

THE WAY OF CAIN

Hebrews 11:4; Genesis 4; and 3:8-13, 15-21

The Evils of Arrogance

By

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Opening.

Hebrews 11:4 says, “By faith Abel offered God a *better* sacrifice than Cain did....” The offering of a “better sacrifice,” as in the “once for all” {9:12b} sacrifice “of the body of Jesus Christ” {10:10} to “do away with sin” {9:26b}, is a common theme in the Letter of Hebrews. It consumes the larger portion of our author’s thought, his exhortation to live under the Banner of Grace {the “Superior” Covenant of which Jesus is Mediator: 8:6}, and his Spirit-inspired direction in chs. 9-10.

“By faith” Abel “was commended as a *righteous* man [aorist indicative of *martureo*], when God spoke well of his offerings [Again and again, from the present participle of *martureo* meaning- ‘bear witness, testify, speak well of, approve.']. And by faith he *still* speaks [present indicative = ‘down to this very day’], even though he is dead.” The Jews held their martyrs, those willing to sacrifice life, limb, fortune and family on the altar of steadfast faith, unwavering devotion to *Yahweh Elohiym*, in the highest of high esteem. And in Hebrew belief, Abel is considered to be the first martyr.

Why was Abel’s sacrifice “better” than Cain’s? Why did the Lord “testify” to his righteousness and “approve of his offerings” while rejecting his brother’s? Was it the attitudes underlying them? Was it the faith with which they were offered... or was it the faith expressed by the offering itself? One, as we will see in Genesis 4, was an offering of blood, an *animal* sacrifice; the other, the “fruit of the soil,” what was gained by the ‘sweat of Cain’s brow’ from a ground the Lord cursed because of Adam’s disobedience {Gen. 3:17-19}!

Let’s look at Genesis 4, and maybe even ch. 3, and see if we can’t find an answer to some of these questions.

The Fall Takes Effect.

Moses’ opening statement has been variously translated, “Adam *lay* with his wife Eve [*Chavah*- ‘the mother of all the living’]” {NIV}, “now the Man *knew* his wife Eve” {NRSV}, “had *relations* with his wife Eve” {NAS}, “*slept* with his wife Eve” {*The Message*}, TLB has “Adam had sexual intercourse with Eve his wife.” You get the picture. The Qal Perfect of the verb *yada* implies

two things: ‘*intimate* knowledge’ and ‘*legitimate* possession.’ It’s the one term for sexual intimacy in Hebrew associated with legitimate possession of another {and sometimes a violation of this legitimate possession}.

“And she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain [*Qayin*]. She said, ‘With the help of the LORD I have *brought forth* a man [Or ‘acquired a man, gotten a man.].’” Cain’s name is a play on the verb *qana*, which means- ‘get, acquire,’ possibly ‘produce.’ Eve is delighted, exultant, overwhelmed, right? Firstborn son, the first child born outside of Eden, the first human being to be born, *period*. She has much reason to celebrate, but I believe there’s something more at work here. What was God’s Promise to the serpent in Genesis 3:15? **“I will put *enmity* [*hatred, hostility,* a *state* of perpetual warfare] *between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers* [*Your seed and her Seed,* *singular* on both counts.]; *He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.*”** What is Eve looking for? You think these words of the Lord are not playing over and over in her mind every day? She’s looking for a Hero, a Redeemer, a **“Seed”** who will ‘slay the dragon’ and send him scurrying away forever, a Son who will *solve* this problem of sin and lead them back to the Garden! ***I believe she believes Cain is the one who will do this.***

“Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.” *Hevel* means- ‘vapor, breath, vanity,’ which may be a subtle reference to the length of his life.

Now we see the contrasts between the two, as well as a pattern in the Genesis narrative of firstborn sons being *displaced* by their younger brothers. It says, **“Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil,”** v. 2; **“Abel became a herder of sheep while Cain was a tiller of the soil”** {Robert Alter}. V. 3, **“In the course of Time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the *firstborn* of his flock. The LORD looked with favor [‘with interest and approval,’ from *sha’a*] on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and *his* offering He did *not* look with favor,”** vv. 4-5.

There is so much speculative commentary on this section, from writers of every possible angle and background. Was Abel merely demonstrating by his sacrifice his faith in the Lord as Creator and Redeemer, and Cain his callous disregard? Is it the inner attitude or the outward action? Is the problem with Cain’s offering from the **“fruit of the soil,”** from what he produced by the sweat of his

own brow? Is this an image of man-centred goodness, of a works-based righteousness, while Abel's is an image of grace: that Someone had to *die* so we could be free from the Curse of Sin? These are legitimate questions.

“The firstborn of his flock” indicates the very *best* Abel had to offer, the **“fat portions”**— which are considered by most peoples of the Earth outside the United States to be the premier pieces— are the prime cuts of his best animals. The nature of Cain's sacrifice is not the primary problem: several thousand years later the Law of Moses will command the Israelites to bring their **“first-fruits,”** the ‘first ripe’ gleanings of their harvest, as an offering to the Lord {Ex. 23:19; Lev. 23:9-14; Deut. 18:4-5}, which is an offering of the wheat from their fields, the new wine from their vines, and the olive oil from their trees. These are offerings of *gratitude* and thanksgiving, and are symbolic of the ingathering from the rest of the harvest.

It's not so much the *what* which was offered as the *why*. If Cain were to bring something less than his best, than his ‘first ripe,’ while refusing to offer a sacrificial lamb, or animal, then we've got a problem. If he brings a perfectly appropriate offering of any kind, but does it grudgingly, resistantly, we've got a problem. The Truth is: **We don't *know* what's going inside of Cain; we only see his outward action while the Lord looks at the heart.** All the rest of this, no matter how intelligently analyzed, is mere speculation. Unclear at best. So, let's look at what we *do* know, not at what we *don't*. Which is the *only* way to accurately interpret Scripture— allow what is clear speak to what is unclear, the solid to the not-so-solid, interpreting the ‘I'm not *sure* about that’ by the ‘I *am* sure about this.’ Here's what we do know.

In Genesis 3:20-21, after the Curses are laid out in reverse order from which blame was assigned— from the serpent to the woman to the man— we see two things take place. [i] Adam exercises what little dominion is left to him and names **“his wife Eve,”** *Chavah*, meaning ‘life-giver.’ And [ii] **“the LORD God made garments of *skin* for Adam and his wife and clothed them.”** Why **“garments of skin”**? Because they now knew they were naked... and *shame* had replaced what had once been glory. What has to happen for them to be **“clothed”** in **“garments of skin”**? **Innocent animals have to *die* in order to ‘cover’ the sins of Man.** Right... we good?

So the *only* precedent we have for sacrifice in the Book of Genesis, in the Origins

of the Human Race and the Inauguration of Human His-Story, is one of *blood*, of animal sacrifice. You with me so far? This is all we have to go on; there *is* no other account, nothing to shed light on obscurity or darkness. It's entirely possible they know the means of sacrifice, that Adam and Eve have told them of their Creation at the hands of the Lord, about the Fall That Changed It All and the Eden they were driven out of: who they are and how they came to be here. And it's reasonable to conclude that *Elohiym* Himself has instructed them in *how* to offer a sacrifice and *what* this sacrifice is to consist of — *until* the “Seed” of the Woman should come and “crush” the head of the serpent.

My point is: **Whatever Cain thinks about the nature of sacrifice, however he feels about slaughtering an innocent animal, what he believes would be an acceptable substitute to what God has commanded, is of *no consequence whatsoever!*** And neither is what we think, how we feel, and what we believe. Now let me ask you this. Will you open your heart and mind long enough to pick up what I'm laying down? **What we think, how we feel, and what we believe about what *Abba* has spoken is *inconsequential* when it clearly conflicts with what He has commanded.** When God offers us guidance, when He gives us direction, when He reveals His will to us through the wisdom of His Word, our only response is, “Yes Sir.” “When and where, Lord? *You'll* take care of the how.” ‘How’ is a faithless question and ‘why’ is not even on the radar! ‘Why’ is a question you're not going to get an answer to so, in all honesty, it's ridiculous to even ask. ‘How’ is *faithless*, but ‘why’ is *childish*. Just remember: **Children do what they want to do; Men and Women do what they *have* to do.** *And* what they're lead to do!

A Murderer From the Beginning.

What was the effect of this, the result of *Abba's* favor and approval given graciously to *Hevel* and withheld from *Qayin*? V. 5b, “**So Cain was *very* angry and his face was downcast. Then the LORD said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry ...and why is your face downcast [‘Why are you incensed and why has your face fallen?’ {Alter}.]?** If you do what is *right*,” says the Lord, “**will you not be accepted** [NAS has, ‘will not your countenance be lifted up?’]? **But if you do *not do* what is right, sin is crouching at your door** [The imagery in the original couldn't be more vivid, more *concrete*. ‘Sin’ is like a wild animal, waiting to pounce on its unwary victim.]; **it desires to *have* you** [‘Its desire is *for* you’ {NRSV} *Qayin*....], **but you must master it.**” This, by the way, is the exact

same construction as the last phrase of the Lord's curse on the Woman in Genesis 3:16. The parallels in these two passages are *profound*, and numerous.

“To the woman He said ...‘Your *desire* will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.’” The **“and”** right there can, and should {in my professional opinion}, be translated as an adversative, which would imply a contrast: “Your desire will be to *master* your husband, *but* he will rule *over* you.” This is not meant to be tyranny, though it sometimes devolves into this. It's meant to be authority, protection, a willingness to be the ‘point-man’ of your platoon, and a profound sense of responsibility. ***You are the Leader, you are the Head, you will stand alone and accountable to the Son of God one Day for how you lead, or failed to lead, your Queen and your children spiritually and eternally!*** Don't be the guy going, “Uhhhhhhh...” Be the Son of the Most High who can say, “No excuses, Sir, because none are needed.”

There's great power packed into this little statement in Genesis 3:16. You're looking at something in front of you which is vast enough in its scope and definition to encompass all of human His-Story. There is an *opposition* between the first and last parts of this phrase. On the one hand is Adam's **“rule,”** on the other is Eve's **“desire.”** The noun *teshuqah* means- ‘a *desire*, a *longing*, a *craving*.’ *Teshuqah* is figurative for an animal's ‘desire to devour,’ his hunger for fresh meat. In Genesis 4:7 the Lord told Cain sin is like a wild beast **“crouching at the door,”** ‘intent upon’ him, ‘hungering’ for him. This is the parallel I want to explore. When God tells Cain in the midst of his arrogance and anger, **“if you do not do what is right** [if you don't *crush* this mindset before it mushrooms], **sin is crouching at your door** [Waiting outside the flap of your tent. There are images carved into Babylonian ruins which show demons lying in wait, crouching outside the door of human dwellings, ready to spring!]; **and its desire is for you** [to ‘have you,’ to ‘own you’], **but you must *master* it,”** the last part of this v. is identical in construction to the last part of Genesis 3:16.

Let me tell you what this means, or at least what I believe to be an accurate understanding of it. In ch. 3 the woman's desire is set against the man's rule and authority; in ch. 4 sin's desire is set against the necessity of man to master it. **This makes the curse on the woman not only permanent but prophetic.** It's saying Eve's natural inclination, *sin*-natural as of *now*, is to *usurp* the place of Adam, to take the lead, to assume an authority she was never intended for.

In marriage, what happens when a woman gets frustrated with the lack of leadership, the failure of her man to *be* a man? Does she take him before the Throne of Grace and ask God to tan his hide, whip him into shape so their Family can function the way *Abba* intended it? Not usually. More often than not she takes the reins of authority; she does her *own* thing her *own* way. Then when it all falls apart she wonders how this can possibly be. No wonder we have such *confusion* in our nation today over the roles of men and women in the Kingdom of Grace: we no longer know what it means to be real men and real women created in the image of a real God.

What we're seeing today as a result of decades of misguidance and misperception is women who are maladjusted to authority. And men who refuse to wield it. *Accurately*, that is, with wisdom, with justice, and with mercy. They either abuse it tyrannically, as power-mad egomaniacs, or they go *passive*, they refuse to accept the role which God designed them for. Let me ask you something: **What do you think happens in the minds of children who are raised by mothers and fathers like this?** They grow up with this same affliction: maladjusted to authority and *ignorant* of its proper place in relationships. You see this today, among people of *all* persuasions: the predominance of arrogance and the desire to control, a mind which is *set* to manipulate. Ladies, here's one for you: **Humility and grace make a *Lady* out of a woman.** What is humility? It's simply living out the glory that God designed for you: nothing more and nothing less. **There is a realm in which we are to rule, and there is a realm in which we are *not* to rule. Knowing the *difference* between the two is humility.** "This is not my place." It's that simple.

Cain Rises Against.

Let's look at v. 8 of ch. 4. **"Now Cain said to his brother Abel, 'Let's go out to the field [Greek, Latin and Syriac Vss. have this, but the Masoretic text does not.].' And while they were in the field, Cain *attacked* his brother Abel and *killed* him."** To use the literal language of the Hebrew: Cain 'took his stand,' he 'arose against' Abel. *Harag* means- '*destroy, slay, murder*;' it's a term of phenomenal violence. But don't lose sight of the relational language Moses employs here. In two vv.: **"said to his brother... attacked his brother,"** then God is going to ask Cain, **"Where *is* your brother...?"** These are not two enemies squaring off *mano y mano*! These are brothers by blood.

Think of the heart of Eve the moment this sin was uncovered, the heart of a mother — the *Mother* of Mothers. Think of the pain which must have seared the soul of *Adam*, the Man molded from ‘red earth’ by the hands of the Master, the one who drew his first breath from the mouth of God. Of how they must have felt when *Hevel’s* body was discovered, when they saw his life-blood’s crimson hue staining the Earth beneath them and the *full effect* of their actions in the Garden coming home to haunt them in their Exile. You still with me? Now imagine as a mother the disappointment, the heartache, the *terror* of not just losing a son, but losing a son to *another* son — the one whom *you* believed was going to set all wrongs to right! **Futility, hopelessness, and a *profound* loss of faith had to be crashing in like tidal waves at this point.**

Hebrew mythology and rabbinic belief hold various views on why Cain murdered his brother. One story has it that when Eve bore children, in the beginning she always bore twins — one boy and one girl. They were meant to be husband and wife one day and to populate the Earth with future generations. The story goes that Adam decided Cain’s sister should go to Abel, and vice versa, which infuriated Cain. So Adam told his sons to bring an offering to the Lord, and whoever’s offering was accepted by the Fire of Heaven would get the young lady. Abel took his best lamb to the place of sacrifice and offered it *willingly*, but Cain took his poorest ear of corn and laid it *grudgingly* on the altar. We know the rest. One day Abel was asleep upon a mountain; when Cain found him there, he took a huge stone in his hands and crushed his skull.

The other story has it that Cain and Abel were having trouble deciding what belonged to whom. So Abel told Cain to choose whatever he wanted, and he would take whatever was left. Cain took the Earth and everything stationary; so Abel took everything capable of moving. This still didn’t satisfy Cain, whose heart was full of bitterness and envy. So one day he said to Abel, “Remove your feet from this place, brother, for you stand upon my property. The plain is mine.” Abel fled to the hills, but Cain pursued him crying, “The hills are mine!” Finally, Abel sought refuge in the mountains, but Cain pursued him there saying, “The mountains too, are mine.” With a heart overcome by envy and arrogance, he *hunted* his brother to his death.

The Character of Cain.

The reason these stories developed is because the Hebrews couldn’t come to

grips with the fact that a man would kill his brother simply because *his* sacrifice was accepted while his *own* was not. I understand how they felt. It seems a bit of a stretch... *until* we start to understand something about the nature of Cain. Cain is the Hebrew archetype of an 'evil man' — angry, arrogant, filled with the *poison* of bitterness and envy, *self-consumed* right down to his core. What do we say in light of the Battle raging around us? **There's more going on here than meets the eye.**

The apostle John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, gives us a bit of insight into the character of Cain. He says in 1 John 3:12, **"Do not be like Cain, who *belonged* to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were *evil* ...and his brother's [Abel's] were *righteous*."** **"His own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous."** He was *jealous* of Abel. And jealousy leads to envy, envy leads to hatred, and hatred leads to murder. Under the 'civilized cover' of post-modern Churchianity, this is often expressed as contempt, or '*mental* murder.'

Many times I've watched *Abba's* Children lash out each other, usually because *shame* has begun to set in — rightly or wrongly — shame over the weight of one's life, or one's attitude, one's embrace of service or rejection of it, in comparison to someone else's. Observe human nature long enough and it's pretty plain: **When we don't feel the way we *want* to feel, we want someone to pay for how we *do* feel.** Maybe not on a conscious level, but somewhere in the deep, dark waters of the subconscious, we *do*. Otherwise, why would we lash out so often at our Brothers in the Battle? And why would we feel justified in doing so?

When we *do* react this way, we're watching Jesus' Body hack away at itself! This is bound to work out well for the Kingdom of God, don't you think? **This kind of reactionary arrogance is satanic, period.** You know full well whose side you're on the moment you entertain hatred of another believer, the second you seek to *strike* someone down in the Family of Faith, the minute you begin to vilify and denigrate other Sons and Daughters of the Most High God. I'm not talking about speaking Truth to power, or dealing with reality no matter how ugly it is; I'm not talking about honesty and transparency {unless you've decided to be 'transparent' for another — which is *arrogant* beyond belief!}. I'm not even talking about pointing out blatant hypocrisy as Jesus unashamedly did, exposing what is patently *false* in the various 'gospels' being given around the globe. I'm talking about piling on the hurting and the heartbroken, not allowing others

the space to heal, not being willing to forgive when confession or repentance or even an expressed desire for forgiveness has been offered. The subtle twist of the knife already buried in a back, the swift kick to the groin of someone already on the ground. **You tracking?**

The Way of Cain.

V. 9 tells us, “Then the LORD said to Cain, ‘*Where* is your brother Abel?’ ‘I don’t know,’ he replied....” “I don’t know.” Really? *Really... you* don’t know? Lie of lies. What did Jesus say about Satan to the Jews of His own generation? “He was a *murderer* from the beginning. ...There is *no* truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a *liar* and the *father* of lies” {Jn. 8:44}. Perfect. John told us Cain was “of the evil one,” and it appears he’s fitting right in.

“Am I my brother’s keeper?” Oh irony of ironies. The word Moses puts in the mouth of Cain is *shamar*, it means- ‘*exercise* great care over, keep *watch*, *guard* and *protect*.’ “Am I supposed to watch over and to care for him, am I responsible to guard and protect him?” Uhhhhh *yes*, actually: you *are* his older brother, you are the firstborn son! So, *yes*, yes you are. Here’s the unbelievable irony. *Shamar* is a *shepherding* term, one of the words for those sleepless Warriors who keep watch over the weak and weary under their care; also for the angels now ‘guarding’ the way to the Tree of Life {Gen. 3:24}. Abel, you remember, was what? A herder of sheep, a ‘keeper of flocks,’ a *protector*.

Cain says two things in response to the Lord’s question, *neither* of which answers it. The first is an *outright* lie; the second is an evasion, a half-witted attempt to evade responsibility in the presence of God. Think about this for a minute. **He’s talking to God!** This Story sounds painfully familiar, doesn’t it? Where do you think he got the idea to ignore the voice of God and evade any sense of accountability? Hmmmm ...where would this have come from?

Read Genesis 3:8-13.

There’s nothing actually false in what either of them says; it just has *nothing* to do with the question being asked. Listen to Word of the Lord. “**Have you eaten from the Tree that I commanded you not to eat from?**” *That’s* the question: not *where* you got it nor *who* deceived you about it. Neither of these things is the

issue. It is a 'yes' or 'no' proposition {in this case, *yes*}. You think the Lord of Heaven and Earth, Creator of All That Is, doesn't know who told them they were naked, where they got the fruit, and who deceived the woman into believing she could be God?

This is the Original Lie, by the way, still being served up with *devastating* effect {Satan should have a sign that reads: "10 billion served ...and *still* going strong!"}: "You can be your *own* god. By disobedience_to divine command, you can *find* what you're missing." Sound familiar? The only problem with the proposition is... they weren't *missing* anything! **And as Sons and Daughters of the Most High, neither are you.** Ephesians 1:3 says, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the Heavenly Realms with *every* spiritual blessing *in* Christ." In Colossians 2:9-10 Paul wrote, "For in Christ [There's that phrase once again.] *all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the Head over every power and authority,*" every form of angelic and demonic rule or anything else which might be out there in our wide, wonderful Universe. Jesus is *King* of all Kings and *Lord* of all Lords!

Shifting back to Genesis 3, you think He doesn't know they've already eaten from it? So if God knows this, and He *does*, what is He looking for from His Children, from these two made in His *tselem*, His "**image**"? Humility. An *honest* acknowledgment that they've sinned. Get this down. [i] **Unless there is genuine confession there can be no genuine forgiveness** ['Confess' in the New Testament means- '*name, cite, identify, acknowledge*' {1 Jn. 1:9}]. [ii] **Those who refuse to recognize they're sinners will never find their way to the Savior!**

Here's the point. Wouldn't it make human communication *so much simpler*, wouldn't it remove some of the utterly unnecessary strain on relationships, if we would learn to answer the question being *asked* and not the one we're pretending to hear in our heads? If we would deal with the issue in front of us, if we would straight-forwardly answer the question someone has asked us, and not try to ditch and dodge by talking around in circles or answering a question no one is asking, wouldn't it help the level of direct communication between human beings? You *bet* it would; and it *will*! It would certainly eliminate an *enormous* amount of *BS*— of bovine scatology. And *that*, my friends, would be a glorious thing to behold! Amen?

V. 10, “The LORD said, ‘What have you *done*? *Listen!* Your brother’s blood *cries out* to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse [There’s another one. This time on the offspring of the original cursees.] and driven from the ground [Just as *Adam* and *Eve* were ‘driven from the Garden’ {3:23-24}.], which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand [The imagery in Hebrew is profoundly physical: “a gaping ‘mouth’” swallowing “‘blood’ from the murderer’s hand.”¹]. When you work the ground [Notice: this is the very thing Adam was commanded to do in Eden {2:15}, and what would now amount to much futility because of the Curse {3:17-19}.], it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a *restless wanderer* on the Earth,” vv. 11-12. Whoaaahhh.

“Cain said to the LORD, ‘My punishment is more than I can bear. Today You are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from Your Presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the Earth, and whoever *finds* me will *kill* me” {vv. 13-14}. I find this interesting, at the very least, coming from one who has *just* committed murder: the fear that someone will “kill” him. But then I find many things in human nature interesting — and horrifying.

Now think, think with me for just a moment. What is being *implied* by the phrase “*whoever finds me will kill me*”? The one made in the “*image*” of *Abba* is not going to kill his firstborn son, nor is the Woman who was ‘fashioned’ from his DNA. *Sooooo*? The implication is there are ‘others.’ Maybe children not spoken of, certainly daughters to whom future sons will be wed. Cain is going to “lay with his wife” in v. 17, and she had to come from somewhere. Make sense?

Let’s grab hold of a couple of things here. In Jude 11, Jesus’ brother is speaking of false teachers among the Saints and he says, “*Woe to them! They have taken the Way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam’s error; they have been destroyed in Korah’s rebellion.*” Here’s what we’ve seen so far concerning the “Way of Cain.” It is [i] **faithlessness** {there are few things less honorable than a *liar*; there are a few, but very few}; [ii] **envy of God’s graciousness toward the righteous** {envy — ‘I *do not* want to see good come to this person, this marriage, this family, this church!’ — is *always* evil}; [iii] **a murderous mindset** {when you’re willing to *kill* to get what you think you want, you’ve joined the side of Satan: you are channeling the demonic}; [iv] **a denial of responsibility** {which takes us back, once again, to falsehood and faithlessness: ‘I simply will not admit I am wrong.’}; and [v] **a refusal to accept**

the judgment of *Abba* {a fair and *merciful* Father, I might add}. *This* is the Way of Cain. Ever been hit with attitudes like this, ever embraced and indulged attitudes like this, ever seen in your children attitudes like this? More times than tongue can tell.

A Culture of Curses.

A recap of events in the His-Story of our earliest ancestors. God warns Cain — *just* as He does us — about *sin*, what a wild and wary animal it is; Cain — just as *we* often do — ignores it, lets the bottle of bitterness *fill* to overflowing, then drains every envious drop. In the midst of his jealous anger, he murders his brother Abel. *Abba*, as He is wont to do with those He loves, confronts Cain with the stark raving reality of the situation. Cain — *just* as His parents before him — does an evasive little tap-dance, to no avail. The Lord of the Everlasting Armies pronounces His punishment upon Cain, a cursing of the ground he once labored over for his food and to a destiny of restless wandering.

Then, in vv. 13-14 of Genesis 4, we hear this whine erupt from the mouth of the murderer. **“My punishment is *more* than I can bear. Today You are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from Your Presence; I will be a *restless* wanderer on the Earth, and whoever *finds* me will kill me.”** **“But the LORD said to him”** in v. 15, **“*Not* so [Or in Hebrew, ‘Very well’]; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer *vengeance* seven times over.’ Then the LORD put a *mark* on Cain so that *no one* who found him would kill him.”** The Hebrew *oth* means ‘a sign, a mark, a miraculous warning.’ It is ridiculous to even speculate on what this might be; it’s most certainly not a racially distinctive feature of any kind! It is a **“mark”** of *mercy*, a ‘sign’ of the Lord’s protection, yes, even over the first murderer in human His-Story.

“So Cain went out from the LORD’s presence and lived in the Land of Nod [*Nodh*, which means ‘wandering;’ it’s a cognate of ‘wanderer’ in v. 12.], **East of Eden,”** v. 16. Children are soon to be born from Cain and his sister. As we’ll see in the vv. to follow, the **“Land of Nod, East of Eden”** is *more* than just geographical. They will live as *‘fugitives* from God’ doing, as all godless peoples in every age have attempted to do: manufacture a culture, create a civilization, and desperately attempt to govern themselves apart from God!

V. 17 of ch. 4 begins exactly as v. 1 did. **“Cain lay with his wife, and she**

became pregnant [Sound familiar?] and gave birth to Enoch.” It goes on to say, “Cain was then *building a city*....” Cain was *what*? Just five vv. back the Lord tells him he will be a “restless wanderer on the Earth” {v. 12} and now he’s “*building a city*”? In *defiance* of the Curse. I wonder, in totality, just how much of our lives, how much hard-fought time, energy, and effort are expended in *defiance* of the Curse ...whatever particular curse we happen to be battling.

Ever notice this before: **How the very idea of a city first came from Cain?** He and his progeny are the origins of fortifications, of culture, of mankind’s initial civilization. These didn’t come from God {not in the beginning, not originally}; and they didn’t come from Adam. Scripture tells us quite clearly in 4:16-17 that in defiance of the Lord’s curse upon him for the murder of his brother, “**Cain went out from the LORD’s presence and lived in the land of *Nodh*, east of Eden.**” His wife gives birth to Enoch, and it says, “**Cain was then building a city** [a ‘citadel of evil’], **and he named it after his son Enoch** [*Chanok* in Hebrew means ‘dedicated;’ in Cain’s case, to arrogance and evil].”

What did the Lord tell Cain in v. 12, just five vv. back? “**When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless *wanderer* on the Earth.**” So Cain say’s in the deceitfulness of his own heart, “We’ll *see* about that. I’ll just build a city, my own little empire.” And thousands upon thousands of years later look where we are now. So very different! **The Truth is we’re still desperately trying to build those ‘monuments to man,’ and losing our true hearts in the process.** In defiance of God, *just* like Cain, we keep saying to ourselves, “I will *make* this life work! I will shape it to my desires, God, not Yours. I will *find* what has been lost within me; the peace, the happiness, the security I seek *will be mine!*” And off we go.

You know what the two most dangerous words in those statements are? “*I will.*” Mmmm, we’ve heard that somewhere before, haven’t we? Listen to the Word of the Lord through the prophet Isaiah. Of Lucifer he says in Isaiah 14:12, “**How you have fallen from Heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been *cast down* to the Earth, you who once laid low the nations** [Just as you have done to them, says the Lord, now *I* have done to you.]! **You said in your heart, ‘I will *ascend* to Heaven; I will *raise* my *throne* above the stars of God** [His angels, meaning every rule and authority, every throne and dominion, every power and principality.]; **I will sit *enthroned* on the Mount of Assembly, on the utmost heights of the Sacred Mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the**

clouds [Remember the ‘cloud’ in the wilderness? ‘Clouds’ are often a reference to divine glory. It’s another way of saying, ‘I will receive the worship, the honor, the *glory* belonging to *Abba* alone.']; **I will *make myself*** [Hithpael is the intensive reflexive stem = ‘by my own might, my own power’] **like the Most High. But you are brought down to *Sheol*, to the depths of the Pit,” vv. 13-15.**

This is dangerous ground, my friends. Precisely the type of defiantly arrogant ground we are woefully ill-equipped to tread. Apart from the leadership and illumination of the Holy Spirit, this world is a minefield just waiting to rip our souls to shreds. Consider, as Evidence Numero Uno, our attitudes toward our idols {it borders on *worship*, if not surpassing it!}, our love affair with the inessential {the meaningless menagerie we allow into our lives which, when weighed against Eternity, will amount to ‘less-than-nothing’}, and our near *obsessive* desire for distractions. We are a generation *addicted* to the near unceasing stimuli of electronic entertainment. We’ve come to believe ‘we *can’t* live without our toys’— our mobiles, our tablets, our laptops and WIFI, our streaming of every movie, documentary, and TV show ever known to man, our double-digit hyper-texting. **We can’t live without ‘em, and yet— in the midst of our devotion to them— real Life, from the Source Himself, remains as elusive as ever.**

The Offspring of Cain.

So now, in v. 18 the narrative moves to the genealogy of Cain’s descendants, and the godless culture which came into existence through them. We don’t have a complete accounting of every member of Cain’s family, but we don’t have this in *any* of the genealogies listed in Scripture. The women and wives, for the most part, are not included, nor the numerous other children: we have the men, the firstborn sons of the fathers, and sometimes other infamous siblings well-known to the readers of antiquity. Such is the case here.

V. 18 says, **“To” Cain’s eldest son “Enoch was born *Irada*, and Irad was the father of *Mehujael*, and Mehujael was the father of *Methushael*, and Methushael was the father of *Lamech*.”** Lamech is the seventh generation from Adam, from the Man molded by the hands of the Creator Himself. We have a fascinating bit of commentary on the family of Lamech. Moses tells us in v. 19, **“Lamech married two women [The first recorded instance, from Biblical history, of *bigamy*.], one named *Adah* and the other *Zillah*. Adah gave birth**

to Jabal: he was ‘the father of’ [a literal rendering from the Hebrew] **those who live in tents and raise livestock** [The nomadic tribes of the antediluvian world.]. **His brother’s name was Jubal: he was ‘the father of’ all who play the harp and flute,”** vv. 20-21. So, *early*, early on, Mankind begins making music— to soothe the soul and to tell their stories. **Musical instruments are among the earliest inventions of mankind.** In his instrumentation and the songs which flow from them, Man demonstrates his capacity for ‘sub-creation’ {God is Creator, as Tolkien once said, and we are ‘sub-creators’}.

V. 22, **“Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain** [whose name is rather appropriate, since Cain means- ‘*metal-smith*’], **who forged all kinds of tools out of *bronze* and *iron*.”** You have to think, with the propensity for violence which fallen man has already shown, these are not *just* tools he’s forging but weapons as well. The Jewish historian Josephus speaking of Lamech’s descendants says,

But Tubal, one of his children by the other wife, exceeded all men in *strength*, and was very expert and famous in *martial* performances [i.e., in the ‘arts of war’]. He procured what tended to the pleasures of the body by that method [that is, by *violence*]; and first of all invented the art of making bronze.

The last part of v. 22 says, **“Tubal-Cain’s sister was *Naamah*.”** In a genealogy in which the only women mentioned are to illustrate man’s lust for more, there’s got to be a divine purpose to Naamah’s inclusion. The Hebrew Midrash {in Judaism, these are ancient exegetical commentaries on the Torah} recognized that the root of her name can refer to ‘song.’ *Maybe* “Naamah is meant to be associated with her half brother Jubal ...— he as accompanist, she as singer.”² This would make her, if true, the first songstress in History.

Now we come to the piece de resistance. **“Lamech said to his wives”** in v. 23, **“Adah and Zillah, *listen* to me; wives of Lamech, *bear* my words. I have *killed* a man [same verb as v. 8 = *harag*- ‘destroy, slay, murder’] for wounding me, a young man for injuring me. If Cain is avenged *seven* times, then Lamech *seventy-seven* times!”** {v. 24}. Do you see this— the *intensification* of violence? In the words of author John Eldredge, “Cain murders Abel... and sixteen vv. later Lamech threatens to murder everybody else!”

Imagine the heart of love beating in the breast of the Creator, and the Paradise which He envisioned and brought into being for His Image-bearers. *Now* look at

the world ravaged by the sin of man and the lies of Satan, the *full effect* once again of Cain's sin, anger and arrogance on his descendants. **"For I, the LORD your God, am a *jealous* God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the *third* and *fourth* generation of those who *bate* Me"** {Ex. 20:5b and Deut. 5:9b}. Wait ...wait, this doesn't seem fair. So why is it, then? Because they *follow* in the footsteps of their fathers. It's a generational curse, if you will: the sins of the fathers and mothers carried *on* by their children. Emulation and imitation. **Living with a sinful nature in a fallen world means our children and grandchildren will *do* what we *do*... and not what we *say*!**

Cain murders Abel out of envy and arrogance. Lamech murders a man for nothing more painful than an insult, then brags about it, proclaiming a level of vengeance on anyone who dares to seek justice from him beyond anything Cain had ever *dreamed* of! The descendants of Cain, says Josephus, became some of the most base, despicable, and violently oppressive people of all time. He writes,

And when Cain had traveled over many countries, he, with his wife, built a city, named Nod, which is a place so called, and there he settled his abode; where also he had children. *However*, he did not accept of his punishment in order to amend" it, "but to *increase* his wickedness; for he only aimed to procure everything that was for his own bodily pleasure, though it obliged him to be *injurious* to his neighbors.

He augmented his household substance with much wealth, by rape and violence; he excited his acquaintances to procure pleasures and spoils by robbery, and became a great leader of men into wicked courses. He also introduced a change in that way of simplicity wherein men lived before; and was the *author* of measures and weights. And whereas they lived *innocently* and *generously* while they knew *nothing* of such arts, he changed the world into cunning craftiness. He first of all set *boundaries* about lands: he built a city, and fortified it with walls, and he compelled his family to come together to it; and called that city Enoch, after the name of his eldest son Enoch....

Even while Adam was alive, it came to pass that the posterity of Cain became exceedingly wicked, every one successively dying, one after another, *more wicked* than the former. They were *intolerable* in war, and *vehement* in robberies; and if anyone were slow to *murder* people, yet was he bold in his profligate behavior, in acting *unjustly*, and doing injuries for *gain*. {Italics Mine}

I am *sooo* glad evolution changed all this, and we're on our way in the human

race to a better and brighter future. This new and improved version is *vastly* superior to the old!

Is there any doubt the Sons of Adam and Daughters of Eve will *kill* to get what they want? We will *murder* for money: an insurance settlement, a partner's retirement, or the spare change in our pockets. We will murder one another for the right to sling rock on a certain corner, or the distribution of powder and Mexican meth by the ton. We go to war over insults— political and personal. We go to war over *land*; we go to war over *oil*; we go to war over trade routes, over shipping lanes at sea, over mineral deposits and the natural resources of nations. We have warred over gold, silver, and precious stones, over the *right* to tell other men and women how to run their lives, their cultures, their communities and their families, how they can worship and how they can't, what they *can* and *cannot* do with their own business, in their own homes, on their own lands. We will impose the most heinous of human rights sanctions resulting in the deaths of *hundreds of thousands* on nations we once armed to fight our enemies because someone in an office of the Pentagon or the Kremlin decided *these* are now our enemies. We will kill *anyone, anywhere* who tries to save their nation from the systemic evil of the international banking cartel, or even rein in the incestuous relationship between Wall St. and Washington. Ever heard the phrase 'Goldman Government'? **It's *not* without meaning.** Any president who gets serious about exposing the evil and corruption of the Federal Reserve can look forward to a short ride through Dallas in a white convertible.

There is no level of murder left, for *any* reason, which the Sons of Adam have not condescended to commit. Those made in the "image" of God murdering those made in the image of God. And on and on it goes, down the corridors of Time from the beginning to the End. On and on and on. **What do you think *Abba* thinks about this: our willingness to so eagerly take another human life when it benefits us in some way, great or small?** You think He looks around and says, "Mm-hhmm, *yessss*, now *this* is what I had in mind!"

Like so many peoples to follow them, in spite of their prosperity evil is advancing ominously! Moses gives us a picture of an affluent society, technologically advanced, living in defiance of the True and Living God, seeking only what the world has to offer. **Sound familiar?** It should, to *all* of us. It is *this* world in which Israel will emerge, drawn from the fires of slavery by the hand of the Master, and *into* this world she will be sent —

like the Body of the Risen Jesus is *sent* as “a *kingdom* and priests” {Rev. 1:6a} to proclaim the righteousness of God and the “*praises* of Him who called” us “out of darkness into His wonderful Light” {1 Pet. 2:9e}.

Finale.

To wrap up this ch. and the incredible Story it tells of the Origin of Civilization as man’s post-Eden attempt to become his own god, v. 25 tells us, “**Adam lay with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him *Seth* saying** [the name *Seyt* is similar in sound to the Hebrew *sheet*, meaning ‘put or set, grant or appoint’], **‘God has *granted* me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him.’** Again, the narrative continues, this time telling the Story— as it will more fully in ch. 5— of a holy lineage, a righteous line from Adam through which the “**Seed**” of the Woman will one Day come. It tells us in v. 26, “**Seth *also* had a son** [Which means what? Adam and Eve had *other* daughters besides the one to whom Cain was married. Right?], **and he named him Enosh....”** *Enowsh* is a description of man as ‘mortal, *sick*, transient, *terminal*,’ it comes from the verb *anash* meaning ‘be *spiritually* sick, *incurable*, *desperately* wicked.’

Seth is clearly gifted with insight into the nature of *Abba*, the Lord of Heaven and Earth. He realizes that even with the life spans afforded those in the antediluvian civilization, mankind is spiritually dead and in *desperate* need of spiritual Life! Thus, it closes with this remarkable phrase in v. 26. “**At that time men began to *call* on the Name of the LORD.**” *Qara* is the characteristic verb for prayer in the OT; it means ‘call’ or ‘cry out.’ You can imagine the passion, the fervor, the vehemence with which they called upon the Lord in a civilization sliding toward destruction. **This is the first mention of *prayer*, and the first description of *faith*, in all of Scripture.** The line descended from Seth began to cry out in prayer for deliverance. Guess what? They *found* it in the promised Redeemer of Genesis 3:15. **And so will we.**

The ch. closes with a stark contrast between those who sought to rule themselves as they forged their own Empire, apart from the presence of God... and those who surrendered themselves— their lives, marriages, families, their culture, their *inalienable rights*, and the very foundation of their civilization— to the rule and reign of the one True God, *Yahweh Elohiym*. **And thousands of years later, maybe tens of thousands, the Battle for *whose* ‘kingdom’**

will reign over the hearts and lives of men is still raging.

¹ : Robert Alter, *Genesis- Translation and Commentary*, p. 18

² : Ibid., Alter, p. 20