

Am I My Brother's Keeper?

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[0 : 00] When we met last Wednesday, we found Adam and Eve living outside the Garden of Eden.

! They had been expelled from the Garden! because of disobedience. We also discovered Eve had given birth to two sons.

! The first one they named Cain, which means possession in Hebrew. The second son they named Abel, which means vanity. That's an interesting choice.

I want to inject something at this point. Adam and Eve lived a very long time. Adam was 930 years old when he died, and he and Eve had other sons and daughters during that time.

The Bible isn't clear how many or when kids started to be born. Their children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren and so forth lived a very long time, and all this is pre-flood.

[1 : 11] All of these people produced many children. And of course, there's always the possibility of multiple births, twins, triplets, and so on.

Another thing I want to say, and I don't want to be emphatic here, but I get the impression in reading some of the genealogies that in the early pre-Abrahamic history, which is the first 11 chapters of Genesis, Genesis, a lot of these folks didn't get married real early.

It's not like, well, you're 18 now, you've got to leave home and get married and have your own family. From the biblical record that I was looking at, particularly in chapter 5, looking ahead, they got married later.

Some had children later. We're going to be hearing about another son born to Adam and Eve tonight, just briefly, named Seth. Adam and Eve were 130 years old when she gave birth to Seth. Seth married and became a father for the first time at age 105. Now back to Cain. We learned last time that he was a farmer, that he worked the ground for crops.

[2 : 28] His brother Abel was a keeper of flocks, and both of those professions were honorable. Let me reread some of Genesis chapter 4 that we looked at last time.

Starting in verse 3, it says, In the course of time, Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground. And Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and their fat portions.

And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, not just angry, he was very angry, and his face fell.

It is important to remind ourselves that these two offerings, one accepted, one rejected, were brought on the basis of the condition of each boy's heart.

Now I'm calling them boys, they may be 100 years old, but I'm calling them boys. For example, Abel's offering was acceptable, not because necessarily it was animal, although that is important because of the shedding of blood.

[3 : 48] And it wasn't even that he brought the very best from the flock. Neither was it because he had a zealous heart.

His offering was acceptable because it had been given in obedience. In the manner that had been revealed to them, though it was not revealed to us in the book of Genesis, it is obvious that whatever these instructions were, Cain ignored them.

He wasn't concerned with the finer points of worship. He brought whatever he wanted in whatever quantity he wanted, and not what God desired.

In the case of each boy's offering, its acceptance by God was determined by the matter of their heart, good or bad. But all this made Cain very angry.

What he should have done was to repent of his sin and seek forgiveness. Instead, Cain is mad at God. We pick that up in verse 6 and following.

[4 : 59] The Lord said to Cain, Why are you angry? And why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted?

And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.

Good principle of living there, right? You must rule over it. God is making it very clear to Cain that his rage will profit nothing.

It's not going to get him anywhere with God. Cain wanted to be honored by God based upon the offering he made. It reminds me of the Pharisees who would bring coins and hold them way up high and drop them into the plate so people could hear them hitting the plate.

They wanted to be recognized. Cain was filled with anger when his offering was rejected. Cain could not look inward and see the evil that existed in his own heart.

[6 : 13] Cain is really playing the part of a victim. He feels like he's been victimized by Abel and victimized by the Lord. And you know that role of being a victim continues down to this very day.

There are actually classes taught in some law schools that teach that if anything bad happens to your client, someone is responsible and subject to a lawsuit.

And this has had disastrous consequences on the justice system. And I won't bore you tonight with some of the horrendous decisions that have been made, particularly on the East Coast and West Coast where all crazy things get their start.

So Cain is mad at God. But he is also incapable of getting to God. I mean, what's he going to do? Invite him out behind the woodshed?

You're not going to do that. So his anger and his wrath turned toward his brother whose offering was accepted.

[7 : 27] He's going to vent toward his younger brother. And the Lord knows all this to the minutest detail.

The Lord knows us down to our subconscious. He knows everything. And the Lord, knowing this, asked Cain, Why are you angry?

Why are you angry? And God then reproves him by telling him, If you do right, do well, will you not be accepted? And using those words, God is proving to Cain that the blame of his evil thoughts and actions lie totally within him.

He needs to look inside. Don't look at your brother. Don't look to heaven at the Lord. Look inside. In fact, Cain's anger is foolish.

He is angry at the rejection of his sacrifices, but has taken no steps whatsoever to amend his errors. Which, by the way, would begin with repentance.

[8 : 39] God tells him, If you do well, you will be accepted. And then, God issues to Cain this frightening warning. He says, And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door.

I can just picture that image of sin like an animal, like a wildcat, ready to pounce. Each of us should play that thought out in our minds.

Even though we are in Christ, we live in a fallen world, we battle sin, we battle unredeemed flesh, and as a result, sin is always crouching at the door of our heart, ready to pounce.

Cain's greatest adversary is the sin that inhabits his heart and controls his actions. That's his greatest enemy.

And he hadn't figured that out. He thinks God's the enemy. He thinks Abel's the enemy. There can be no doubt that Cain's conscience was pressing down upon him.

[9 : 57] God had given us the gift of conscience. And now it is pressing downward upon Cain. One writer has said that conscience is like a thousand witnesses and a most cruel executioner.

God then admonishes Cain that he must conquer his sin or it will become his master and like a master does, rule over him.

To put that another way, we must be about conquering sin or it will be about conquering us. We had a young man that got saved, I hope, several years ago and he gave him a real nice Bible and I wrote in the beginning, I said, this book will keep you from sin and sin will keep you from this book. That's true. That's true. We get a taste of where this sin came from in the heart of Cain being the older brother.

Cain regarded Abel as inferior to him. He's my baby brother. But we find Abel is a diligent worshiper of God.

[11 : 20] He's going about worshipping God in the prescribed manner. Cain worshipped God negligently. What he should have done is to worship God after the pattern of his younger brother.

And that thought undoubtedly made Cain even angrier. He wasn't about to do that. I had two nephews that were a lot like this.

My first two nephews, Lloyd and Danny. Both of them are dead now. Danny in an accident and Lloyd just, I guess, smoked and drank himself to death. So what does Cain do next?

It's very interesting. Cain spoke to Abel, his brother. Oh, we got some light here, right? Cain speaks to his brother Abel. I really would like to have been the fly on the proverbial wall and listen to what Cain said to his brother.

There are two schools of thought as to what this conversation may have encompassed. encompassed. And these opinions date back for centuries and even millennia.

[12 : 26] One thought is that Cain had a very amicable conversation with his brother. By that I mean Cain was peaceable, he was friendly, even harmonious.

But those who hold to this view also believe that it was all a ploy on the part of Cain. He was merely using this conversation as a way to strike when the opportunity presented itself.

If this version is true, then Cain is the very worst kind of hypocrite. Now, other theologians believe that the conversation was anything but amicable.

having been rebuked by God, Cain struck out at his brother verbally, blaming him and blaming his offering that had been accepted by the Lord.

That was John Calvin's belief. He did not think Cain was able to control his emotions at this juncture and angrily told Abel just how he felt.

[13 : 39] Whether I agree with Calvin or not is irrelevant. I don't want to debate him if he comes back. We're not going to have a debate. We are not sure which scenario is correct, but we may have been given a small clue with the next words.

And when they were in the field. And when they were in the field. When they were conversing in the field, Abel was not so alarmed by the speech that he suspected anything bad was coming his way. The two had probably had many such conversations in the field. They worked in the fields. Both are away from Adam and Eve.

For his part, Cain has been deferring his vengeance for the appropriate time which was now upon them. And then we hear what happened next in verse 8.

Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. I would say he was very angry. He killed his brother.

[14 : 53] The first two boys born to our original parents are now either a murderer or a murder victim. that is quite an indictment of the human race in fallenness.

If anyone doubts the power of indwelling sin, they need to read that passage. If anyone doubts the presence of indwelling sin, they need to read that passage.

I couldn't help when I read those words, I did a mental review of my career in law enforcement and especially my time as a criminal investigator which began in 1971.

I have worked on directly or helped other officers and agents investigate hundreds of murders, some in this town, a lot in Texas.

I've never worked one that involved a brother killing his own brother. I never had one of those. I'm not saying it doesn't happen, it does happen. But I never had one of those, I'm glad. Why did Cain kill Abel?

[15 : 58] Well, to learn that, we turn to the Apostle John. He tells us in the inerrant words of God found in the epistle of 1 John chapter 3, for this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

We should not be like Cain who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him?

Because his own deeds were evil and his brothers righteous. Now, as the Holy Spirit often does, in an economy of words, God tells us much in that New Testament passage.

first of all, he tells us we should love one another. That's true, right? We should love one another. Goes on to tell us we should not be like Cain.

Goes on to tell us Cain was a follower of Satan. He belonged to Satan. Cain murdered his brother for two reasons. Cain's deeds were evil and Cain was jealous because Abel's deeds were righteous.

[17 : 19] So in that brief passage we have a lot of information. God, of course, was a witness to everything that transpired between the brothers.

And God next speaks to Cain and then the Lord said to Cain, where is Abel your brother? I should have added this.

Did God know where he was at? Of course he did. Of course he did. A minority of theologians have bought into the belief that this wasn't the Lord talking, but this was Cain's conscience speaking to him and accusing him of murder.

I don't know how they came up with that. It says, then the Lord said, and most theologians hold that God was audibly communicating with Cain.

And I believe that. In those days, God did speak directly many times. God still speaks to us. He does so through his word. In our day, if you want to hear from God, read the Bible.

[18 : 35] If you want to hear from God with your ears, read the Bible out loud. Cain, of course, has an answer to God's inquiry.

It is filled, in my view, with malice and flippancy. Now, he's talking to the Creator God of the universe, undoubtedly a second person of the Trinity.

Cain said, in answer to the question, where is Abel your brother? Cain said, I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? Am I my brother's keeper?

Interesting, I didn't add this, I don't think I did, but remember it said, Abel was a keeper of flocks?

And now Cain uses, borrow some of that language. Am I my brother's keeper?

God is omniscient. That means he's all knowing. God had witnessed the murder of Abel, and Cain is not going to be able to feign ignorance.

[19 : 40] He's not going to be able to feign ignorance of the fact that he is the one responsible for the death of Abel. I learned a new word while preparing this lesson.

It was John Calvin writing about Cain, and he said, Cain gave nothing with God by his, how do we pronounce that? Huh? Tergibbersate?

It's like a conversation, but it's a tergibbersation. I thought that can't possibly be a word. I came across that in a commentary. I looked it up in Webster's 1828 dictionary.

It means to engage in a shifting, a subterfuge, or an invasion, to evade. And that's what Cain was trying to do. I typed that out, and I didn't have to look at spellcheck.

It said this is a real word. hear what God says next, verse 10. And the Lord said, what have you done? Did the Lord know what he had done?

[20 : 46] Sure. What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground.

Wow. God is not investigating this crime. He doesn't have to. God knows that Cain did this, and now Cain chooses a path that aggravates the atrocity of this crime.

It aggravates it. God. When we have committed a sin, we should not contend with God. We sure shouldn't pretend it didn't happen. As believers, we confess what God already knows.

And by the way, if you want to know where you can find the Bible, 1 John 1.9. You need to memorize that. I didn't put that in there. 1 John 1.9. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness.

With these words, God not only convicts Cain, but declares for every age the heinous nature of the act.

[22 : 10] We have this as a blueprint that we're not supposed to murder. And actually that's what it says in the Ten Commandments. Thou shalt not murder. We always say thou shalt not kill.

It's not the Hebrew word for kill. I mean, I don't want to go into a lot of detail, but there's times when lives are taken that are justified under God's law and man's law.

If in law enforcement, in the military, in a just war, that happens, but you can't murder. I used to give a speech of that when I was police.

Is a police officer capable of murdering? Yeah. And a military man? Sure. there's always that capability if you go outside the rules of engagement.

But here he convicts Cain of the heinous nature of murder. Abel is unable to speak. He's dead.

[23 : 11] His soul is with the Lord. But his lifeblood cries out to his maker. God hears his blood as it's sinking into the ground.

The blood of Abel has a voice that is heard by the Almighty. After his death, that voice thundered into heaven itself. And God as judge next pronounces the sentence.

There's a principle at work here. God continually watches and no one will be able to hide from him the deeds done in the body.

And, you know, whatever we're trying to hide from our spouse, whatever we're trying to hide from our kids, whatever we're trying to hide from our parents, we're not hiding it from God. So go and talk to him about it.

Because he already knows. And I've said in here many times, remember, God has broad shoulders and very big ears. He can hear that prayer of repentance and confession. He can hear it.

[24 : 22] And we'll hear it. Verse 11 and 12, and now he's talking to Cain. God is talking to Cain. And now you are cursed from the ground.

He makes his living with the ground. That's his livelihood. Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

When you work the ground, and that's what he did for a living, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.

Now this is a severe judgment. Again, remember, Cain is a farmer. The curse meted out by God is on the land that Cain works.

It impacts the soil that Cain must as a farmer work with. No longer would Cain experience productivity from the land.

[25 : 33] It is the very land that at that moment was absorbing the blood of his brother Abel. and God is not going to permit Cain to go out there and work the land where his brother's blood seeped into the earth.

Well, Cain has a response. Does that shock you? My punishment is greater than I can bear.

Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground and from your face I shall be hidden.

I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth and whoever finds me will kill me. Cain's scared.

This is more than he can bear.

This sentence. And if we knew the Hebrew language, we would know that this is a cry of desperation. He's a desperate man.

Cain has stood before the judgment bar of God and there is no hope of pardon.

[26 : 46] He's at the point where there's no hope of pardon. He dug in. No repentance, no confession. I have seen many a murderer who has behaved arrogantly in court, but then when the sentence of either death or life without the possibility of parole is read and suddenly it comes all crashing down upon them.

And they start to realize. They start to realize. Cain must now wander the earth as a fugitive. And there's nowhere he can go.

There's nowhere he can go. The only life he has known is that of a farmer, of tending crops, growing things.

That's over. The only relationship he had was with his brother and his parents. That's over. I don't think Adam and Eve are going to say, hey, come on back home.

Everything's okay. I don't think so. Henceforth, his life will be a life of restlessness. He must have had a searing conscience as to what he had done to his brother.

[28 : 06] I mean, I don't know how he could ever sleep a full night. I don't know how he could do that. That would haunt him every waking hour and be the subject of his dreams while he was sleeping.

This is amazing. And he cries out in desperation, I can't bear this great punishment. I will be killed for what I have done.

Somebody's going to kill me. Cain now saw everyone on earth as his enemy. He didn't have a friend. Probably the closest friend he ever had was Abel.

That was probably his closest friend, certainly in his age group. God speaks again to Cain. Then the Lord said to him concerning someone killing him, not so.

If anyone kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold. I don't know if that would bring me comfort or not. I think that was more directed to the people that might be conspiring to kill Cain. But he said, if someone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.

[29 : 19] And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

I just don't know if Cain got any comfort from knowing that God would avenge his death sevenfold if someone killed him. And we are told that God put a mark on Cain and that probably struck terror

into anyone who saw that mark.

He said, don't touch that guy, you'll pay a big price. It was a reminder that Cain had murdered his brother. That's the guy that killed his brother. See that mark? It was a reminder that anyone who killed Cain would suffer a sevenfold judgment from God.

Now, just what was this mark? No one knows. No one knows. And anytime you don't know something from Scripture, people come forward and claim they know.

They write books, they go on lecture tours, charge money. Anyone who claims to know what the mark is, mark it down, they don't know. No one knows what that mark was.

[30 : 44] That has not kept men from speculating about what it might be for centuries. Some have said it, maybe it's a tattoo of some sort on Cain's forehead and someone came up with, and across his forehead was written Jehovah.

I've never even seen that in Hollywood. Some have suggested palsy, that Cain shook in his hands and his head.

And palsy scares people, doesn't it? I had a great uncle, I never knew him, he died in the 30s, but he had palsy. And my dad knew him, and he had a brilliant mind, and he was good with his hands, he could build things.

But people were afraid of him. And he took care of his widowed mother, whose husband, my great grandfather, had fought in the Civil War. And he took care of her.

But people were nervous around him because he shook all the time. And actually on her Civil War pension, it said to take care of you and your simple son, Jesse. They called him a simpleton because he had palsy.

[31 : 53] So some have suggested palsy. And maybe Cain shook in his hands and head. The worst I ever saw, I was in college, and that was a long time ago, over 50 years, 50 years ago, and one of the guys in the dorm came up with a pamphlet purporting to be Christian which said the mark of Cain is black skin.

That's what they came up with. Members of the Negro race. That is pure racism. There is not one iota of evidence that that's even remotely true.

In fact, you get in the New Testament, and there's some pretty neat black people around Jesus. We won't plumb that depth tonight.

We don't know what the mark was. But I'll guarantee you it's not a whole race of people. No way.

We do know that Cain left the presence of the Lord and moved to the land of Nod, which is located east of Eden.

If Eden was still around, he had to go around because angels guarding the place with swords. Of course, no one can ever find a place in Eupens absent the Spirit of God.

[33 : 16] The Spirit of God was in Nod, and he's on the furthest galaxy far, far away. I'm going to copyright that term. I've used it two weeks in a row. no one can ever find a place in Eupens where God doesn't exist.

Nod, interestingly, means wandering and exile. That's a fitting name, and thus signifies motion on the part of Cain. He's moving. And it says here, Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch.

Now, the question of the ages is, where did Mrs. Cain come from? Where did Mrs. Cain come from? She was either a niece of Cain's, or more likely a sister.

A sister. Now, I know this, that creates a lot of problems in our mind. I mean, that's hard for us to wrap our minds around.

But we've got to remember some things. In those days, God permitted such unions, though it was still one man, one woman. And it is to this day.

[34 : 32] Okay? One man, one woman. I didn't tell Diane this. I was on the phone with the bank today because the interest rates are really low. And we're thinking about refinancing our house with a 15-year note.

And this woman says, I'm required to ask you this, but you're married, right? And I said, yeah. And you're a man, right? And I said, yeah. Is your wife a woman? And I said, I hope so.

I think. They have to ask that now. She was real careful how she worded it, but I said, yeah, I married a woman. God permitted this.

And additionally, the genetic code in those times allowed this to happen without physical repercussions. All that's going to change after the flood. After that, all that changes.

And later, God would alter the genetic code and such marriages would be a violation of God's law. And that's clearly outlined in Exodus in the law of God.

[35 : 40] We also discover that Mrs. Cain became pregnant and bore a son to Cain named Enoch. Now, do not confuse this Enoch with a later Enoch whose father was Jared and who became the father of Methuselah.

This is the Enoch that did not die. You remember God took him directly to heaven? And I love the little black boy in Sunday school and a little bitty shaver and the teacher said, does anyone understand what happened to Enoch?

And he said, yeah. He said, Jesus, why don't you come? Let's go play. Every day they'd go play. And then they were out in the fields playing and it was getting really dark and Jesus said, we're closer to my home than yours. Let's go to my house.

He said, okay. And God took him. I love that explanation. I love that explanation. God took Enoch directly to heaven. There's also a little interesting thing and we might look at that, but not tonight, but Enoch lived 65 years and his wife became pregnant and gave birth to Methuselah, who's the oldest guy that ever lived 969 years.

And it says, and when he became the father of Methuselah, he started walking with God. I love that. Enoch saw something in that little boy, that little baby.

[37 : 16] It turned his life around. He started walking with God. I remember when my son was born. But Cain's son Enoch had a city named after him, probably a primitive village with some crude walls put up for protection.

And he also had an interesting descendant named Lamech. Did I pronounce that right? Mike or Willard? The Bible says Lamech had two wives.

first of all, why would you want to do that? Secondly, this is bigamy.

This is a violation of God's plan for marriage. One man, one woman. One man, one woman.

this was open rebellion against God. Now, what's the message there? Well, sin, since Cain, is increasing.

[38 : 31] And someday, all of those descendants of Cain are going to drown in a flood, which we'll look at. Noah's flood.

And then, when Adam was 130 years old, Eve bore him a son named Seth.

Seth represents the reestablishment of the godly line. In that respect, Seth took the place of Abel.

Seth was in the genealogical line of both Joseph and Mary, the mother of Jesus. You understand that Matthew is Joseph's line?

Now, it starts at Abraham, but when you go to Mary's, it goes all the way back to God, and you can track from Abraham back with hers. Seth was in both these lines.

[39 : 34] So, he's quite a person to look at. Well, with that in mind, let's pray. And Father, we thank you for the day and your grace and your mercy.

Lord, I thank you for those who are here tonight and for those who couldn't make it. We certainly pray for them and for those that were lifted up with prayer requests tonight. May we remember those as well.

And Lord, may we remember that there are many canes out there and there are some Seths. May we be in the line of Seth, the godly line, looking for the return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And it's in his name that we pray. Amen.