



*The History of  
Cain and Able  
The Sons Of Adam*

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## The History of Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam

### Genesis 4:1-15 (KJV)

And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen?

If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

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.

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

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

And now *art* thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment *is* greater than I can bear.

Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, *that* every one that findeth me shall slay me.

And the LORD said unto him, therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

### **Scripture Understanding**

When Cain was born, Eve said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. Perhaps she thought that this was the promised seed. If so, she was woefully disappointed.

#### **Abel signifies vanity:**

When Eve thought she had the promised seed in Cain, whose name signifies possession, she was so taken up with him that another son was as vanity to her.

Observe, each son had a calling. It is the will of God for everyone to have something to do in this world.

We may believe that God commanded Adam, after the fall, to shed the blood of innocent animals, and after their death to burn part or the whole of their bodies by fire.

Thus that punishment which sinners deserve, even the death of the body, and the wrath of God, of which fire is a well-known emblem, and also the sufferings of Christ, were prefigured. Observe that the religious worship of God is no new invention. It was from the beginning; it is the good old way.

[Jeremiah 6:16](#)

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, we will not walk therein.

### **The offerings of Cain and Abel were different.**

Cain showed a proud, unbelieving heart. Therefore he and his offering were rejected.

Abel came as a sinner, and according to God's appointment, by his sacrifice expressing humility, sincerity, and believing obedience.

Thus, seeking the benefit of the new covenant of mercy, through the promised Seed, his sacrifice had a token that God accepted it.

### **Abel offered in faith, and Cain did not.**

Hebrews 11:4

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaks.

In all ages there have been two sorts of worshippers, such as Cain and Abel; namely, proud, hardened despisers of the gospel method of salvation, who attempt to please God in ways of their own devising; and humble believers, who draw near to him in the way he has revealed.

Cain indulged malignant anger against Abel. He harbored an evil spirit of discontent and rebellion against God.

God notices all our sinful passions and discontents. There is not an angry, envious, or fretful look that escapes his observing eye.

The Lord reasoned with this rebellious man; if he came in the right way, he should be accepted.

Some understand this as an intimation of mercy. "If thou doest not well, sin, that is, the sin-offering, lies at the door, and thou mayest take the benefit of it."



The same word signifies sin, and a sacrifice for sin.

"Though thou hast not done well, yet do not despair; the remedy is at hand."

**Christ, the great sin-offering, is said to stand at the door.**

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

**Those well deserve to perish in their sins that will not go to the door to ask for the benefit of this sin-offering.**

God's acceptance of Abel's offering did not change the birthright, and make it his; why then should Cain be so angry? Sinful heats and disquiets vanish before a strict and fair inquiry into the cause.

### **Cain Murders Abel, the Curse of Cain**

Malice in the heart ends in murder by the hands. Cain slew Abel, his own brother, his own father's son, whom he ought to have loved; his younger brother, whom he ought to have protected; a good brother, who had never done him any wrong.

What fatal effects were these of our first parents' sin, and how must their hearts have been filled with anguish!

Observe the pride, unbelief, and impenitence of Cain. He denies the crime, as if he could conceal it from God.

He tries to cover a deliberate murder with a deliberate lie. Murder is a crying sin. Blood calls for blood, the blood of the murdered for the blood of the murderer.

**Who knows the extent and weight of a Divine curse, how far it reaches, how deep it pierces?**

Only in Christ are believers saved from it, and inherit the blessing. Cain was cursed from the earth. He found his punishment there where he chose his portion, and set his heart.

Every creature is to us what God makes it, a comfort or a cross, a blessing or a curse.

The wickedness of the wicked brings a curse upon all they do, and all they have. Cain complains not of his sin, but of his punishment.

It shows great hardness of heart to be more concerned about our sufferings than our sins. God has wise and holy ends in prolonging the lives even of very wicked men.

**It is in vain to inquire what the mark was that was set upon Cain.**

It was doubtless known, both as a brand of infamy on Cain, and a token from God that they should not kill him. Abel, being dead, yet speaks.

He tells the heinous guilt of murder, and warns us to stifle the first risings of wrath. God teaches us that persecution must be expected by the righteous. Also, that there is a future state, and an eternal recompense to be enjoyed, through faith in Christ and his atoning sacrifice.

And he tells us the excellency of faith in the atoning sacrifice and blood of the Lamb of God.

**Cain slew his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.**

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.

## **The war between sin and righteousness still rages.**

In consequence of the enmity put between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, the war broke out, which has been waged ever since. In this war we are all concerned, none are neuter; our Captain has declared, He that is not with me is against me.

Let us decidedly, yet in meekness, support the cause of truth and righteousness against Satan.

## **Seth appointed instead of Abel**

Genesis 4:25

And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.

**Our first parents were comforted in their affliction by the birth of a son,  
who they called Seth.**

Saith means 'set,' 'settled,' or 'placed;' in his seed mankind should continue to the end of time, and from him the Messiah should descend.

While Cain, the head of the apostasy, is made a wanderer, Seth, from whom the true church was to come, is one fixed.

In Christ and his church is the only true settlement. Seth walked in the steps of his martyred brother Abel; he was a partaker of like precious faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and so became a fresh witness of the grace and influence of God the Holy Spirit.

**God allowed Adam and Eve to see the revival of redemption in their family.**

The worshippers of God began to do more in religion; some, by an open profession of true religion, protested against the wickedness of the world around.

The worse others are, the better we should be, and the more zealous.

Then began the distinction between professors and profane, which has been kept up ever since, and will be, while the world stands.

### **The Guilt of Jerusalem**

Matthew 23:36

Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation.

**Our Lord declares the miseries the inhabitants of Jerusalem were about to bring upon themselves.**

He does not notice the sufferings he was to undergo.

A hen gathering her chickens under her wings, is an apt emblem of the Saviour's tender love to those who trust in him, and his faithful care of them.

He calls sinners to take refuge under his tender protection, keeps them safe, and nourishes them to eternal life.

The present dispersion and unbelief of the Jews, and their future conversion to Christ, were here foretold.

Jerusalem and her children had a large share of guilt, and their punishment has been signal. But ere long, deserved vengeance will fall on every church which is Christian in name only.

In the meantime the Saviour stands ready to receive all who come to him. There is nothing between sinners and eternal happiness, but their proud and unbelieving unwillingness.



**The blood of the righteous will be required of this generation.**

Luke 11:51

From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation.

**He Reproves the Pharisees**

We should all look to our hearts, that they may be cleansed and new-created; and while we attend to the great things of the law and of the gospel, we must not neglect the smallest matter God has appointed.

When any wait to catch something out of our mouths, that they may in snare us, O Lord, give us thy prudence and thy patience, and disappoint their evil purposes.

Furnish us with such meekness and patience that we may glory in reproaches, for Christ's sake, and that thy Holy Spirit may rest upon us.

**It Is Set Forth by Instances from Abel to Noah**

Hebrews 11:4

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaks.

**Here follow some illustrious examples of faith from the Old Testament.**

Abel brought a sacrifice of atonement from the firstlings of the flock, acknowledging himself a sinner who deserved to die, and only hoping for mercy through the great Sacrifice.

Cain's proud rage and enmity against the accepted worshipper of God, led to the awful effects the same principles have produced in every age; the cruel persecution, and even murder of believers.

By faith Abel, being dead, yet speaks; he left an instructive and speaking example.

Enoch was translated, or removed, that he should not see death; God took him into heaven, as Christ will do the saints who shall be alive at his second coming.

We cannot come to God, unless we believe that he is what he has revealed himself to be in the Scripture. Those who would find God, must seek him with all their heart.

Noah's faith influenced his practice; it moved him to prepare an ark. His faith condemned the unbelief of others; and his obedience condemned their contempt and rebellion.

Good examples either convert sinners or condemn them. This shows how believers, being warned of God to flee from the wrath to come, are moved with fear, take refuge in Christ, and become heirs of the righteousness of faith.

### **The New Testament Dispensation Shown to Be Much More Excellent Than the Old**

Hebrews 12:24

And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel.

Mount Sinai, on which the Jewish church state was formed, was a mount such as might be touched, though forbidden to be so, a place that could be felt; so the Mosaic dispensation was much in outward and earthly things.

The gospel state is kind and condescending, suited to our weak frame. Under the gospel all may come with boldness to God's presence. But the most holy must despair, if judged by the holy law given from Sinai, without a Saviour.

The gospel church is called Mount Zion; there believers have clearer views of heaven, and more heavenly tempers of soul.

All the children of God are heirs, and every one has the privileges of the first-born. Let a soul be supposed to join that glorious assembly and church above, that is yet unacquainted with God, still carnally-minded, loving this present world and state

of things, looking back to it with a lingering eye, full of pride and guile, filled with lusts; such a soul would seem to have mistaken its way, place, state, and company.

It would be uneasy to itself and all about it.

Christ is the Mediator of this new covenant, between God and man, to bring them together in this covenant; to keep them together; to plead with God for us, and to plead with us for God; and at length to bring God and his people together in heaven.

This covenant is made firm by the blood of Christ sprinkled upon our consciences, as the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled upon the altar and the victim.

This blood of Christ speaks in behalf of sinners; it pleads not for vengeance, but for mercy. See then that you refuse not his gracious call and offered salvation. See that you do not refuse Him who speaketh from heaven, with infinite tenderness and love; for how can those escape, who turn from God in unbelief or apostasy, while he so graciously beseeches them to be reconciled, and to receive his everlasting favour!

God's dealing with men under the gospel, in a way of grace, assures us, that he will deal with the despisers of the gospel, in a way of judgment.

We cannot worship God acceptably, unless we worship him with reverence and godly fear. Only the grace of God enables us to worship God aright. God is the same just and righteous God under the gospel as under the law.

The inheritance of believers is secured to them; and all things pertaining to salvation are freely given in answer to prayer. Let us seek for grace that we may serve God with reverence and godly fear.

### **Love to the Brethren Is the Character of Real Christians**

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.

We should love the Lord Jesus, value his love, and therefore love all our brethren in Christ. This love is the special fruit of our faith, and a certain sign of our being born again.

But none who rightly know the heart of man, can wonder at the contempt and enmity of ungodly people against the children of God.

We know that we are passed from death to life: we may know it by the evidences of our faith in Christ, of which love to our brethren is one.

It is not zeal for a party in the common religion, or affection for those who are of the same name and sentiments with ourselves.

The life of grace in the heart of a regenerate person, is the beginning and first principle of a life of glory, whereof they must be destitute who hate their brother in their hearts.

The ways of righteousness is still open to whosoever will partake. Choose today whose example to follow.

**To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:**

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Verse Concept: Matthew Henry's Concept Bible Commentary.

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