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## **GENESIS: BROTHER'S KEEPER**

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<sup>14</sup>But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it <sup>15</sup>and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

**2 Timothy 3:14–15 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup>Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.”

**Genesis 4:1 (ESV)**

Adam “knew” Eve serves as an allusion to the Tree of Knowledge and the consequences of sin i.e. “they knew they were naked”.

Cain – קַיִן - qǎ'·yin is a play on words with gotten/created – קָנָה – qanah.

Lit. the text reads: And the man had known Eve his wife, she conceived and bore Cain saying, I have created a man: Yahweh.

<sup>2</sup>And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground.

**Genesis 4:2 (ESV)**

His brother Abel. The story is really about Cain.

Cain as the eldest follows in Adam's footsteps in working the ground – this is priestly! Abel means vanity/meaningless (See Ecc. 1:1) or breath/vapor. Here then gone.

<sup>3</sup>In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, <sup>4</sup>and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions.

**Genesis 4:3–4a (ESV)**

The word that's used for the sacrifice—a *minchah*—is well known in the Hebrew Bible, and it's not intrinsically a blood sacrifice; it's a gift, a gift offering, and a gift offering can take many different forms.

It's a difference of quality not substance. Goes to motive and intent.

And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup>but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell.

**Genesis 4:4b-5 (ESV)**

The issue is pride. Like his parents before him, Cain desired recognition that didn't belong to him. Very angry – he burned exceedingly!

<sup>6</sup>The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen?”

<sup>7</sup>If you do well, will you not be accepted?

**Genesis 4:6-7a (ESV)**

ACCEPTED = UPLIFTED/RAISED UP

When others achieve more than we do, we can have two possible reactions. We can admire what they have accomplished and strive to emulate or even surpass them, or we can grow jealous and wish them harm—as Cain did.

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.”

**Genesis 4:7b (ESV)**

Some commentators have compared the Hebrew *rōbēš* (“crouch”) to the cognate Akkadian term *rābišum*, a mythological demon attending the doorways of buildings to guard its inhabitants or conversely to threaten them. The REB thus reads, “Sin is a demon crouching at the door.” If there is an allusion to the door demon, then the narrative is personifying sin as a demonic spirit ready to pounce on Cain once he opens the “door” of opportunity. This may well correspond with the “seed” of the serpent in [3:15](#), which will do battle with the “seed” of the woman Eve. The imagery is effectively the same and the message clear: sin can be stirred up by wrong choices.

<sup>13</sup>Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. <sup>14</sup>But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. <sup>15</sup>Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

**James 1:13–15 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup>Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. <sup>9</sup>Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?"

**Genesis 4:8-9 (ESV)**

"We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny."

**Martin Luther King Jr. I've Been to the Mountaintop. April 3, 1968.**

Be concerned about your brother. You may not be on strike. But either we go up together, or we go down together. Let us develop a kind of dangerous unselfishness.

**Martin Luther King Jr. I've Been to the Mountaintop. April 3, 1968.**

<sup>10</sup>And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground.

**Genesis 4:10 (ESV)**

Blood is lit. bloods. "Whoever takes a single life destroys thereby an entire world."

Some years ago, Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz was giving a talk to lawyers in Hamburg and asked the audience members, "How many of you have suffered from the Holocaust?" A few hands of several elderly lawyers were raised. Dershowitz then asked, "How many of you or your family members have had cancer, coronary problems, diabetes, or a stroke?" This time, nearly every hand was raised. Dershowitz paused, and then asked, "How can you be sure that the cures for those diseases did not go up in the smoke of Auschwitz or Treblinka?" There was a stunned silence. Following my talk," Dershowitz recalled, "dozens of these German lawyers came up to me and said, 'We too have suffered from the Holocaust.'"

**<sup>11</sup>And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. <sup>12</sup>When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth."**

**Genesis 4:11-12 (ESV)**

Cain, tiller of the soil, whose criminal act was the outcome of his offering the fruits of the soil, stained the earth with his brother's blood. It is fitting, then, that the earth be the instrument of his punishment. It will no longer yield him its produce, and so he can no longer pursue his vocation. He must perforce become a vagrant and an outcast.

**<sup>13</sup>Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. <sup>14</sup>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."**

**Genesis 4:13-14 (ESV)**

The mark of a repentant person is always to say, "My punishment is just," but the mark of an unrepentant person is to say, "My punishment is more than I deserve." He is actually kind of blaming God. He's saying, "This isn't right. This isn't fair." Yet how does God respond? Does God say, "Insubordinate"? Does he say, "You are in contempt of court"? What does he say?

Derek Kidner says in this ridiculous, unrepentant, self-defensive plea, there is a cry of "Please pity me," and God responds. This is amazing. God cares for the unrepentant. God cares for the people who will not listen to him. He cannot bring him into his presence. Do you see that? But he protects him when he sends him out.

**<sup>15</sup>Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. <sup>16</sup>Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.**

**Genesis 4:15-16 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup>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 brother's righteous.

**1 John 3:12 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup>Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. <sup>2</sup>For by it the people of old received their commendation. <sup>3</sup>By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. <sup>4</sup>By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.

**Hebrews 11:1-4 (ESV)**