

Genesis 4B

[Gen. 4:3](#) So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground.

[Gen. 4:4](#) Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering;

[Gen. 4:5](#) but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

- God has regard for Abel, not for Cain
 - Shaah – paid attention, looked at Abel’s
 - God ignored Cain’s sacrifice
 - Cain was angry and his face fell
 - He was angry at God and his brother
 - Why was Abel’s contribution considered better?
 - Cain’s offering was produce of the ground
 - A grain offering
 - Provided later in the law

[Lev. 2:1](#) ¶ Now when anyone presents a grain offering as an offering to the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour, and he shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it.

- No doubt Cain was practicing according to similar instructions
 - Like a tithe or paying honor to God
- Abel gives an animal sacrifice
 - He brings an animal sacrifice
 - Animal sacrifices of this type (sheep) are only for sin atonement (not a tithe)
- But there’s more than meets the eye in our English translation
 - Clue #1: the words Habel gam bo in Hebrew

- Their literal meaning is an issue
 - The issue is with the word “also”
 - An appropriate way to interpret the word is to assume a pronoun (since Hebrew doesn’t have pronouns) and translate: Abel brought “it” also and brought of the firstlings of the flock
- Clue #2:

[Heb. 11:4](#) By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.

- God testifies about Abel’s gifts
 - Abel is said to have multiple gifts when he approached God
- There is a third clue coming in a minute, but for now...
 - Cain brings an offering only
 - Abel brings an offering and an animal sacrifice in recognition that he must have his sin atoned
 - Hebrews says that Abel’s actions were evidence of faith in God’s atonement for his sin, and by that faith he was righteous
 - Cain evidently didn’t recognize the same need to atone
- Naturally, God was pleased with Abel’s willingness to acknowledge his sin and his need for atonement, so God has regard for Abel’s gifts
 - Meanwhile, God has no regard for Cain
 - Without faith, it’s impossible to please God
 - Before our offers of tribute will be seen by God, His wrath for our sin must be satisfied

[Gen. 4:6](#) Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?”

[Gen. 4:7](#) “If you do well, will not *your countenance* be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.”

- God shows a measure of grace to Cain even in the fact that He takes note of Cain's dissatisfaction
 - God gives Cain the answer to his problem
 - But here again, translating the Hebrew is a challenge and leaves a lot of room for interpretation
 - Im yatab yatab seeth im yatab yatab chattath rabats pethach
 - Seeth = raised up
 - Chattath = sin offering
 - Rabats = lying (but of a quadraped – see Isa 11:6-7)
 - Pethac = doorway or entrance
 - Clue #3 – Cain's mistake was in not recognizing the need for an atonement of his sin through a sacrifice
 - And from the story, it seems fair to conclude that his mistake was not merely one of protocol
 - Cain didn't believe he needed to be absolved for sin
 - He had not placed his faith in the sacrifice that God provided and was proudly depending on himself
 - Finally, consider the imagery here
 - God telling Cain that if he is does what's right (is sinless), then he can expect to be lifted up
 - But if he sins, then he can look to a sin offering at the doorway
 - What does the image does the phrase a sin offering at the doorway evoke?
 - Passover and the Passover lamb
 - I believe God is intimating the sacrifice of Jesus here
 - Preaching the gospel to Cain, essentially

- Finally, the curious phrase at the end
 - Only two words in Hebrew
 - Teshuqah – desire (only Gen 3:6 and S of S)
 - Mashal – authority or ruler or to rule
 - Difficult to translate and depends entirely on how you translated the earlier phrase
 - Sin crouching leads to master it and rule over it (desire = master like in Gen 3)
 - But if desire means desire (as before), then God is saying desire to rule or desire the ruler
 - In the context of the earlier part of this verse, then we can say that God is asking Cain either to desire the ruler God Himself will send to provide a sacrifice for sin (Christ the King)
 - Or God is saying to Cain that he should not be jealous of his brother, since Cain is the oldest and has the right by birth to rule over his siblings
 - In other words, God is trying to diffuse Cain’s jealousy for his brother

[Gen. 4:8](#) Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

[1John 3:12](#) not as **Cain**, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother’s were righteous.

- One last translation challenge here
 - The opening phrase of verse 8 reads “Cain said to Abel his brother...”
 - There is something missing
 - Most modern English translations have tried to make it read as if this phrase stands alone

- The earliest surviving Hebrew, Greek and Latin texts all state this verse as:
 - “Cain said to Able his brother, let’s go out into the field.”
 - The NET Bible has also chosen to render it this way
- It shows premeditation, as Cain convinced his brother to go to a remote place before committing murder
 - Cain must have had a large enough extended family at this point that he had reason to need privacy and fear retribution
- The depravity of the human heart is complete from the very beginning
 - All the sin required for me to do the very worst things existed from the second man
 - It is not a worsening of the human condition that leads to things like Murder
 - It is the complete depravity of the human heart
 - What was the basis of Cain’s anger at Abel?
 - Simply, a hatred of those who gain God’s approval

[John 15:18](#) ¶ “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it* hated you.

[John 15:19](#) “If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.

[John 15:20](#) “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

[John 15:21](#) “But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.

- When Cain destroyed Abel, scripture tells us it was the most ungodly man living destroying the most godly
 - The spiritual son of the first Murderer, Satan, rising up against the first prophet, first among many to be persecuted

- The pattern continues unabated today

[Gen. 4:9](#) ¶ Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” And he said, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?”

[Gen. 4:10](#) He said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to Me from the ground.

[Gen. 4:11](#) “Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand.

[Gen. 4:12](#) “When you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you; you will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth.

- Verse 9 is one of the most sarcastic and disrespectful statements spoken to God recorded in the Bible
 - Verse 10 suggests that this is the first burial
 - It was done out of the need to cover up a mistake, not out of respect for the body
 - That’s the meaning of the phrase from the ground
 - And the earth “opening” its mouth
- □Cain’s punishment is similar to Adams’ but even more severe (and it’s unique to Cain alone)
 - He was a farmer, but no longer
 - He must wander and scrounge for his living
 - He will forever wander the earth
 - More importantly, he will live out his days away from the rest of his family and from God Himself
 - Though man has left the garden, God has not left man
 - He was still interacting with Abel and now Cain
 - There is still a type of garden experience going on
 - Keeping man out of the garden was about keeping man from the tree, not keeping him from God
 - But now Cain is looking at a life without God’s immediate presence, something he’s never known

- Cain's removal from God's presence is remarkably similar to what we know happens to all unbelievers in eternity
 - Eternal separation from God's presence
- Which suggests that Cain is being judged here eternally as much as temporally
 - God is declaring that Cain will not find forgiveness
- If you are ever tempted to believe that the everyone can be converted to faith merely through a compelling and convincing presentation of God, remember Cain
 - Cain knew God
 - He spoke with God, He talked to God
 - Yet he didn't accept the gospel
 - He didn't submit his will to God's
 - An encounter with God or a powerful religious experience cannot create faith
 - Hebrews tells us that God is the author and perfecter of our faith
 - He is also the perfect judge of all who oppose Him

[Gen. 4:13](#) Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is too great to bear!"

- Cain seems to understand the significance of God's judgment
 - He says:
 - Cain amar YHVH avon min gadol nasa
 - Cain declared or said that his iniquity (or crime) was too great to be lifted or forgiven
 - He may not be talking about his punishment, but rather his offense
 - He recognizes he won't find mercy from God
 - Worldly sorrow, not repentance

[2Cor. 7:10](#) For the **sorrow** that is according to *the will of* God produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation, but the **sorrow** of the world produces death.