

Lessons Learned from Cain and Abel

(Most Scriptures used are from the New King James Version)

The Bible tells us that the true-life stories of the people in the Old Testament, the incidents and actions of the "forefathers" of the Israelites, are written in the word of God for a purpose: "Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them..... **Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition,** on whom the ends of the ages have come." (I Corinthians 10:6-7 & 11). The great men and women of faith in Hebrews 11 are meant to be examples to follow, but many more of the histories recorded in the Old Testament are meant as warnings of what NOT to do. Let's look now at what God's word tells us about Cain and his brother Abel.

- **Genesis 4:1-2** "Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, 'I have acquired a man from the Lord.' Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground."

Definition: "Abel was a KEEPER of SHEEP, but Cain was a TILLER of the GROUND" - Abel became a shepherd, and Cain became a farmer. Notice how much time must have passed just in Genesis 4:2. Obviously, Abel didn't just pop out of Eve's womb and become a "keeper of sheep" overnight - he would have had to grow to adulthood. Then, in verse 3, it says "in the process of time," so we know that even more time has passed before the incident where Cain kills his brother. How old Cain and Abel were when all this happened, is unknown, but we know that their brother Seth was born some time after the death of Abel, and Genesis 5:3 tells us that **Adam was 130 years old when Seth was born.** Cain, Abel, and Seth are the only children of Adam and Eve that are **named in the Bible**, but we know they had other "sons and daughters" - probably hundreds.

- **Genesis 5:3-5** "And _____ lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a _____ in his own likeness, after his image, and named him _____. After he begot Seth, the days of Adam were _____ years; and he had _____ and _____. So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died."

Definition: "All the days that Adam LIVED were NINE HUNDRED and THIRTY YEARS" - Some people have tried to say that the "years" mentioned in the early part of the book of Genesis were not true 365-day years, but were something shorter, like months. Well, we know that's not true, because if that were the case, then a lot of the early men and women in the Bible would have been having children at the age of nine or ten, since it tells the age of the descendants of Adam at the time their children were born. **These were TRUE YEARS of 365 days for each year!** How and why did people live such long lives back then? We can't even imagine such a thing in our day and time, because the curse upon this earth, and the ravages of sin, sickness and disease have reduced peoples' life span to a short 70 to 80 years. A person is considered very old if they make it to one hundred, much less the 500, 600 and up to 900-year-life-spans of the book of Genesis. A careful study of the Bible will show that peoples' life spans started dropping dramatically right after the Flood. The reason for this is probably because **the water canopy that had been around the earth was depleted during the 40 days and nights of rain during Noah's flood. That water canopy had protected humanity from the dangerous ultra-violet rays of the sun,** and other harmful Gamma Rays, Beta Rays, and so forth. Those harmful rays coming from outer space bombard us each day and cause aging and disease. Also, just over the period of time, **the consequences of Adam's sin, the curse**

upon the earth, and the activity of Satan in the earth, have caused diseases to multiply, and these cut our lives short. God originally made Adam and Eve to live forever, so seen in that light, Adam's life span of 930 years doesn't seem so long.

- **Romans 5:12** "Therefore, just as through one _____ sin entered the world, and _____ through _____, and thus _____ spread to all men, because ALL _____ - "
- **Psalms 90:10** "The days of our lives are _____ years; and if by reason of strength they are _____ years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away (die)."
- **I Corinthians 15:45-49** "And so it is written, 'The _____ man Adam became a living being.' The _____ Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the _____, and afterward the spiritual. The _____ man was of the _____, made of DUST (chemicals in the earth); the _____ Man is the _____ from _____. As was the man of _____, so also are those who are made of _____; and as is the _____ Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the _____ of dust, we shall also bear the _____ of the _____ Man."
- **I Corinthians 15:20-22 & 26** "But now Christ is _____ from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (in death). For since by _____ came _____, by Man came also the _____ of the dead. For as in _____ all _____, even so in Christ all shall be made _____." (Verse 26) "The last _____ that will be destroyed is _____."
- **Genesis 4:3-8** "And in the process of time it came to pass that **Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord**. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but **He did NOT respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very ANGRY**, and his countenance fell (the expression on his face). So the Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you ANGRY? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, **SIN lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should RULE over it.**' Now 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 KILLED him.**"
- **I John 3:11-13** "For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as _____ who was of the _____ one and _____ his brother. And _____ did he _____ him? Because his works were _____ and his _____ were _____. Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world _____ you."
- **James 4:1-2** "Where do _____ and _____ come from among you? Do they not come from your _____ for _____ that _____ in your members? You lust and do not have. You _____ and _____ and cannot obtain. You _____ and _____.....".

Definition: "You MURDER and COVET" - Jesus makes it clear in Matthew 5:21-22 that **the underlying ATTITUDE of the HEART carries the same guilt as actual MURDER**, and we know from facts throughout all of history that anger, jealousy, coveting and envy (wanting what someone else has) are all prime motives for murder. The very first murder of all human history, that of **Cain killing his brother Abel, was motivated by PRIDE, selfishness and ENVY, which later turned into full-blown anger and murder**. God gave him a chance to repent (Genesis 4:3-8), but Cain refused to come to God in humility by bringing an animal for a blood sacrifice, and instead wanted to "show off" the crops he had grown. Cain was the original one to mirror the words of the song, **"I Did It My Way"**! God refused Cain's sacrifice, but

instead of "ruling over" the wrong emotions and passions of his flesh, **Cain turned on his brother Abel in ENVY and ANGER, because his brother was obeying God and bringing the correct kind of sacrifice, and he murdered him.**

- **Matthew 5:21-22** "You have heard that it was said to those of old, ' _____ shall not _____ ,' and whoever _____ will be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whoever is _____ with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment....."
- **Galatians 5:19-21** "Now the _____ of the _____ are evident, which are: _____, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, _____, sorcery, _____, contentions (arguments), jealousies, outbursts of wrath (anger), _____ ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, _____, drunkenness, revelries (partying, sexual orgies), and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Definition: "Cain brought an OFFERING of the FRUIT of the GROUND" - An offering of the "fruit of the ground" was not acceptable to God for an offering **because the GROUND had been CURSED!** And even though we do not see a direct command from God that Adam and his family needed to give an animal sacrifice to God, **it is implied in the fact that God Himself CLOTHED Adam and Eve with ANIMAL SKINS after they had sinned.** Innocent animals **had to be killed** in order to get their skins to provide clothing for sinful mankind. **This is a picture of the fact that we cannot cover up or get rid of our sins by ourselves, but we need God to cover us and provide a sacrifice for us.** The sacrifice of an innocent animal on the altar is a foreshadowing and a picture of **the GREAT SACRIFICE of Jesus, the innocent Son of God**, when He was nailed to the cross for our sins, and the sins of all mankind, including Adam.

- **Hebrews 12:24** "To _____ the Mediator of the new _____, and to the _____ of _____ that speaks better than that of _____."
- **I Peter 1:2** "Elect according to the foreknowledge of _____ the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and _____ of the _____ of _____ Christ."
- **Genesis 2:16-17** "And the Lord God commanded the _____, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of _____ and _____ you shall _____ eat, for in the day that you _____ of it you shall surely _____.'"
- **Genesis 3:17-19** "Then to _____ He said, 'Because you have heeded (listened to) the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you saying. 'You shall _____ eat of it': ' _____ is the _____ for your sake (because of what you have done); in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both _____ and _____ it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the _____ of your face you shall eat bread (work hard for a living) till you _____ to the _____, for out of it _____ were _____; for _____ you are, and to _____ you shall _____.'"

Definition: "He did NOT respect Cain and his OFFERING. And Cain was very ANGRY" - We have already seen that Cain refused to humbly come to God in obedience by bringing an animal for a blood sacrifice, and instead wanted to "show off" the crops he had grown. By contrast, Hebrews 11:4 tells us that Abel's sacrifice was given in FAITH, as well as obedience. **Cain's sin was one of PRIDE**, and when God would not accept his so-called offering given with the wrong motive of pride, **his rebellious spirit became angry. ANGER, REBELLION and PRIDE** all go together,

and they are the opposite of the attitude of a "humble and contrite heart" that God desires and will accept.

- **Hebrews 11:4** "By faith _____ offered to _____ a more excellent _____ than _____, through which he obtained witness that he (Abel) was _____, God testifying of his gifts (offerings); and through it he being dead still speaks."
- **Psalms 51:16-17** "For you do not _____ sacrifices, or else I would give it; You do not _____ in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a _____, a _____ and a contrite _____ - these, O God, You will not despise."
- **Jude 11** "Woe to them! For they have gone in the _____ of _____, have run greedily in the error of Balaam, for profit, and _____ in the _____ of Korah."
- **I Samuel 15: 22-23** "....Has the Lord as great delight in burnt _____ and _____, as in _____ the voice of the Lord? Behold, to _____ is better than sacrifice..... For _____ is as the _____ of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king."

Definition: "SIN lies at the door, and its DESIRE is for you, but you SHOULD RULE over it" - This goes back to the original issue of God giving man "free will" - volition, the right to make his own decisions. God will not force someone to do His will, and **He did not force Cain to do what was right, although He told Cain what he "should" do.** God told Cain that he should have made a decision to rule over the wrong thoughts and emotions that made him angry. You have free will (also called "volition") to go your own way and make a thousand mistakes or wrong turns, and God knows each mistake and wrong turn before you make it. He will not prevent you from making the mistakes or wrong choices, but He may arrange circumstances to soften your landing (or in some cases, make it harder), in order to show you His love and grace, or **to bring you to repentance**, thus influencing you to make a decision for Him next time. There is a very fine line between God arranging our circumstances, influencing our decisions, and knowing the outcome, and Him "predestining" us to make certain choices. God has predestined that **we as Christians should be conformed to the image of His Son**, or in other words, to become more like Jesus Christ. He will work ALL things together in our lives **towards that purpose**, if we allow Him to. We allow Him to work all things together for good in our lives by surrendering our will (which is an act of our free will) to His, and by having faith that He is working it all out for our good and for His purpose.

- **Romans 8:28-29** "And we know that _____ things _____ together for _____ to those who _____, to those who are the called according to His _____. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the _____ of His Son....."
- **Genesis 4:9-17** "Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?' He said, '**I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?**' And He said, 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. So now you are cursed 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.' **And Cain said to the Lord, '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; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me.' And the Lord said to him, '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. Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. **And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived** and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son - Enoch."

Definition: "I DO NOT know. Am I my brother's keeper?" - This makes lying the next sin that Cain committed. And God ALREADY KNEW everything, just as He had when He asked Adam and Eve where they were in the garden of Eden. We can't get away with lying to God. Cain's answer to God is also very sarcastic, when he asks, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

- **Proverbs 6:16-19** "These six things the Lord _____, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: a _____ look, a _____ tongue, hands that _____ innocent _____, a heart that devises _____, feet that are swift in running to evil, a _____ witness who _____, and one who sows discord among brethren."
- **Hebrews 4:13** "And there is no creature _____ from His _____, but all things are naked (exposed) and _____ to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

Definition: "And the Lord set a MARK on Cain" - Don't try to make anything mysterious about "the mark of Cain." It was simply some kind of visible mark that God put upon him, probably on his forehead, to warn people not to take vengeance on him for killing Abel.

Definition: "And Cain KNEW his WIFE, and she CONCEIVED" - By the time Cain ran away after killing Abel, a lot of time had passed since Adam and Eve first began having children. Cain would have most likely married a sister, niece or grand-niece, although possibly even a great-grand-niece. Genesis 4:16 says he went into the land of Nod, east of Eden, so there must have been enough people living on the earth by then to populate a "land" and give it a name.

- **Genesis 1:28** "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, 'Be _____, and _____, and _____| the earth, and subdue it....'"

We've already seen above how much time must have passed just in Genesis 4:2, and then, in verse 3, it says "in the process of time," so we know that even more time has passed. We know that **Adam was 130 years old when Seth was born**, and that he and Eve had other "sons and daughters" (Gen. 5:4). **God had given Adam and Eve a commandment to multiply and fill the earth**, and their children would have begun multiplying, and THEIR children multiplying, until Cain would have had many women to choose from in selecting a wife. A related question, then is this: was it permissible to marry your sister or niece in the beginning? What about the laws of God against incest? The answer is that the laws of God against incest (having sex with a close relative) were not given until the time of Moses, over 2,000 years after Adam and Eve. Obviously, if God told Adam and Eve to multiply and fill the earth with people, He would not have told them to do something that was wrong. Even at the time of Abraham, it was okay to marry a sister, as Abraham himself married Sarah, his half-sister (Genesis 20:12). God created Adam and Eve in a perfect world, without sickness and disease. However, by the time of Moses, the effects of sin, the curse that came upon the whole earth, had produced so many diseases that it was not wise for people to intermarry and have children with any relatives closer than cousins. Nowadays, even marrying a cousin may cause problems, and produce children with hereditary diseases, although it is not forbidden.