

# CAIN AND ABEL: THE STORY OF MY SIN

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Creation 2023 #3, Genesis 4

February 12, 2023

*“But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door;  
it desires to have you, but you must master it.”*

Genesis 4:7

## The vocabulary of sin

*Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, “With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man.”<sup>2</sup> Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.*

*Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil.<sup>3</sup> In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD.<sup>4</sup> But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering,<sup>5</sup> but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.*

*<sup>6</sup> Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? <sup>7</sup> If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”*

Genesis 4

1. Life outside the garden begins with worship which reveals the heart (see 1 John 3)
2. Life outside the garden reveals the essential problem with the human race
3. Sin begins with the language of the curse (see connection to Genesis 3:15-16)

## The first murder

*<sup>8</sup> Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.*

Genesis 4 (note the textual difference between the NIV and ESV)

1. Cain’s attack reveals the true source of evil (see Matthew 5:21-24; James 4)
2. Cain’s attack reveals the power of sin
3. Satan and the curse are behind every attack on the line of the promise

## Curse to grace

<sup>9</sup> Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

<sup>10</sup> The LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.

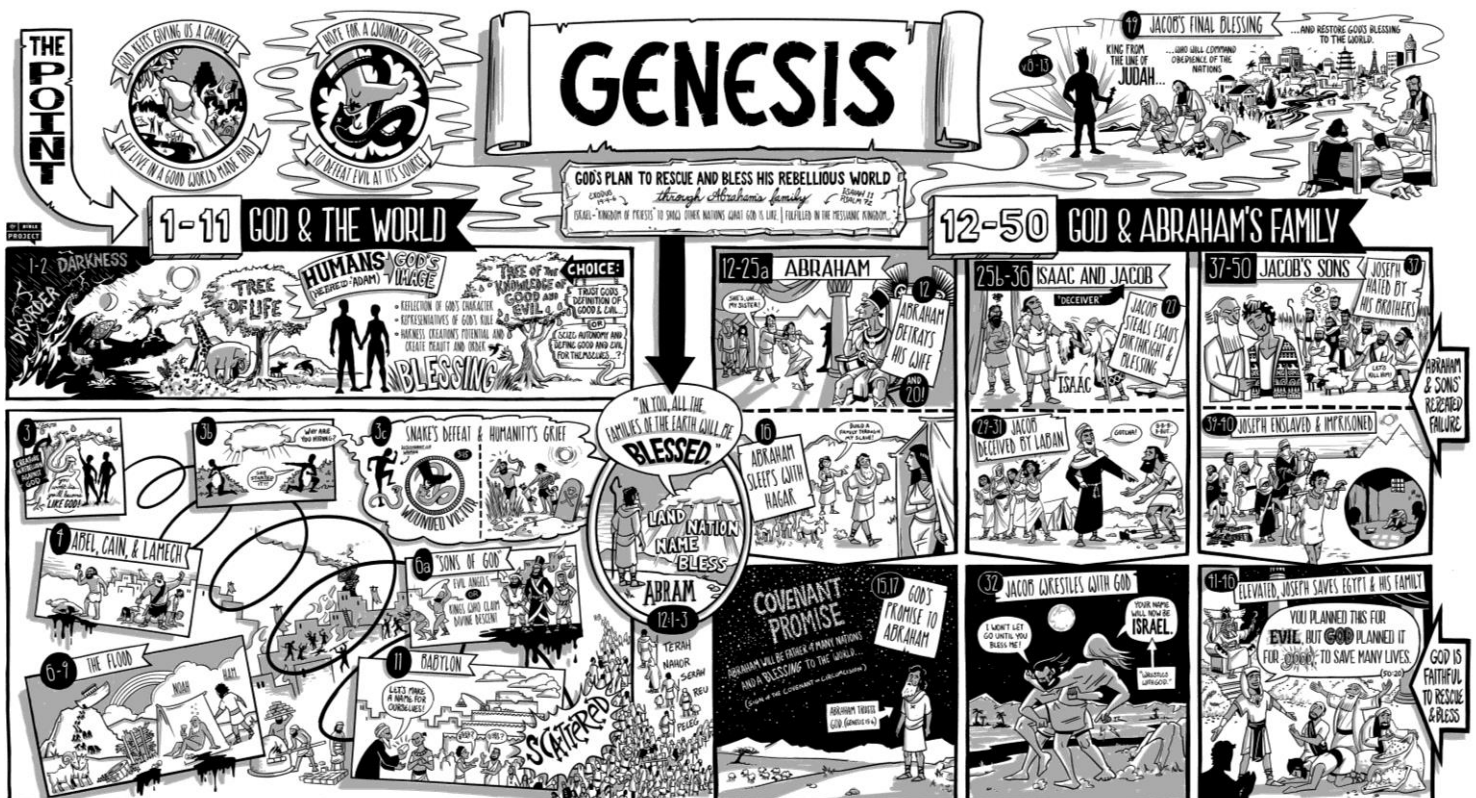
<sup>11</sup> Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. <sup>12</sup> When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”

<sup>13</sup> Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is more than I can bear. <sup>14</sup> 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.”

<sup>15</sup> But the LORD said to him, “Not so; 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. <sup>16</sup> So Cain went out from the LORD’s presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Genesis 4

1. The answer to this question is always “yes” (see passages like Leviticus 19:16-18; Galatians 6:1-9)
2. Cain realizes that his “guilt” is more than he could bear – the first step toward grace
3. The “mark on Cain” (see Genesis 1:14, 9:12) points to God’s grace: special and common



## Lessons from the blood (of Abel and Jesus)

<sup>14</sup> *Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.* <sup>15</sup> *See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many . . . .*

<sup>22</sup> *But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, <sup>23</sup> to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, <sup>24</sup> to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*

Hebrews 12

### Lesson 1: Don't be like Cain, who acted out of death not life

<sup>11</sup> *This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.* <sup>12</sup> *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 were righteous.* <sup>13</sup> *Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.* <sup>14</sup> *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.* <sup>15</sup> *Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.*

<sup>16</sup> *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.*

1 John 3

### Lesson 2: Abel is the first example of righteousness

<sup>4</sup> *By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.*

Hebrews 11

### Lesson 3: If Abel's blood calls out for vengeance, Jesus' blood speaks of grace

Nay, do not run away from the wounds which you have made, but find shelter in them; forget the sufferings of Christ, but rest in them! Your only hope lies in trusting in Jesus, resting wholly upon him. Think much of the griefs of your Lord, and if I might suggest to some of you who will not be coming out this afternoon, perhaps if you could spend an hour or two between services in considering the sufferings of the Saviour, those considerations might be the means of bringing faith to you. Faith cometh by hearing, but it is a thoughtful hearing; and hearing comes by the word of God, but the word must be thought over. Open the Word, read the story of the cross, ask the Master to bless it to you, and who knoweth but through the Divine Spirit some of you may yet hear the voice of that blood which speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Charles Spurgeon's conclusion in "The Blood of Abel and the Blood of Jesus"

## Resources for the Genesis

Be sure to check the [Bible Project's poster](#) on Genesis.

[Bible.org](#) has some wonderful sermons on Genesis, especially those by Deffinbaugh (see <https://bible.org/seriespage/fall-man-god%E2%80%99s-perfect-plan> ) and Stedman.

Maclaren has a helpful commentary at on many of these passages at [https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/bible\\_book/genesis\\_maclaren.html](https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/bible_book/genesis_maclaren.html)

Many of Spurgeon's sermons on Genesis are collected at <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/scripture-index/genesis/> Spurgeon's wonderful gospel sermon on Genesis 3:15 is at <http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols22-24/chs1326.pdf> . Spurgeon also has a more general sermon on sin from 2 Kings 7 at <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/the-sin-of-unbelief/#flipbook/> . Spurgeon also has a "God's First Words to the First Sinner" sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols7-9/chs412.pdf>

For more thinking about sin, good places to start are Michael Horton's "Whatever Happened to Sin" at <https://wscal.edu/resource-center/what-ever-happened-to-sin> and Plantinga's *Not The Way It's Supposed to Be* (Eerdmans 1995).

There are several more good Monergism resources on Genesis 3-4 at <https://www.monergism.com/topics/sermon-manuscripts-mp3s-scripture/genesis/chapter-genesis/chapters-03-05-fall>

Carl Trueman is Doug's best analyst of the modern condition. See his shorter "Myth of the Modern Self" at <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2022/07/the-myth-of-the-modern-self> or his much longer *Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* (Crossway, 2020). His *Strange New World* (Crossway, 2022) is a little easier read.

To dig more into Doug's "would Jesus still have come even if Adam and Eve hadn't sinned?" question compare Michael Horton who answers "no" (see <https://www.monergism.com/fall-humanity>) with John Murray who hints "yes" in his <https://www.monergism.com/fall-man>

For more details on the connection between the creation story and other traditions see <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/posts/the-bibles-conflict-free-creation-story/>

Very Poythress has some very interesting thoughts on reading Genesis at [www.frame-poythress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/2013ChristianInterpretationsOfGenesis1.pdf](http://www.frame-poythress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/2013ChristianInterpretationsOfGenesis1.pdf) and <http://faculty.wts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/PoythressVernCorrelationsWithProvidenceInGenesis2.pdf>

This "framework" article comes from a theistic evolution perspective, but I appreciate the background work on Genesis 1, at <https://biologos.org/series/science-and-the-bible/articles/the-framework-view-history-and-beliefs>

Tim Keller has a wonderful series of sermons on the fall at [Monergism.com](#) at <https://www.monergism.com/paradise-crisis-%E2%80%93-genesis-31-9> and <https://www.monergism.com/paradise-lost-%E2%80%93-genesis-38-24> and for Genesis 4 at <https://www.monergism.com/%E2%80%9C-history-world-nutshell%E2%80%9D-%E2%80%93-genesis-41-10>