

*First Things – Genesis*

**Genesis 4:8-11**

**“Murder One”**

**1. THE INSTIGATION OF THIS MURDER**

A. Who was manipulating Cain

B. What was motivating Cain

**2. THE INVESTIGATION OF THIS MURDER**

A. A sovereign confronting sin

B. A sinner covering sin

**3. THE INDICATION OF THIS MURDER**

A. The blood that cried for punishment

B. The blood that cries for pardon

1. When God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, the sixth commandment stated with simple brevity, “Thou shalt not kill.”

2. Today, the laws forbidding murder are a little more complicated than that. Over time, governments have established so-called “degrees of murder”.

3. While the laws can vary from state to state, in our country, “murder one”, or murder in the first degree, is generally considered to be any type of premeditated murder, or murder with malice and forethought.

4. Second degree murder is usually considered to be an unlawful and malicious killing carried out without premeditation or deliberation.

5. There are also other degrees of murder, such as third degree murder, manslaughter, and felony murder, which all have different definitions and circumstances connected with them.

6. In Genesis chapter 4, we read about murder one, at least in the sense that it is the very first murder.

7. With no more drama than a police report, the Holy Spirit records for us in verse 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.”*

8. The wickedness in Cain’s heart that had first appeared at the altar of the Lord, now worked itself out through his hands as he murdered his own brother.

9. It is an ancient crime, recorded for us in the Word of God, and therefore carrying with it important lessons for us today.

10. Hebrews 11:4 says of Abel, "...*he being dead yet speaketh.*" Even today, the story of his murder speaks to us about the justice of God, the wickedness of man, and ultimately, the glory of *our* righteous Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ.

11. Notice some things we see about this first murder in Genesis 4. First of all, notice with me:

### **I. THE INSTIGATION OF THIS MURDER**

1. At least according to the TV crime dramas, one of the things that are important in a murder trial is the issue of motive. Why did the suspect kill the victim?

2. In the case of the first murder, Cain's motives are not explicitly stated, even though we have some idea about them from the account of the different offerings that he and his brother presented to the Lord.

3. Fortunately for us, the New Testament book of I John gives us an insight into the motives of Cain, and what instigated this murderous assault upon his brother, Abel.

4. I John 3:12 says, "*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.*"

5. Taking the testimony of John regarding Cain's act of murder, we are mindful of what was behind this crime. Consider first of all:

#### **A. Who was manipulating Cain**

1. It is true that Cain acted alone in this murder of Abel. He single-handedly slew his innocent brother.

2. Nevertheless, John indicates that there was another force that was acting upon Cain. John says that Cain "was of that wicked one".

3. The idea is that Cain came from, or belonged to 'that wicked one'. Without too much speculation, we can guess who the "wicked one" is.

4. He is the Serpent in chapter 3, and the one we know as the devil - Satan himself. Though Cain was Adam's first son, he was the first seed of the Serpent as well.

5. While no one can ever justify their sin by saying, "The devil made me do it," the reality is that our adversary, the devil *is* the master and manipulator of evil in this world.

6. In II Corinthians 4:4, Paul refers to him as “the god of this world”. This fallen world, filled with hatred, disease, war, famine, strife, and murder is merely a reflection of the influence of that wicked one.

7. When people see suffering and wrong in the world, very often they will raise their fists toward heaven and cry, “Why God?!”

8. The reality is that their anger would be better aimed at the wicked one, whose fingerprints can be found on every crime and injustice since the very beginning of human history.

9. As we see Cain being influenced by the devil, let us be mindful of what Martin Luther wrote so many years ago:

*For still our ancient foe,  
Doth seek to work us woe,  
His wrath and power are great,  
And armed with cruel hate,  
On earth is not his equal!*

10. In considering the instigation of this murder, think with me not only about who was manipulating Cain, but consider also further:

### **B. What was motivating Cain**

1. The influence of the wicked one aside, what was it in Cain’s heart that would lead him to kill his own brother?

2. Again, John testifies under the inspiration of the Spirit, and says, “...*And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*”

3. In Genesis 4:7, God had said to Cain, “*If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?*” The problem is that Cain *would not* do well.

4. Cain’s works were evil, and he knew it. Abel’s works were righteous, and stood as a testimony against the wickedness of Cain’s.

5. In Luke 11, Jesus refers to Abel as the first in the line of the prophets of God who were slain by those who hated what they proclaimed (cf. 11:50-51).

6. In Cain there was hatred toward what he knew was right and clearly opposite of his own life. His was the first hate crime.

7. Do you know why the world hates the church? Do you know why the media and the popular culture mock and disdain those who love the Lord Jesus and seek to proclaim His Word?

8. It is because their works are evil. They do not like those who refuse to join them in their sin. They despise those who seek to please the Lord rather than themselves.

9. If you are a genuine follower of Christ, you can rest assured that the descendants of Cain are going to hate you. Jesus said, "*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*" (John 15:18)

10. Old Vance Havner said, "We are the salt of the earth, mind you, not the sugar..."<sup>ii</sup> The righteousness of Abel was like salt in the wound of Cain's wickedness, and that irritation is what instigated this killing.

11. Consider a second truth we learn from this story of the first murder. Think not only about *the instigation of this murder*, but also notice with me:

## II. THE INVESTIGATION OF THIS MURDER

1. In his autobiography called *Be Myself*, preacher and author Warren Wiersbe tells of his life-long love of mystery stories, especially the adventures of Sherlock Holmes.

2. With only a handful of people alive on the earth, there was no need for a great detective like Sherlock Holmes to find the killer in this very first murder.

3. Nevertheless, when we read Genesis 4 that it was none other than the all-seeing, and all-knowing God who showed up to investigate this first murder.

4. We are reminded here that all sin will ultimately be judged by God. The New Testament reveals that Jesus Christ Himself has been appointed the Judge of both the living and the dead. (Acts 10:42)

5. Notice what happens in the investigation of this first murder. We see in this text:

### A. A sovereign confronting sin

1. I love the way Charles Spurgeon imagines Cain actions in the moments following the murder of his brother. Spurgeon said:

"Perhaps Cain went his way dreaming that the terrible matter was all over. He had done the deed, and it could not be undone; he had smitten the blow...the blood had been swallowed up by the earth, and there was an end to the business..."

2. He goes on and says, "It was not so, however, for though that blood was silent in the seared conscience of Cain, it had a voice elsewhere."<sup>iiii</sup>
3. So often men carry out their sins in a supposed secrecy, practicing things in what they call their "private lives" that they assume nobody knows anything about.
4. The passing of time seems to soak up their sin like the ground soaked up the blood of Abel. They walk on, thinking that somehow they have gotten away with it.
5. The reality is, however, the same God who appeared to Cain as he walked away from the body of his brother is the same God who will one day open the books and hold men accountable for the deeds they have done.
6. Yes, God is love. Yes, God is gracious and merciful. Nevertheless, Abraham's question in Genesis 18:25 bears repeating. "*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*"
7. The very reason we compel men to come to Jesus and believe the gospel is because we know that one day the Sovereign God is going to confront the sin of this world. In II Corinthians 5:11, Paul says, "*Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...*"
8. No, people don't want to be told they are sinners, any more than Cain wanted to be confronted as a murderer.
9. Nevertheless, the Word of God presents the truth, and we must proclaim it, that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming to confront the sin of this world, and those who choose their sin over His salvation.
10. In the investigation of this first murder, we see not only a sovereign confronting sin, but we see also:

#### **B. A sinner covering sin**

1. Look at verse 9 in our text. It says, "*And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?*"
2. The gracious Lord sought a confession from Cain, but all He got was a flimsy cover-up in the form of deception and rebellion. Cain lied to God, and then issued a sort of challenge to Him.
3. Cain's attitude is very interesting here. Though he is only the second man in history, he sounds very much like modern man.

4. Rather than answering God's question about his sin, Cain tries instead to ask a question about God? "*Am I my brother's keeper?*"
5. Instead of dealing with his own guilt, Cain wants to have a dispute about the authority of God over the responsibility of man.
6. Most people today would rather dispute the reality of God than deal with the fact of their own sin. They would rather debate whether or not the Bible is true, than confess the fact that they have lied.
7. Men prefer to read *The Davinci Code*, and argue about the Holy Grail, rather reading the book of Romans, and responding to the holiness of God.
8. The sovereign God says, "All have sinned," but with the rebellion of Cain, men still ask, "Who is this God and what sin is He talking about?"
9. Last year, an atheist organization paid what amounts to over \$200,000 to advertise on some 200 buses around the city of London. Among the slogans on the rolling advertisements was this one: "There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life."<sup>iv</sup>
10. Though that mentality is the gamble that many are taking, the Word of God reveals that one day, just as Cain was, men will answer to God for their sins.
11. As we look at this first murder recorded in Genesis 4, we see not only *the instigation of this murder*, and *the investigation of this murder*, but notice also thirdly:

### **III. THE INDICATION OF THIS MURDER**

1. In modern forensics, whenever a murder occurs, the most important piece of evidence in that crime is the body.
2. The body of the victim provides medical examiners with clues about the time and cause of death.
3. In this first murder, we see that the indication of the crime was not the dead body of Abel, but rather the shed blood of Abel.
4. It was Abel's blood that God pointed to when confronting Cain with this first murder. Consider that important truth with me for a moment. Think with me about:

#### **A. The blood that cried for punishment**

1. Note carefully what God said to Cain in verse 10. *"What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground."*
2. This is an important and interesting detail in this Scripture. God knew what had happened in that field. His sovereign sight saw the whole thing.
3. Yet, when He confronted Cain, He did not say, "I saw what you did to your brother. I witnessed your evil deed."
4. No, instead, God told Cain that it was the blood of Abel that called Him to action. He moved in judgment upon Cain because the blood of Abel had been spilled.
5. God said, *"...the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground."* What did it cry it out for?
6. It cried out for justice. It cried out for God to vindicate his servant. Abel had been obedient to God. He had done nothing to deserve the death he received.
7. Abel's blood joined the voices of those martyrs who cry out in Revelation 6:10, *"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"*
8. God did punish Cain, and rose to the defense Abel, as He will all those who suffer for His name. Cain's punishment is recorded for us in the verses that follow in this chapter.
9. Before we leave the scene of this murder, however, and the blood that indicated what had been done, I want to point you to another passage of Scripture, and another "blood" that speaks as Abel's once did.
10. Turn over with me to Hebrews 12, and notice verse 24. Here we see another blood that indicates something. Abel's was the blood cried for punishment. In Hebrews 12 we see:

#### **B. The blood that cries for pardon**

1. The writer of Hebrews says in chapter 12, verse 24 that we who have believed the gospel, are headed to the city of God, *"And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."*
2. The writer compares the blood of Abel with the blood of Jesus. It is comparison that is not too hard to make.
3. Righteous Abel was killed by his wicked brother. Jesus came to His own, and they took Him with their wicked hands and nailed Him to a cross.

4. It was the righteousness and innocent perfection of Jesus that so irritated the men of this world. As one writer put it, "...His goodness...we found *too* good for our endurance, and [we] dealt with [Him] as Cain dealt with his more righteous brother."

5. The murder of Abel points us to the murder of Jesus, when He was crucified under Pontius Pilate some 2,000 years ago.

6. Yet, the writer of Hebrews says that the blood of Jesus that was shed on that cross *"speaketh better things than that of Abel."*

7. Abel's blood cried out for punishment. Jesus' blood, the foundation of the New Covenant, cries out not for punishment, but for pardon.

8. Abel's blood cried out for God to confront Cain's sin. The blood of Jesus cries out for God to forgive man's sin. Abel's blood called for justice. Jesus' blood says justice has been given at the cross!

9. Like Abel, His precious blood was shed and He died. Unlike Abel, He did not stay dead. The earth soaked up the blood of Abel and no doubt took his body soon after.

10. They put the body of Jesus in the ground, but the grave could not hold Him. Now He sits beside His Father in heaven, and He ever lives to plead the power of His blood for the lives of His people.

11. Let us be forever thankful for the blood that cries out for our pardon!

1. There is an ancient Arab belief that the spirit of a murdered man hovers over his own grave in the form of a bird who cries out, "Give me drink, give me drink," until the blood of the victim's murderer is shed as well.

2. Abel's blood cried out from the ground for God to intervene and execute justice on His behalf.

3. As we study this first murder, all of us should see in either our past or present condition something of Cain. We may not be physical murderers, but we are born under the control of the wicked one, and we have been rebels against God.

5. The good news is that the blood of Jesus speaks of better things than that of Abel. When we come to Christ in repentance, our sins are washed in His blood, and we are forgiven by God's grace.

6. The blood of Abel reminds us of our sin, but points us to the blood of Jesus as well, and His blood reminds us of our salvation.

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<sup>i</sup> Luther, Martin, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God”, 1529

<sup>ii</sup> Hester, Dennis J., The Vance Havner Quote Book, (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1986), p. 38

<sup>iii</sup> Spurgeon, Charles H., The Life and Work of Our Lord: Volume 1, (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 1998), p. 15-16

<sup>iv</sup> Atheist Buses Launched...praise be!, Metro.co.uk, accessed 10/28/10,

<http://www.metro.co.uk/news/461121-atheist-buses-launched-praise-be>

<sup>v</sup> Dods, Marcus, The Book of Genesis, (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1899), p. 40