

## **We Are All Abel**

### **Genesis 4:1-8 (KJV)**

**1** And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. **2** And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. **3** And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. **4** And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: **5** But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. **6** And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? **7** If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. **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.

In this story, we have two brothers. Each brother was born after Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden; after God told them that the ground would be cursed because of them.

**Genesis 3:17 (KJV)** And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

Adam and Eve are driven into the land east of Eden to struggle to survive. They had everything they'd ever want and need in the Garden, but outside of the Garden they had nothing.

In this vast ocean of despair, they find hope; Eve is pregnant! In all the time that they spent in the Garden, this never happened.

**Genesis 1:28 (KJV)** And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

The first command that God gave to creation was to “be fruitful and multiply,” yet Adam and Eve hadn’t fulfilled this commandment. During their time in the Garden, they never had a child, but after they left, Eve became pregnant. This was a very joyous occasion for the couple, because they gave their first born the name “Cain.”

The word “Cain” or “Quayin” means “acquisition” in Hebrew. That’s why it says:

**Genesis 4:1 (KJV)** And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.

Adam and Eve felt that they had their first success in life without the protection of the Garden. The land may be cursed, but Eve is not. They created something. No one had ever produced life except for God up to this point. This was literally the coolest thing anyone had ever done. It’s not surprising that they gave him the name “acquisition,” or “wealth.” If he were alive today, we’d call him “Mister Marvelous,” or “Captain Incredible.” Adam and Eve poured all their hopes and expectation into Cain. He was a wonder to behold; “Look at what we have done...”

But this attitude gave Cain an inflated view of himself. If Cain is ‘Captain Incredible,’ then everything he does is ‘stupendous.’ God cursed the ground because of Adam, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. Not even cursed ground is barren under the authority of ‘Captain Incredible’ Cain.

Cain expected everything he did to be greeted with wonderment and adoration. He wanted all his efforts to be considered the best that had ever been, because in a very real sense they were.

When Cain and his brother, Abel, made offerings to God, Cain’s offering wasn’t accepted.

“How can this be?” Cain thought. “I am Cain. I am the greatest.” The thought that his offering was inferior was inconceivable. To have God outright reject it was unconscionable.

## The Spirit of Cain

To have the Spirit of Cain is to consider your own desires greater than others. People with this spirit are more concerned about what they can get from people instead of what they can do for them.

**Jude 11 (KJV)** Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

Balaam is the one who took money to curse the Israelites when they were in the desert after leaving Egypt. Even though the Bible says that he did not issue a curse, the idea that someone in ministry would be in it just for money is the spirit of Cain.

Jude also mentions Korah, the man who took it upon himself to challenge Moses for the priesthood in Numbers 16. God judged Korah and his whole family by having the earth swallow them up. This spirit desires to take the anointing of God for selfish desires rather than allowing God to choose His servants.

God wants people who are servants to others. Anyone who is looking to be in a pulpit for the money, for the adoration, or for the power is not fit to be in the ministry. Ministers are servants; they are shepherds. A good shepherd needs to be concerned most with the needs of the sheep. A good parent needs to be concerned with the needs of children. A minister needs to be concerned with what he can do for the church, not what the church can do for him.

The Chinese have a saying, "Wealth rarely survives three generations." The idea is that someone poor is motivated to make a better life for his family. He scrimps, saves, and works hard to get some measure of wealth. His son watches his father work hard and he takes the family fortune and builds upon it to make the wealth even greater. The third generation, however, grows up never knowing poverty. The third generation feels entitled to the wealth and so become spoiled. The third generation concentrates on spending the wealth rather than adding to it.

Conrad Hilton was born in New Mexico territory in 1887 to strict Catholic parents. He purchased his first hotel in 1919 and built several others over the next few years. During the Great Depression, he lost most of his money, but bounced back to even greater wealth. In 1944, he founded the Conrad Hilton Foundation to ease human suffering worldwide.

His son, Barron Hilton, pledged to give 97% (at least 2.3 billion dollars) of his personal fortune to the foundation that his father started.

Paris Hilton, the great-grand daughter of Conrad Hilton, is known for being an attractive rich socialite. She is famous in large part for being famous.

When someone grows up with wealth, they become accustomed to it. As humans, we make the mistake of believing that something that existed all our lives will always exist. We stop cherishing and nurturing it and start neglecting it instead. We feel that we are entitled.

### **Judges 18:30-31 (KJV)**

**30** And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. **31** And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

### **Three Generations of Moses**

The word “Manasseh” is written in Hebrew as: ‘Mnsh.’

The letter “n” is written as a superscript above the other letters. Many scholars believe that this was done because the word is actually Jonathan, son of Gershom, son of Moses. Now the Hebrew spelling of “Moses” is: ‘Msh.’

The writers gave us a clue to say that this is the grandson of Moses, but to preserve his good name they pronounce it “Manasseh” instead.

In three generations, the family went from being the strongest spokesman for God to a priest to a priest for a graven image.

## Three Generations of David

When Solomon died, his son Jeroboam took over the kingdom.

### **1 Kings 12:14-16 (KJV)**

**14** And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. **15** Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat. **16** So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

After David spent years uniting the northern and southern kingdoms, Jeroboam destroyed all his work in a few days. Why? He was greedy. He didn't see himself as a servant of the people, but instead saw the people as his servants. The people were a source of tax revenue and nothing more. He felt entitled to the power of being king. He didn't value the effort it took to get there.

As I mentioned before, the word "Cain" means "acquisition" or "greed." The spirit of Cain is a spirit of entitlement.

**Genesis 4:5 (KJV)** But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

Cain made an arrogant offering to God and expected that God would consider it wonderful, just as Adam and Eve had always done. He figured that any old offering was good enough, but God felt otherwise. Cain was interested in what he was going to get from God, not what he could give to God.

As ministers, we constantly fight against our flesh in this regard. That's why the only minister you should follow is the one who tells you not to follow him, just as Elijah did to Elisha.

## **2 Kings 2:2-4 (KJV)**

**2** And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said unto him, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel. **3** And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. **4** And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.

I have fans in this room this morning. I know that some of you will come up to me and tell me how much you like it when I speak. I will admit that my flesh likes it when you tell me that, but my spirit hates it. I don't want you to follow me; I want you to follow Jesus. Our God is a jealous God and anyone or anything that comes between you and Him is doomed. I am certain that every other minister in this church feels the same way; that is why I am here.

## **The Spirit of Abel**

Abel was a shepherd; he was concerned about the needs of the sheep. Shepherds must make sure that the sheep are fed, given water to drink, and kept safe from predators at all hours of the day and night. The spirit of Abel is a spirit of a servant; one who's looking after the needs of others.

Abel's offering pleased God. While Cain made an offering to God to get something from God, Abel made an offering per what God wanted. Someone with the spirit of Abel is a person you want to be your secret Santa. Someone with the spirit of Abel is thinking about what you want, even though you might feel that you don't deserve it.

That cashmere sweater that costs \$200? I would never buy myself that, but someone with the spirit of Abel would get it for me.

Sick in the hospital at 3:00AM? A lot of your own family wouldn't come and see you at that time, but someone with the spirit of Abel would.

Someone with the spirit of Abel thinks about you before themselves.

The word Abel in Hebrew is “havel” which means, “mist” or “vapor.” It also means “temporary” or “transient.”

While Adam and Eve gave their first son the name “Captain Incredible,” they gave their second son the name “nobody.” Don’t even bother learning his name, because he isn’t important.

Yet it was the unimportant one, Abel, which God accepted. It was Abel who cared for the sheep. It was Abel whose sacrifice was accepted. And it was Abel who was killed by Cain.

**Genesis 4:8 (KJV)** 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.

## **We Are All Abel**

**James 4:14 (KJV)** Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

The word “vapor” is the same as the name Abel. James is saying, “Look, we are all Abel. We are all going to appear on the scene for a short period and then disappear.”

Abel is alive in the Bible for a grand total of seven verses. But every preacher, evangelist, and teacher you have ever seen is not even in the Bible that much. We all come onto the scene, we do our part, and then we are gone.

But just like Abel, we all fight against the spirit of Cain. The spirit of greed, of lust, of ego would like to destroy anything that God might find acceptable. Our flesh battles against the things of God.

**Genesis 3:17 (KJV)** And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

The ground is cursed because of the sin of Adam, but for Cain it says,

**Genesis 4:10-11 (KJV)**

**10** And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. **11** And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

So, while the ground is cursed because of Adam, it's the ground that curses Cain. Cain, the tiller of ground, can't even till the ground any more. Cain's forced to be a wanderer; he's no longer even a farmer. The ground itself has cursed him. Cain not only destroyed Abel, but he destroyed himself.

Everyone struggles to have a spirit of Abel, the servant, and keep that spirit safe from Cain, our ego, lust, and sin. Sin destroys completely. Not only will it destroy your relationship with God, it will destroy the thing that made you feel self-important to begin with.

We are all Abel. We must fight to make sure that our sacrifice is acceptable to God. We must fight against the ego within ourselves that seeks to elevate us rather than Him.

If you are anyone in this church, from the Bishop to the newest visitor, ask yourself why you are here. Are you here to get something or to give something? Are you here to get heaven when you die, or to give a little bit of heaven to others here on earth?