

## Genesis: The Two Brothers

In our last lesson from Genesis we left off where Adam and Eve had sinned against God in that they neglected His command to not eat “of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (*Gen 2:17*). And along with that they both neglected to respect the creation order where Adam was to be the head of his wife, “for Adam was formed first, then Eve” (*1Tim 2:13*), and she was to be in subjection to him (*Gen 3:16*). After God had “made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them” (*Gen 3:21*), He “[multiplied Eve’s] pain in childbearing” (*v. 16*) and “sent [Adam] out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken” (*v. 23*). God had told Adam...

*Gen 3:17*...cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; *18* thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. *19* By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

In clothing Adam and Eve with the “garments of skins” God had to take the lives of the animals from which those hides were acquired. Thus the first sacrifices and the beginning of the sacrificial system set up for mankind to atone for his sins. We need to understand something before going on from here. God had known in eternity that this rebellion by Adam and Eve was going to take place and had already, “before the foundation of the world” (*Eph 1:4/Rev 13:8*) made plans for it in order to introduce the sacrificial system to make ready for the ultimate sacrifice that would finally end it. That final cost was paid by God through the offering of His Son “once for all” (*Rom 6:10*) so that His crucified body would become the only garment God would accept that can hide our nakedness known as sin. Some might ask “Why even create man, knowing he would sin against Him and thus have to offer His own Son to redeem him?” And... “Did He need man for something?” Good questions. To answer them simply, it was all according to His will in order to glorify Him.

In the concluding book of the New Testament, John records the words of the “twenty-four elders,” who fell down before the Almighty. In praise, they proclaimed:

“Worthy are you, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power: for you did create all things, and because of your **will** they were, and were created” (*Rev. 4:11*; emphasis added).

Admittedly, this passage contains some ambiguity. It merely affirms that God brought the creation into existence because he willed to do such. [Note: Isaiah’s earlier testimony, that the “creation” (of the nation of Israel) was for God’s “glory” (*43:7*), may hint the original creation was similarly initiated.]

Wayne Jackson, *The Christian Courier- Why Were Humans Created?*

Some might speculate that “God created man because He needed someone to love Him.” But not so as Paul pointed out concerning God not needing to be “served by human hands, as though He needed anything” (*Act 17:25*). We need to be careful when we speculate whatever, as Moses was instructed to speak to Israel concerning this.

Deu 29:29 "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Adam and Eve began their existence outside the garden of Eden in a life of toil and hardship as punishment for what they did against God's only commandment. As they began to have children there were two particular brothers that played a part in defining what God required under the then sacrificial system. It is obvious that Cain and Abel were not the only children that our first parents had because Gen 4:17 speaks of Cain having a wife. Thus sons weren't the only offspring that were born of Adam and Eve. Can you imagine marrying one of your own siblings? So, with Cain as "a worker of the ground" being their firstborn and Abel as "a keeper of sheep" (v.2) their second, our lesson begins...

**Gen 4:3** In the course of time [*when*] Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, 4 and Abel **also** brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, 5 but for Cain and his offering He had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell.

At this point in time these two brothers would have been young adults because of what their occupations would have demanded of them and because of their ability to even comprehend what it meant to sacrifice as God had told them. What evidence do we have that God revealed a sacrificial system to the first people who inhabited the earth? We need to look at other passages throughout the Bible to see them. But first...

Here are the facts as recorded by Moses. Both Cain and Abel came to worship before the Lord, both brought a sacrifice. But there was a difference. Cain brought a sacrifice of the fruit of the ground. His offering was a bloodless sacrifice. However, Abel brought forth a bloody sacrifice, and the fat thereof. The result of their worship before the Lord was that Jehovah had respect unto Abel **and** his offering, but he did not have respect towards Cain **nor** towards his offering. And why was that?

Moses's record makes it easy to understand what the problem was. The written account specifically denotes the differences between their offerings. One was of produce, the other was a blood-bearing sacrifice. The Hebrew writer makes it even more clear:

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh" (11:4).

How did Abel present his sacrifice unto the Lord? It was **by faith**. Moses did not write that Cain offered his sacrifice by faith, and no New Testament writer comments on the faith of Cain demonstrated by this offering. If Cain did not offer his gifts unto God by faith, then how did he worship?

*It is commonly believed in the religious community that “faith” is merely a willingness to accept facts regarding the Lord, combined with a disposition to trust him. Nothing could be further from the truth. “Faith” is not validated as faith, until it responds in doing what God requires. That is why James can challenge: “Show me your faith apart from works [obedience], and I, by my works [obedience] will show you faith”(James 2:18).*

*Wayne Jackson, The Christian Courier- Abel Yet Speaks: Are We Listening?*

The opposite of faith is by sight, that is, through human intuition.

**2Co 5:7** for we walk by faith, not by sight.

Cain worshipped according to “sight” — according to what his own senses and wisdom dictated would be an honorable gift unto the Lord. No doubt, his produce was lovely to look upon. No doubt, he labored over those crops until the harvest. No doubt he anticipated that all the hard work, time, and care he had spent on those offerings would be acceptable.

*(Nowhere in Genesis or elsewhere can we find evidence of Cain bringing substandard crops to be sacrificed or that such was the reason God was displeased with it. The word “also” in verse 4 implies that Cain brought his best or it would have been written “Abel brought”.)*

His expectation of acceptance is clearly demonstrated by his reaction to the Lord’s rejection of his sacrifice. But Cain’s offering was not rejected because he did not worship in earnest. Instead, his offering was rejected because it was offered according to his own presumption and not by faith. Faith is not simply a feeling of confident expectation. Cain had that. Rather, faith is the result of hearing God’s word, submitting the mind and body to its dominion, and acting in accordance to what the Lord has instructed.

*(Sometimes our best isn’t good enough when it isn’t according to what God requires.)*

There is a truism attributed to a Chinese philosopher that says, “To know and not do is to not know.” The same principle can be applied to faith, “To believe God, and not obey him, is to not believe him.” Or as James wrote, “faith apart from works is dead” (2:26).

*(We can believe in God but “even the demons believe” [Jas 2:19]. But to obey Him is to believe Him, and that what He says, will occur.)*

To whatever extent it could be said that Cain worshipped before the Lord, his activity was negated by the fact that it was not according to faith. By way of contrast, Abel’s offering was by faith. Why is faith attributed to Abel? Paul defines the source of faith that is well-pleasing to God in Romans 10:17.

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing **by the word of God.**”

Let’s reason. *(by way of a logical syllogism.)*

1. Abel offered his sacrifice by faith (Heb. 11:4).

2. But faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom 10:17)
3. Therefore, Abel offered his sacrifice by hearing and obeying the word of God.

*(This answers the question that God **did** reveal what was required from man via a sacrificial system. Where else would they have gotten the idea to sacrifice to begin with if it didn't originate with God?)*

Cain did not offer his sacrifice by faith. Therefore, he did not worship according to the word of God. And God rejected his offering. Cain was presumptuous. Whether or not he consciously thought that God was not serious in what he commanded is irrelevant; his actions demonstrated that he supposed that he had the right to substitute his own judgment for the Lord's. The way of Cain is the way of presumption. Those who, in like manner, presume to design their own system of worship are children of Cain.

Those who, just like Cain, neglect the clear teaching of the Lord in matters of salvation and invent for themselves their own system of access to the sacrifice of Christ are practicing the religion of Cain.

Jared Jackson, *The Christian Courier*- Why Was Cain's Sacrifice Rejected?

But can we imagine the thoughts that went through Cain's mind when God rejected his offering? And wasn't he "a worker of the ground"? He didn't raise sheep like his brother Abel did. We must assume then that they traded in order for Cain to have clothing made of wool and since man wasn't yet permitted to eat meat (*Gen 9:3*), Abel would have had need for the crops Cain raised. That being the case, they could have bartered crops for sheep and vice versa. But Cain had an attitude problem that finally got the best of him. His pride wouldn't allow him to let his younger brother's acceptance exceed his own. He was having a "hissy fit" and God called him on it.

**Gen 4:6** The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."

Whatever the emotion that has a grip on us has its rule over us. Whether it be anger, hatred, envy or even pride, anything that would cause us to sin has rule over us.

**1Jn 3:12** We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.

Cain's pride was brought low when all that he had worked so hard over wasn't accepted. Did he think he didn't need to obey God's sacrificial arrangement which required the blood that Abel understood it to? He had the choice to either humbly change his attitude and replace his offering with what **was** required or allow his anger to get the best of him, which is what he did.

**Gen 4:8** Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

The first recorded murder of anyone in history is the one just about everyone can name; when Cain slew his brother Abel. It might also then be the first account of a burial of a deceased person, unless of course if someone had died of natural causes or by accident before this. Cain must have thought that God would not have seen his wicked deed if he could have hidden the evidence by burying Abel's body in the ground. He must not have learned from his parents mistake of thinking they could hide their nakedness from God. God sees everything and nothing is hid from Him.

**Psa 139:11** If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," **12** even the darkness is not dark to **You**; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with **You**.

At that point God asked Cain what had happened to his brother Abel. He already knew where Abel was, as our parents often knew when asking us when we did things we shouldn't have. But, as Father, God questioned Cain and put him on the spot so that he would come clean over what he had done.

**Gen 4:9** Then the **LORD** said to **Cain**, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?"

How often have we asked that very same question? "Am I my brother's keeper?" Are we our brothers' keepers? Paul said we are to...

**Gal 6:2** Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of **Christ**.

What does it mean to "fulfill the law of **Christ**"?

**Joh 13:34** ...that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

Jesus loved us to the point of dying a cruel death to save us from an eternal punishment. If we can even try to comprehend how much love that is and how we are to have such for each other then we will...

**Php 2:3** Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than [ourselves]. **4** Let each of [us] look not only to [our] own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Yes, we are our brothers' keepers. Not that we're responsible **for** each other, or that we are to be taken advantage of by those who would, but that we definitely are responsible **to** each other, especially where it has to do with each other's spiritual well-being when we have the ability to make a positive impact on it. Cain, as the older brother, could have had a positive influence on Abel but instead chose to act as though he was the younger, even as if he was a toddler who throws fits when he doesn't get his way.

**Gen 4:10** And the **LORD** said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground.

*“In the providence of God blood has a voice crying to him to which he cannot but give heed. It is vain, then, to attempt concealment.”* Albert Barnes

Gary Hampton states concerning Abel’s blood that Abel “speaks more clearly through his example of obedient faith”. It is pointless to try and hide any sin from the all-seeing eyes of our Maker. Whether in secret or shadow, and even, young people, if your parents don’t see your bad behavior, God does! Because...

**Heb 4:13** ... no creature is hidden from **His** sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of **Him** to **Whom** we must give account.

Cain’s day of reckoning came in his lifetime as punishment leveled against the one thing he was good at; his livelihood as a “worker of the ground”. It was seriously hindered and he would have to work even harder to produce his crops.

**Gen 4:11** And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. **12** When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth."

Sometimes a punishment for wrong doing can go a long way toward getting someone’s attention in order to make them change their ways. It really got Cain’s attention.

**Gen 4:13** **Cain** said to the **LORD**, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. **14** Behold, You have driven me today away from the ground, and from Your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

Even with having his skills put to the test as a grower of crops, notice what Cain’s second worst fear was; to be driven from the presence of God which shows he actually did revere Him and also points to his half-hearted sincerity in bringing what God required when sacrificing to Him. But he still seemed to put the hindrance of his livelihood as of first importance though. And since his family were the only people that sprang from the original parents, Adam and Eve, those he said would kill him if they found him, would have been of his own siblings and their offspring, including Abel’s.

*“The continual apprehension of being slain, as all the inhabitants of the earth were at that time of the same family, the parents themselves still alive, and each having a right to kill this murderer of his relative.”* Adam Clarke

Paul must have alluded to this when writing to the Thessalonians when stating the yet future punishment of ...

**2Th 1:8** ... those who do not know **God** and on those who do not obey the gospel of our **Lord Jesus**. **9** They will **suffer** the punishment of eternal destruction, **away from the presence** of the **Lord** and from the glory of **His** might...

**Gen 4:15** Then the **LORD** said to him, "Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the **LORD** put a mark on **Cain**, lest any who found him should attack him.

For Him to pronounce a sevenfold vengeance on anyone who attacked Cain shows God's desire to protect him. Thus the mark as evidence of who he was and a reminder to all who met him that they would suffer God's wrath if they harmed him. No one can be sure of what exactly that mark was but we can know that only Cain received it and not his children after him. Nothing is written that they also would suffer for Cain's sin, in fact the exact opposite is found in the writings of the prophet Ezekiel.

**Eze 18:20** The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

Cain went on to have children and be productive enough to build a city he named after his son Enoch. From there Cain's descendants are only recorded as being six generations in all. But...

**Gen 4:25** ... **Adam** knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name **Seth**, for she said, "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him."

Obviously, people had longer life spans at that time. We can't imagine husbands and wives today in their 60s and 70s or even older having children as though in their early 20s. Cain slew Abel as an adult so Eve had to have been a grandmother by the time she bore Seth. But again, she might still have had the appearance and vitality of a woman today in her 30s. But to those of us who have lost children we understand that no child can replace them, they will always have a special place in our hearts until we breathe our last. So it's difficult to understand how Eve could name this son Seth, which means in Hebrew, "substituted". It could have been because of the hole her murdered son had left in her heart and having another son take his place was all that could fill it. Jesus' genealogy then is traced back through...

**Luk 3:38** ... **Seth**, the son of Adam, the son of God.

*"The promised seed might have come through Abel, but he was dead. Man might have seen that as an end to the plan of salvation. After all, the one righteous man had been killed by a self-willed man. Thankfully, God is not so easily deterred. He caused Eve to bear another son, Seth."* Gary Hampton

**Gen 4:26** To **Seth** also a son was born, and he called his name **Enosh**. At that time people began to call upon the name of the **LORD**.

*"The marginal reading is, Then began men to call themselves by the name of the Lord; which words are supposed to signify that in the time of Enos the true followers of God began to distinguish themselves, and to be distinguished by others, by the appellation of sons of God; those of the other branch of Adam's*

*family, among whom the Divine worship was not observed, being distinguished by the name, children of men.”*  
Adam Clarke

With the end of this chapter we find the distinction between the righteous seed of Enosh and the irreverent seed of Cain. And their mingling would bring about the end of the antediluvian (*pre-flood*) world.

*“As the followers of God at this early period found it indispensably necessary to separate themselves from all those who were irreligious and profane, and to make a public profession of their attachment to the truth, so it should be now.”*  
Adam Clarke

*“This chapter should teach us the importance of worshipping in God's prescribed way. He is only pleased with sacrifices offered in accord with his direction. Also, it can be seen that God will reward the faithful and punish the disobedient. Those who would be rewarded of God should fervently seek to do his will.”*  
Gary Hampton

It didn't take long before worldly influences began to creep in on the faithful. As time plodded on the unrighteous influences of the seed of Cain began to affect the righteous seed of Enosh once they began to mingle with them.

**Gen 6:1** When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, **2** the sons of God (*speaking of the seed of Enosh*) saw that the daughters of man (*the seed of Cain*) were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.

A disastrous mix.

**1Co 15:33** Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."

The next lesson from Genesis we hope to look at will be when “The Lord saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually” (*Gen 6:5*).

It was at that time when God decided to “blot out man” (*Gen 6:7*) with the flood of Noah's day. But these two distinct groups, the godly and the ungodly, the saint and the sinner, have continued to exist even after the earth “was deluged with water and perished” (*2 Pet 3:6*). Which group do you belong to? Are you of the righteous One or of the evil one? There is a way to make that distinction and you **do** have the choice, as did Adam and Eve, as to where you stand. And if that choice is on the Lord's side you need to ask yourself; “Am I worshipping as Cain did?” Remember, you can be bringing God your best but if it isn't in accordance to what the Lord requires it isn't good enough to please Him. The same goes for the salvation of your soul. Are you at risk?

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