

## THE BEGINNING OF RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS (CAIN AND ABEL) (Genesis 4)

### a. Introduction

**Gen 4:1** And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

**Gen 4:2** And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

(1) All men came from Adam and Eve.

Adam is the father of the human race.

Though there are superficial differences between men, such as skin color and shape of the nose and eyes, all men have the same father.

There is only one “race” of men.

(2) Adam and Eve did not have children until after they had sinned and been put out of the garden.

(3) Children are different and make their own choices.

God gives promises to parents that raise their children in the right way.

**Pro 22:6** Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

But a child still has a will and must make his or her own decision about receiving God’s Word or rejecting it.

(4) Children are influenced by their environment, but sin comes from the heart and not from the environment. Cain and Abel had the same environment.

Cain could not blame his rebellion on anyone but himself, and that is true for every individual today.

### b. The true religion of Abel

Abel’s offering testified of the following truths:

(1) *Abel’s offering testified of respect for God’s Word.*

Abel was a prophet and received revelation from God.

**Luk 11:50** That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

**Luk 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.

Abel listened carefully to God and did what God said.

He did not attempt to modify God’s plan by his own thinking.

He was the father of all who believe that God’s Word is the sole authority for faith and practice.

He understood that there is only one way to God and those who follow false religions will not be accepted.

(2) *Abel’s offering testified of man’s sinful condition.*

Abel acknowledged his personal guilt and unworthiness by bringing a sacrifice that depicted one suffering in his place.

**Rom 3:23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

He did not pretend that he was righteous and that God would accept his works.

**Tit 3:5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Abel acknowledged that man's sin is a serious matter before God which can only be cleansed by the blood and death of Jesus Christ.

**Rom 5:12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

**Heb 2:9** But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

(3) *Abel's offering testified of the necessity of blood and death.*

Abel's offering signified Christ's atonement.

**Heb 12:24** And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of Abel*.

Abel acknowledged that without death and the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins

**Rom 6:23** For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Heb 9:22** And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

A religion that teaches redemption any other way is a false teaching.

**Joh 14:6** Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

**1Ti 2:5** For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

(4) *Abel's offering testified the necessity of substitution.*

Christ took the sinner's punishment; the believing sinner takes his righteousness.

**Isa 53:1** Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

**Isa 53:2** For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him.

**Isa 53:3** He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

**Isa 53:4** Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

**Isa 53:5** But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

**Isa 53:6** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

**Isa 53:7** He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

**Isa 53:8** He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

**Isa 53:9** And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.

**Isa 53:10** Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

**Isa 53:11** He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

**Isa 53:12** Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

**2Co 5:21** For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

(5) *Abel's offering testified of faith rather than works*

**Heb 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 speaketh.

Abel was saved because of his faith.

True salvation has always been through faith without works

**Eph 2:8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

**Eph 2:9** Not of works, lest any man should boast.

**Rom 4:3** For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

**Rom 4:4** Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

**Rom 4:5** But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

**Rom 4:6** Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

**Rom 4:7** *Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

**Tit 3:5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

(6) *Abel's offering testified of repentance.*

By the very act of offering the sacrifice that God had demanded, Abel demonstrated his repentance from self knowledge and false religion and dead works to God's way.

Jesus taught us that there is no salvation apart from repentance.

We must turn from our sinful understanding to God's Word for truth!

**Luk 13:3** *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

### **c. The false religion of Cain**

(1) What were the marks of Cain's religion?

(a) Cain's religion was *built of self works*.

Cain offered the product of his own labor.

He was denying his fallen condition, believing that God would accept him as he was.

Cain is the father of all who deny that man is sinful and undone before God.

He is the father of all who think there is "a spark of goodness in all men," who believe in the universal fatherhood of God, who believe that sincerity is sufficient in religion and that as long as a man is sincere God will accept him.

(b) Cain's religion was *devised by his own self-will*.

It was derived from his own imagination rather than from God's Word.

God had spoken through Abel, who was a prophet and received revelation from God.

**Luk 11:49** Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some of them they shall slay and persecute:*

**Luk 11:50** That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

**Luk 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.

**Act 3:21** Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

But Cain ignored the Word of God.

Cain was the first inventor of his own religion.

(c) Cain's religion *denied the necessity of a blood sacrifice*.

It was a bloodless religion.

He replaced the blood and death of an innocent sacrifice with lovely fresh produce from his own garden.

He is the father of all of those who think they can approach God in some way other than through the blood of Christ.

(d) Cain's religion *believed there are many ways to God*.

Adam and Eve surely told Cain what God had shown them in the Garden, that the way of salvation was through the death of sacrificial animals (taught to them when God clothed them in coats of skins) and that the Seed of the woman would one day come to die for man's sins and thus destroy the head of the serpent.

And Abel had certainly warned Cain that there was only one way to God, but Cain was sure that God was not so narrow-minded.

Thus, Cain is the father of those who believe that all religions lead to the same God.

(2) What was the result of Cain's religion?

(a) Cain was rejected by God.

**Gen 4:4** 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:

**Gen 4:5** But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

**Gen 4:6** And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

**Gen 4:7** 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.

He was rejected because he did not approach God according to divine revelation and according to the divinely-appointed sacrifice.

**Mat 7:21** Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

**Mat 7:22** Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

**Mat 7:23** And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

**Rom 10:1** Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

**Rom 10:2** For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

**Rom 10:3** For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

**Rom 10:4** For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

(b) Cain was angry and jealous of those who followed God's way.

**Gen 4:5** But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

Cain was angry because of Abel's obedience and God's blessing upon him.

Yet Abel had done nothing against Cain.

His anger was unreasonable.

(c) Cain ignored God's gracious warning.

**Gen 4:6** And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

**Gen 4:7** 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.

Notice how patient God was with Cain, in spite of his open defiance to the revelation about the sacrifice.

God could have struck Cain down immediately, but He is a loving, longsuffering God.

Men can say no to God and can reject His salvation.

We see this from the beginning to the end of the Bible.

This in no way detracts from God's sovereignty, because it is God Himself who gave man his will and who has ordained that salvation be received by faith.

**Mat 23:37** O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!*

God told Cain that he could do good or evil.

It was his choice.

**Gen 4:7** 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.

Men have a free will.

It is not the will of man that is in bondage; it is his mind and heart that is darkened.

**Jer 17:9** The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

**2Co 4:4** In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Yet God gives light to every man so that he is without excuse.

**Joh 1:9** *That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

God warned Cain that sin would overwhelm and destroy him if he continued to reject God's Word.

He said, "and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door".

**Gen 4:7** 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.

God described sin as a vicious beast ready to spring.

Sin is an evil taskmaster.

Someone has said, "Sin will take you farther than you want to go and keep you longer than you want to stay and charge a price greater than you want to pay."

Those who ignore God's conviction, and sin against their conscience go from bad to worse.

There was a process that led to Cain's act of murder, and it began with his stubborn self-will and continued step-by-step in a downward spiral.

Any man is capable of any sin if he ignores his conscience and persists in walking in darkness.

(d) Cain murdered his brother in a jealous, demonic rage.

It was the first act of religious persecution.

He then lied and justified himself.

**Gen 4:8** 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.

**Mat 23:35** That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

**1Jn 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.

(e) Cain was judged by God.

**Gen 4:9** And the LORD said unto Cain, Where *is* Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: *Am* I my brother's keeper?

**Gen 4:10** And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

**Gen 4:11** And now *art* thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

**Gen 4:12** 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.

**Gen 4:13** And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment *is* greater than I can bear.

**Gen 4:14** 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.

**Gen 4:15** 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.

**Gen 4:16** And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

God cursed Cain both in this life and in that to come.

**Gen 4:11** And now *art* thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

**Gen 4:12** 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.

Cain was cursed on the earth and *from* the earth.

Eventually he would suffer in eternal Hell.

God sent Cain away from His presence.

**Gen 4:14** 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.

This will be the punishment of every unsaved person.

**2Th 1:9** Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

The lake of fire is eternal separation from God.

#### d. The civilization that Cain built

Cain is the father of the evil world system.

He is the father of those who try to live in this world on their own terms apart from God.

**Gen 4:16** And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

**Gen 4:17** And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.

**Gen 4:18** And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.

**Gen 4:19** And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one *was* Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

**Gen 4:20** And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and *of such as have* cattle.

**Gen 4:21** And his brother's name *was* Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.

**Gen 4:22** And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubalcain *was* Naamah.

**Gen 4:23** And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.

**Gen 4:24** If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

Civilization today is Cainite in origin.

We still have boasting murderers like Lamech and those who violate the sacred vows of marriage, men still reject divine revelation and depend upon their own human resources.

The true Christian does not belong to this ‘world system’ that is passing away.

**1Jn 2:15** Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

**1Jn 2:16** For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

**1Jn 2:17** And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

(1) Cain built the first city.

**Gen 4:17** And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.

This became the headquarters of his defiance against God and a standard for those who were likeminded.

(2) Cain’s children perverted the divine institution of marriage.

**Gen 4:19** And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one *was* Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

We see that the “sexual revolution” is not new.

The perversion of God’s institution has resulted in great heartache and moral and spiritual confusion.

Other ways the children of Cain have perverted marriage is by adultery and fornication, homosexuality, and no-fault divorce.

(3) Cain’s children were accomplished.

**Gen 4:20** And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and *of such as have* cattle.

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