

# Sin and Escalatory Violence

## Session 2



*"If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."*

(Genesis 4.7)

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### Chapter One

1. What does the "Neolithic revolution" have to do with the story of Cain and Abel?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How is the character of Lamech an example of "escalatory violence"? (cf Gen 4.23-24)

### Chapter Two

1. What is the only thing standing between us and our own destruction by escalatory violence?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How does the metaphor of a punishing earth "opening up its mouth to receive your brother's blood" resonate with issues like environmental stewardship, refugee crises, terrorism, and other contemporary threats?

### Chapter Three

1. What are the implications of obsessing over ginned up issues in Genesis 2 & 3 at the expense of the issue of escalatory violence in Genesis 4?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Crossan says, "Substitutionary sacrificial atonement is at the same time the worst and most successful piece of Christian theology in history." Why is it such bad theology?

## Chapter Four

1. What is the difference between “punishment from God” and “consequences for our actions”?
2. “Is there any evidence that God punishes anyone ever? – as distinct from the terrible evidence that there are consequences for what we do.”
3. Why is “sexual preference” so much more of a cultural crisis than our “preference for violence”?
4. To what degree has a “guarantee of an afterlife” been motivation for your commitment to Christianity? How would being Christian be incentivized if it were more faithful to its “afterlife-free” Jewish and Mesopotamian roots?