

## Genesis 4B (2011)

- We drop back into the story of Cain and Abel after God has instructed Cain to seek the sacrifice offered him to atone for his sin
  - But as we will see today, Cain doesn't take that offer
  - And in fact, Cain goes further in the opposite direction, indulging his sinful flesh

[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.

- In understanding what transpired, we face another last translation challenge
  - 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 (i.e., unconnected to the rest of the verse)
  - But 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
  - This better translations conveys Cain's 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
- So Cain commits the first murder in the Bible, the full depravity of the human heart on display from the very beginning
  - All the sin required for us to do the very worst things in life existed from the time of the second man
    - The condition of the world is not the result of a worsening of the human condition that leads to things like murder
    - It has always been a part of the of the human heart

- We should also notice the conscience at work as well
  - Why did Cain feel the need to lure his brother into a remote place?
  - There can be no other explanation than that Cain felt guilt over his crime even before he committed it
  - And he was protecting himself from discovery, evidence of conscience
- What was the basis of Cain's anger at Abel?
  - Simply, a hatred of those who gain God's approval
    - As Jesus warned:

[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 first believing son persecuted by the first unbelieving son
  - 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

[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.

[1John 3:13](#) Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.

- Now we have the second time God has confronted man after a sinful act

[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
  - God gives Cain the same opportunity for repentance that He offer Adam and Eve in the Garden
    - And instead of responding with confession, Cain offers this remarkably blunt response
      - In fact, this is the first human lie in history
    - Clearly, there is no repentance nor remorse in his heart
    - But don't miss the grace of God on display in these early chapters of Genesis
      - Despite watching mankind turn away from Him, disobey Him, disrespect Him, nevertheless God maintains a patient forbearance with all of it
  - And as a result of the first murder, we also see in v.10, the first burial referenced
    - That's the meaning of the phrase from the ground
    - And the earth "opening" its mouth to receive Abel
    - In this case, the burial was done out of the need to cover up a mistake, not out of respect for the body
- God then responds to Cain's insolence with a statement of judgment
  - God says look what you have done (in the form of a question)
    - And that Abel's blood cries to God from the ground
    - God is aware of injustice and of the affliction of His children by faith

- Abel's blood cries out to God for vengeance and God acts in the due course of time
- The punishment God delivers to Cain sounds similar to Adam's but is actually quite different (and it's unique to Cain alone)
  - God says "you" are cursed from the ground
    - While Adam's sin resulted in a curse against the ground
    - Now the ground itself becomes evidence against Cain and brings a curse upon him
  - In Hebrew, the sense is that the ground has been Cain's prosecutor and jury, convicting Cain of his sin
    - And the verdict that the ground demands is death
    - So God pronounces a curse on Cain
      - Remember, a curse is a permanent judgment of damnation
      - There is no recovery possible for Cain
- Furthermore, God declares that the earth will no longer give its produce to Cain
  - He is no longer a farmer who stays in one place
- Instead, Cain will wander the earth and scrounge for his living
  - The word for vagrant is nua, which means to shake in fear or to stagger, to walk to and fro
  - To wander is nud, which is similar in meaning but with an emphasis on grieving and mourning
  - He will forever wander the earth in fear and grieving
- More importantly, Cain must live out his days away from the rest of his family and from God Himself
  - At this point in the history of humanity, Cain can expect to be alone for the most part
  - More importantly, Cain is being banished from God's presence on the earth

- It's obvious that God has maintained some kind of presence among men on earth even after the Fall in the Garden
  - Cain and Abel sacrificed to God
  - Later we'll see that other men in Adam's family knew God and even walked with Him
- So Cain's banishment means he is leaving the community where God is frequently visiting in some form
- Cain's removal from God's presence is a remarkably picture of what we know happens to all unbelievers in eternity
  - They are eternal separated from God's presence as they feel the weight of their sins
    - This is the cursed outcome of every unbeliever
  - Notice that according to this analogy, the unbeliever isn't annihilated
    - Cain's existence didn't come to an end
    - He continued on but apart from God, in an existence of suffering
    - Similarly, the unbeliever under judgment is also subjected to a continuing existence apart from God
  - Cain's story is a Biblical picture of how unbelievers are going to be judged one day
    - They will appear before God
    - And He will test their work, but they won't have an answer for His questioning
      - And in the end, their deeds will be found lacking, and they will receive punishment in eternal separation from God
    - And as an unbeliever, Cain pictures the eternal through the experiences of his earthly life
- The Bible declares that Cain was an evil person who had no faith in God
  - And this is why he finds no forgiveness
  - But if we are ever tempted to think that someone may be converted to faith through some convincing display 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 reacts with regret and sorrow and a complaint
  - Cain seems to understand the significance of God's judgment
    - In literal Hebrew, 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
  - Don't be misled by what you see in Cain here
    - This is worldly sorrow, not godly 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.

- Only God can produce true spiritual repentance, and it leads to a faithful response to God's word
  - In 2Cor Paul explain the difference to his readers as encouragement
  - They had been chastised by Paul and felt sorrow, but Paul says this was good sorrow, because it led them to lead a more godly life
- No such godly response is taking place here

- Instead, Cain is simply showing regret over his circumstances

[Gen. 4:14](#) "Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

- Cain now argues his case before God
  - He says he is being
    - Driven from the face of the ground
    - Banished from the farming of the land – his way of life
    - Made a wanderer
  - These are simple restatements of God's words
    - But then Cain adds that this existence will leave him vulnerable to attack
    - Moving around puts at risk from those who would harm you
  - The irony here is that what Cain himself started he is now concerned about receiving
    - The first murderer fears being murdered
    - What he sows, he now fears reaping
  - And who might threaten Cain?
    - Reasonable projections of population growth arrive at a likelihood that there were 20-30 thousand people on earth by the time Abel died
    - All of these people are relatives, and since Cain is the first to murder, the prospect of retaliation is on Cain's mind
- So God responds to Cain's concern with a measure of grace

[Gen. 4:15](#) So the LORD said to him, "Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one finding him would slay him.

- God is bringing some protection to Cain
  - God declares that anyone who takes vengeance on Cain for Abel will receive a seven-fold (meaning divinely complete) vengeance in his own family
  - Then to be sure that this promise was trustworthy, God gave Cain a sign that he could remember
- The typical reading is that a mark was put on Cain, but the word for sign is oth – a sign like that given to Noah
  - More likely, God simply gave Cain something that he knew meant that he could trust God's promise
- Why does God protect Cain?
  - Ultimately, Cain stands as a witness against lawlessness for many generations
  - Secondly, God has not instituted earthly punishment for sin
    - There is no government or laws to constrain men's behavior
    - So God is merely controlling sin more than protecting Cain

[Gen. 4:16](#) Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

[Gen. 4:17](#) Cain had relations with his wife and she conceived, and gave birth to Enoch; and he built a city, and called the name of the city Enoch, after the name of his son.

[Gen. 4:18](#) Now to Enoch was born Irad, and Irad became the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael became the father of Methushael, and Methushael became the father of Lamech.

- Cain is no longer in the presence of the Lord
  - And so he goes east of Eden
    - East is always a picture of where the unrighteous go (Babylon)
    - West is always a picture of righteousness and the Kingdom
      - This is a common motif in the Bible
      - Mesopotamia is in the East

- Israel is in the West
  - Abraham was called out from the East and sent to the West
  - Isaac's bride Rebekka, who pictures the Church, is called out from the East and meets her husband in the West
  - And Ishmael and Esau leave the West and go East
  - Etc.
- Cain lands in Nod, which could mean wanderer in Hebrew (similar to nud)
    - This shows fulfillment of prophecy
- In v. 17 we hear that Cain has a wife, and at this point, a question everyone asks where did Cain get his wife
    - In fact, this question is one of the first places critics of Scripture will go to suggest the Bible is untrustworthy
      - How can Cain have a wife?
    - But the answer is so easy, even children can answer it correctly
      - Cain's wife was also a sister or some other female relative (a niece perhaps)
      - Can this be appropriate?
    - First, consider that our hesitation to accept this answer is conditioned on modern standards and mores
      - We understand today that incest relationships are wrong and unhealthy
      - But this standard developed out of two historical factors
        - First, God Himself outlawed incest in the Mosaic Law
        - Prior to this time, brother-sister marriages were not unlawful, although they were uncommon
    - Secondly, why did God choose to allow it for a time and then outlaw it
      - In the beginning, the need for brother-sister marriages is obvious, and God permitted it

- Secondly, there was no harm in such marriages because the DNA of Adam was perfect, as he was created perfectly
      - The curse on the Earth introduced the wearing down of the human genome and the introduction of genetic defects
      - But that process took hold over many generations, and in the beginning there were no defects to create an issue
    - So brothers and sisters could marry and have children without fear of defects and deformities
  - Later, after DNA errors began to build up, God outlawed such marriages to protect families from the problems bad DNA would cause
    - Therefore, today we have been conditioned to see incest as bad and harmful, and therefore it is outlawed - rightly so
    - But in Cain's day, there was no prohibition and no medical concerns with the practice
    - And it was essential to growing the population of men on Earth
- So Cain's first son is Enoch, who's name means dedicated toward something sacred, as to God perhaps
  - Here is a classic display of an outward attempt to connect to God (through works)
    - This is the only way unbelievers can reach God
      - Superficially, falsely and through works
    - And it doesn't reach God at all
      - It is merely for show
  - Cain builds a city in honor of his son
    - This doesn't necessarily mean that Cain didn't continue to wander
    - Perhaps he left the city later
  - After Cain, seven generations are named
    - Mehujael – smitten of God

- Methusael – man of God
- Ending with Lamech, the seventh from Adam in Cain's line
  - Seven suggests a culmination of something in Cain's line
  - Lamech means warrior

[Gen. 4:19](#) Lamech took to himself two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other, Zillah.

[Gen. 4:20](#) Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock.

[Gen. 4:21](#) His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe.

[Gen. 4:22](#) As for Zillah, she also gave birth to Tubal-cain, the forger of all implements of bronze and iron; and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

- Lamech is the seven in the line
  - Takes two wives
    - First record of bigamy
      - Notice that the seven one in Cain's line introduces this practice
    - God records it, not endorses it
      - We only have to notice that it originated in the ungodly line of men to see that it was an evil practice from the beginning
    - The wives carry interesting names
      - Adah – adorned (outward) (for child bearing)
      - Zillah – to grow or be dark (for sexual pleasure)
  - From Lamech came men who developed fundamental technologies
    - Herdsman
    - Musicians (string and wind instruments)
    - Tools
  - Worldly accomplishments and worldly praise

- Everything you could want
- Power, influence, intelligence, culture
- Solely dependent on self and separated from God
- Our life is the way it is because unbelievers seek to make their own world conform to their will, not to God's
  - God makes these things serve His purposes and we benefit from them too
- Some Jewish teaching held that Naamah was the wife of Noah, which is why she was mentioned here.

[Gen. 4:23](#) ¶ Lamech said to his wives,  
 "Adah and Zillah,  
 Listen to my voice,  
 You wives of Lamech,  
 Give heed to my speech,  
 For I have killed a man for wounding me;  
 And a boy for striking me;

[Gen. 4:24](#) If Cain is avenged sevenfold,  
 Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

- This is the oldest recorded poetry in the Bible
  - Lamech boasts has killed two men and brags about it
    - But more than bragging, he is repeating the sin of Cain and alluding to it as well
      - Remember the fear that Cain felt
      - But God told Cain that the threat of God's retaliation would protect him
    - Now Lamech kills twice
      - But he is without God so he comforts the wives by assuring them of even greater protection by his own hand
  - The corruption of Cain's line shines through now