn't sort of a casual like to have sort of a thing. This is one of the most powerful forces in human nature is the desire for someone of the opposite sex. And in a proper context, it's a wonderful and beautiful thing.

In an improper context, which is what you have here, it sows the seeds of destruction and brings about a curse. Back to Genesis chapter 4. Cain said to his brother Abel, let us go to the field. This is our reconstructed verse 8. And it came to pass when they were in the field.

Well, see, I just had you turn away from Song of Solomon. That in the field is another reference from Song of Solomon. Let me just give you the verse and you can look at it later.

But verse 11, when it says, Come, my beloved, let us go forth to the field. That's referred to twice in Genesis chapter 4. When they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and killed him. So now the Lord comes back.

On the occasion of Cain's sin of anger, God came to him and God confronted him and said, you have a choice here. You have sinned. You can either do well and your sin will be forgiven.

If you do not do well, you are submitting yourself to the power of the croucher. He has a desire for you. You must rule over him.

That's your calling. That's your opportunity. You're the firstborn.

You're the seed of the woman. That's what you're supposed to do. You've got to crush him under your heel.

Cain instead lures his brother to the field and kills him. So God comes to him again. And this is a reminder to us of the convicting ministry of God, the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit does not vacate the premises when we sin. God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, comes to us and confronts us with our sin. And we have to make a decision.

The Lord said to Cain, where is Abel your brother? Cain lies and says, I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? God replies in verse 10, and He said, what have you done? The

voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. There is an awful lot that we could talk about here.

Just remember what the nature of God's statements have been about the ground. The ground is cursed on account of man's sin. Abel's blood has been spilled on the ground.

The shedding of blood in the animal sacrifice is a picture of remission of sin. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin, Hebrews 9.22. But here, the shedding of blood has been perverted. It is a crime as well as a sin.

And the idea of curse is here in the ground. And as God continues, you see it. He says, the voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.

So now you are cursed from the ground, from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.

This tells us several things. There is a progression away from the beneficial presence of God. When Adam and Eve were in the garden and then they sinned, sin produced a separation.

They were driven from the garden. And God says to Adam, by the sweat of your brow, you will earn your bread. You will till the soil.

And that was a part of the fall. It was part of the loss. They didn't have to till the soil in the garden.

But now they do. Now Cain, by virtue of his sin, and not only his sin, but his unrepentant heart, the fact that he does not do well when he does sin, the discipline comes not only because of the sin, but because of his attitude about his sin. This murder would have never taken place if he had done well when his anger sprung up, if he had done well when it was time to bring the sacrifice.

But there's a progression from wrong motivation in bringing the gift to the mental attitude sin of anger when his gift is not accepted. And as the Scripture says, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin. And sin, when it is finished, when it is fulfilled, when it is completed, bringeth forth death.

And so here, by failing to avail himself of the good that God has put forward in terms of forgiveness of sin, Cain has gone literally from bad to worse. So now, he can't even till the soil. Tilling the soil was part of the consequences of sin.

Now he can't even do that. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.

Now, there's a lot that we can and will do as far as being a fugitive and a vagabond. But

why is Cain not executed for his murder? What is the penalty for murder? If you go to the Law of Moses, the penalty is death. This is called lex talionis.

I mentioned that briefly a week or two ago. The legal term, that's Latin, I think, for basically the law of retribution. Talion or talionis has to do with the idea of retribution.

It means eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, life for a life. And if you turn with me over to Leviticus 24, verse 17, Whoever kills any man shall surely be put to death. It's cut and dried.

Whoever kills an animal shall make it good. Animal for animal. And here is the idea that if you take a life, your life will be taken.

If you kill an animal, then you've got to make restitution. You've got to make it good. You've got to replace the animal.

If a man causes disfigurement, verse 19, of his neighbor as he has done, so shall it be done to him. Fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. As he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him.

And whoever kills an animal shall restore it. But whoever kills a man shall be put to death. You shall have the same law for the stranger and for one from your own country.

For I am the Lord your God. This is the law of retribution. This is what Jesus spoke of when he said, You have heard it said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.

Why is it when Cain takes a life that his life is not taken? God says, You're cursed. The ground will not yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you will be in the earth.

Well, one of the things about the law of retribution is exceedingly important to us. And that is that within that law there is the principle of substitution. The principle of substitution, there is no more important principle for us because that is the reason we are saved.

That is the reason that we are not under the penalty of death and we do not suffer death for our death-meriting sin and sinfulness. We are under the law of Talion. We are under the law that requires death.

The wages of sin is death. The penalty for sin is death. We merit that penalty.

And yet, there is also within that law the principle of substitution. And this is a well-documented principle not only in scripture, but elsewhere. The whole idea of Talion or eye for an eye law is found in many ancient Near Eastern codes.

And I'll just mention a few of them here. You have a code of Eshnunna, E-S-H-N-U-N-N-A

which dates to about 2000 B.C. This is before the time of Abraham. There is another one called Lipet Ishtar circa 1860 B.C. You have the code of Hammurabi which is traditionally dated to 1700 B.C. It's actually a little later than that, but we won't go into chronological problems.

But in its literal application, exact retribution for the injury was to be applied to the offender. And all of these law codes express that principle. You gouge out an eye, your eye gets gouged out, and so forth.

But that is the principle. That's not always the practice. In principle, if you gouge out an eye, you owe that person an eye.

Your eye being gouged out satisfies that requirement. However, this law and this principle of law did not always require or even primarily call for a literal application. The application of the principle is what counts.

In principle, there has to be an equivalence that is made. Restitution can substitute for the literal application of the principle. So, monetary substitution came in.

Payment of claims and damages. And this is what we have today. If you run a red light and bash in somebody's driver's side door, we don't go out and have them bash in your driver's side door.

That would be an eye for an eye. Instead, we operate on the principle of restitution. If you bash in someone's door, you pay them the money or your insurance company pays them the money to have that door restored.

And so, restoration or substitution of a new door for the old one suffices. And even though you're in the wrong and you're guilty of a crime in damaging this person's property, the retribution doesn't come back and have the same thing done to you. And in this way, the application of the principle becomes productive instead of destructive.

Which is better? If somebody knocks out your plate glass window, what's better? For you to go knock out their plate glass window or for them to restore your window the way it was before. The principle is a window for a window. You break a window, another window needs to be replaced.

But you have a positive, a restorative application of the principle. Rather than you destroyed this, I'm going to destroy that. This was recognized even in early times.

So, for example, the law code of Eshnunna that I mentioned earlier, which pertained in the region where Abraham is from, up in the Ur region. The code of Eshnunna said this, if a man, this is great, if a man bites the nose of another man and severs it, rather than the man going back and biting the first guy's nose, he shall pay one mina of silver. So the end of your nose is worth one mina of silver.

Somebody bites it off, they owe you a mina of silver. For an eye, one mina of silver. For a tooth, one half mina.

For a slap in the face, ten shekels. So very early, this is 2000 BC, even before the time of Abraham, you have the idea that money can substitute in this law of retribution. And you find this in the law of Moses, the place we just read in Leviticus.

If you kill an animal, you restore the animal. You can look at Exodus 21, verse 12. In Exodus 21, verse 12, He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death.

However, now you have a modification of the absolute law of Talion. However, if he did not lie in wait, but God delivered him into His hand, then I will appoint for you a place where he may flee. But if a man acts with premeditation against his neighbor to kill him by treachery, you shall take him from My altar that he may die.

He who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. He who kidnaps a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, shall surely be put to death. Do we have any instances of that in Genesis, for example? Someone being kidnapped and sold, worthy of death? He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

If men contend with each other, and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist, and he does not die, but is confined to his bed, if he rises again and walks about outside with his staff, then he who struck him shall be acquitted. He shall only pay for the loss of his time and shall provide for him to be thoroughly healed. That particular passage has wonderful relationship to the parable of the Good Samaritan.

The Good Samaritan basically acts the part of the criminals who put the man in the ditch. He performs the duty of the criminal, even though he himself is not guilty. If a man beats his male or female servant with a rod so that he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished.

Notwithstanding, if he remains alive a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is his property. There's a whole discussion you can have about slavery and abolition of slavery and the Bible's attitude on slavery. If men fight and hurt a woman with child, one of the most famous passages in the Old Testament because of the abortion debate.

If men fight and hurt a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished according as the woman's husband imposes on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. So, if you look at verse 17, we've seen these different death penalty meriting things.

And remember, the principle here is equivalence. One thing is equivalent to another. To smite a man so that he dies, the equivalence, the payment, is you yourself being struck

down and killed.

Knocking out a tooth, the equivalence is your tooth is knocked out. Now, that equivalence can take other forms. And like in Eshnunna, and you'll actually see elsewhere in the Law of Moses, money can compensate for injury.

The man who was injured and rises again in verse 19, the loss of his time, provide for him to be healed, you can compensate for his injuries when he's made bedfast by paying for his time and paying for his healing. That is sort of what insurance does today. And so explicit here is the idea that rather than you being struck so that you have to miss work and be bedfast, you pay money in lieu of being injured yourself to restore this person.

So, when it says eye for eye, tooth for tooth, it is an eye or the equivalent. It is a tooth or the equivalent. And like Eshnunna, the Law of Moses affirms this.

But look back at verse 17. He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. Didn't kill the father or mother, didn't strike the father or mother, cursed the father or mother.

This sets up an equivalence between a curse and death. Now, it's a reverse equivalence. It doesn't say if you kill your mother or father, you will be cursed.

It says if you curse your father or mother, you will be killed. And it's paralleled by the statement elsewhere that a disobedient teenager, a rebellious teenager that disregards his father and mother is to be under sentence of death, to be stoned by the congregation. But, very interesting in verse 17, there is an equivalence set up between cursing and death.

To be under a curse, to suffer the effects of a curse, is the equivalent of death. This begins to answer some of our questions back in Genesis when God says about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die. What is it that happened on the day that they ate thereof? Did they die? A lot has been said, well, dying thou shalt die.

They died spiritually and so forth. What happened on that day? Cursing upon the earth. Cursing upon the serpent.

The effects of that curse on man and on the woman. The effects of the curse in terms of being driven out of the garden, tilling the soil and earning the bread by the sweat of the brow. Childbirth and child rearing and the tension that will exist in the relationship between husband and wife.

Desire versus authority. The classic struggle in the minds and hearts of men and women ever since. All of these are the effects of the curse.

The curse took place on the day in which they ate. If you think about it, there is an equivalence. Ultimately, the curse results in death.

God says, you came from the dust and you are going to return to the dust. But the curse stands in for the immediacy of death. You can look at 2 Samuel 12.

The very familiar case of David. King David. David commits a murder, doesn't he? Uriah the Hittite.

David murders him. It is a premeditated murder. Well, is David just such a favorite of God that he can commit a sin worthy of death and God just doesn't execute him because he's different than other people? The king is above the law.

Verse 13 of 2 Samuel 12. After Nathan gives his parable of the poor man with the lamb and the rich man who takes it and kills it, Nathan says, you are the man. Verse 7. God recounts the blessings that he has given to David and so forth.

Verse 13. David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. Very similar to what Adam and Eve admit and confess in the garden.

I did eat. Nathan said to David, the Lord also has put away your sin. You shall not die.

However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child who is born to you shall surely die. There is a substitution. Instead of David's death for giving occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, David's son will die.

And the picture there is obvious. David's greater son is in a larger sense going to die as the substitute for everyone's sin. But there is a substitution.

It is possible under the law of Talion for something to take the place of one's own physical death. Someone else's death will stand in. And that principle is why we are saved and why we do not die for our sins.

Because substitution is possible. It is possible to substitute the death of another. It is also possible that even when that death is substituted, that the other effects of the sin and the discipline that comes from that comes in terms of a curse.

And Nathan goes on to tell David in verse 14 that the child who is born to you shall surely die. And then he departs to his house. The Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David and it became ill.

David pleaded with God for the child. David fasted, went in and lay all night on the ground. We know what it means to lay on the ground.

This is an admission of sin. It is to lie in the dust. And we know how this story turns out.

But there is here illustrated for us the principle of substitution. From Exodus we recognize that a curse is considered to be the equivalent of death. What happens to Adam and Eve? They do ultimately die as a part of the curse.

But the curse stands in for their death until they do die. Because a curse is the equivalent of death. To curse one's parents results in death.

There are other places where cursing God Job's wife, remember her famous words to Job when he's sitting there scraping his boils with the potsherd? Curse God and die. Cursing God is a death penalty offense. Why? Because it's Talian.

One equates to the other. They are equally severe. So by extension if you look at the case of Adam and Eve the life that they live under the curse to the ground and the curse of the serpent and the effects of that curse stands in for the death penalty.

Ultimately Jesus Christ will pay that death penalty and the curse will be lifted. In the same way in Genesis chapter 4 Cain has done something that is worthy of death. But instead of being executed he is cursed.

You are cursed from the earth which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood. When you till the ground it will no longer yield its strength to you a fugitive and a vagabond that you shall be on the earth. This curse and its effects stand in for the death that Cain will ultimately die in any case.

Cain recognizes how severe this curse is in verse 13 when he says my punishment is greater than I can bear. Surely you have driven me out this day from the face of the ground. I shall be hidden from your face.

Separation from God as a part of this curse is one of the things that makes it equivalent to death. We often define spiritual death as being separate from God. As being alienated from the life of God the way Paul puts it.

And the second death in the lake of fire a component of that death is separation from God. Complete and total separation from God. Cain recognizes this curse as that type of death hidden from the face of God.

I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me will fulfill the end of this curse which is death. The Lord says to Cain therefore whoever kills Cain vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark on Cain lest anyone finding him should kill him.

And that word for mark in verse 15 is ot. He put a sign on Cain. And once again the irony and the word ties in this story.

Cain started out as the man of the sign. When he was born his mother said I have

acquired a man the sign of Yahweh. And the closing phrase of this story of Cain's life the Lord set an oath on Cain lest anyone finding him should kill him.

The sign works both ways. We've talked before about being heirs according to promise in the New Testament. We are heirs according to promise.

And the interesting thing we saw about that verse is that that promise cuts both ways.