

# Cain and Abel (The First Murder) - Part 2

by Art Katz

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the biblical context and the love of God, and calls men to repentance and to a life of righteousness unto death.*

**Duration:** 37:53

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:21, Genesis 4:4, Exodus 20:3, 1 Kings 18:25, 1 Kings 18:27, 2 Chronicles 24:21, Matthew 17:21

**Topics:** "Cain and Abel"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of choosing between two opposing paths in the last days. They highlight the contrast between the biblical view of reality and the world's definition of what is real. The speaker warns that those who hold onto biblical principles may face persecution and have their children taken away. They encourage believers to stand firm in their faith and praise God for the unmovable foundations and wisdom found in Scripture.

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## Transcript

So, Lord, we have not been here heretofore. Many of us have only been up to the ankles. But you are really measuring it out, and we appreciate that, Lord, and we say we want the full measure, frightening as it is, whatever the implications of that might be.

Already there are invitations to Burundi going forth, and who knows what the consequence of these days will be. Talk about sacrifice. There'll be some made because of these days that will probably be the calling for a life.

Not the least of the threat of Africa for us is malaria, which I had in my very first day in Tanzania, learning that the Lutheran missionary, a woman, was being carted away insane from a new strain of malaria. And there I was that night with a fever, and the next day I was beside myself. I was just a welter of sweat and writhing on my bed, the very first day, with the fear that I might be contracting that.

Praise the Lord that he sent him out by two, and the other brother who was not affected was walking back and forth, like somebody in the hospital waiting for a child to be born, just at the top of his lungs crying out to God, Lord, he said, we're not in Africa, we're not in Egypt, we're in the will of God. And you said that your servants, you would not allow the diseases of Egypt to come upon them. And that day I was up and around, completely afraid and continued on.

Later on when I came home, the Lord showed me malaria. Mal, malevolent, malicious, malignant. Mal is bad.

Area is bad air. The principalities and powers of the air. And when I was in Singapore, at a Methodist church, 700 Chinese believers, and they're singing the choruses, the great hymns of the faith.

And on the wall around that church are the plaques of the missionaries who have died. Amy Smith came to Singapore 1902, died 1904, malaria. Right around the room, all of them that were taken by the diseases of an uncommon kind for which we Westerners were not prepared.

So when you go to Africa, you're not on vacation. You might as well go with the understanding there might even be a return. But it's a sweet smelling sacrifice and offering to God.

So Lord, we bless you. Oh, if we could know, my God, what is hanging on these days, what portent, what significance for Africa, for New Zealand, for this nation, for the nations. My God, we would be afraid to come to these tables.

But we bless you for your grace, your mercy, Lord, the way you're giving it to us in portions that we can take day by day. You're dealing with us day by day, Lord, and you're gentle and gracious. And we can say with David, your gentleness is making us great.

And we bless you, Lord, even for the mercy that we see having been expressed to Cain, a murderer who hates the righteous. And yet you are so gracious to woo him and to try to save him from the consequence of his sinful course. And even after he performed it, was gracious in the way in which you meted out your judgment.

So you're full of grace, Lord. And we ask that we might be deeply instructed and even we would break over this continuing revelation of who you are as God from the beginning, before history in the primeval time at the first. Thank you, Lord.

Continue with us now, we pray. And thank you already for this morning. Lead us on, my God.

And delight your own soul. You're shaping something, Lord, for time and for eternity. We thank you and give you the praise in Jesus' holy name.

Amen. Well, some interesting break time comments. Remembering also that the false prophets believed that they were calling on God and expected fire to fall.

That's how deceived they were to the point where in their frenetic fever they were cutting themselves. And there was Elijah mocking them, where's your God? Maybe he's taking a walk. Maybe he's in the john.

The language is actually very pointed. So it's a remarkable parallel with this issue of conflicting altars at the first. And whatever's at the first is always at the end.

The principle of God that is shown in the first episode is already a projection of what will be at the conclusion. the false church and the true with its competing altars. My brother and I... Do you remember what Abel's name means? Cain we know, acquisition, grasping, by one's own exertion.

But what does Abel mean? In Hebrew, E-B-E-L, Abel. We get the English Abel. But it means vanity or a puff or vanity in the sense of weakness.

What am I? I'm just a breath, I'm a vapor. I'm here today going, in myself I can do nothing at all. In me is no good thing at all.

I'm just a vapor. What am I that you should consider me? See what I mean? That was Abel's mentality, a complete contradistinction with the self-sufficiency and the acquisitive, covetous, jealous, angry nature of his brother. We have two archetypal polarities.

And I think we can say for all the factual reckonings, these are the only two, ever and always. And in the end, there's not going to be any in between We're being brought by the centrifugal forces of the last days into the one or the other. And are we willing for the humiliation of being a vapor? A breath? A piece of foolishness? Absurdity? Weakness? Or will we be drawn more and more to striving, to acquisition, to possessing, to having it together? What we're saying is that we subscribe to a principle of understanding of an interpretation and a view of reality that is totally at odds with what the world defines as real.

We have certain predicates, certain understandings that govern our whole view of life, meaning, reality, and history that has its origin in scripture in these ancient and primeval episodes that were from the beginning affect our whole view of reality and of the end. As against a world that not only does not have this view but rejects it with an extreme hostility and wants to keep children from being exposed to it. And the whole issue in public school is something of this issue where the mentality of the world is projected.

I know, I'm a former public school teacher and how I used my place to convey my atheistic, socialistic views to my students. So we need to understand that struggle. And it's going to become more pronounced where we will be looked upon not just as a peculiar people who subscribe to some kind of archaic view of history and of life and its meaning but actually constitute a threat to the progress of mankind and the well-being of mankind by our very presence.

And somehow that line of able that has continued through the thread of history have always brought this kind of opposition against them where their very presence could not be tolerated. And we had the visit of the, not the Mennonites, the Hutterites the other day who are derivative from that line of persecution. The line of able has always come under the persecution of a Cain world who could not tolerate its existence.

And the fiercest expression of that animosity and murder has come from the religious sector. And so will it be at the end when it has its final and fullest pronouncement. We need to gird our lines and anticipate that if we're going to continue to subscribe to these predicates, to these ways of perceiving life and reality from the biblical context, we shall be increasingly marked.

And it may well be as in Russia, our children will be taken from us because we're brainwashing them and setting them on an improper course and that they need to be saved for reason and rationality and not be brought into some kind of Ten Commandment mentality that is archaic and has no validity or efficacy. This struggle is going to become really fierce. So, praise God for the foundations that cannot be moved.

Praise God for the wisdom of what has been given to us in record. Praise God that it's a record of actual events that though they are a microcosm, they contain every element of that which is macrocosmic right to the end. All of the great issues are to be seen in the beginning from the beginning.

We don't only just represent an alternative prophetic view but an alternative reality that the false reality cannot tolerate because it's a threat to its very being even when we're silent. And some of you will know from paper books how my first confrontation as the earliest believer, just back from Jerusalem, back into

the school system where I was a former radical leader and now coming with a Bible under my arm saying Christ is the answer and how a Jewish teacher, colleague, was eating lunch with me and her agitation was so visible and so disturbing and I hadn't said anything at that time, I was just simply eating. And finally she couldn't contain herself any longer and she put her fork in my pan and burst out and she said, even when you're silent, she said, you're a living accusation.

That's what we're going to be even when we're silent. And this is not an encouragement to silence but to the reality that even when we're not speaking the false world is challenged and cannot abide our presence because our very presence blows the whistle on the falsity of its values and the way in which it falsely defines reality omits eternity and will not consider God. Abel never said a word.

There's no record. He didn't say anything. Good.

There's no record of him ever saying anything. Beautiful. Right.

His being alone. But he's called, as our brother just read the scripture, the blood of righteous Abel. Not righteous because he performed the right sacrifice but because being righteous he performed the right sacrifice.

He could not do otherwise. His righteousness intuited what a righteous God required and whatever the cost he brought it with the fact. It was the statement of his own life of faith.

And how did he know God that well? That he would intuit on the basis only of the thread of the sacrifice of animals who clothed the skin with skins his parents in their nakedness? It's because in the place of rest which is the place of devotion and the place of fellowship came the knowledge of God that required a sacrifice of this kind. The holiness of God, the character of God was mediated in his times of rest and away from striving and self-exertion by which he progressively and we also come to know God as God. That's why Jesus said to the disciples who could not cast out the spirits that reduced that son who was symbolic of all Israel into frothings at the mouth and being cast into fire and into water why could we not cast this out? Because this kind, this ultimate and final kind bent on Israel's destruction not just its harassment.

Because Jesus said, how long has this child suffered this? Since infancy. Since childhood. These devilish powers have been seeking its destruction.

Why could we not cast it out? Though we were successful with a lesser order of demonic assailers because this ultimate kind cometh not out but by fasting and by prayer. That's not a technical formula. It's an invitation to a realm of relationship with God where prayer is not merely the pressing of petition but the obtaining of communion.

And for that you have to rise early as Jesus himself did. And not come loaded with your petitions but simply to wait in the presence of God because something is mediated in those times that will only be given in those times. It's the knowledge of God as God.

So that when you confront the terrifying powers of darkness who are having a field day demonstrating their power in reducing that sun to a foaming at the mouth and being as good as dead you're not at all intimidated or even impressed. Because you have a knowledge of what is invisible and eternal that exceeds and eclipses that which is the visible demonstration of the power of darkness. Where did you get it? In fasting, in separation and in prayer which is communion.

That's God's last day statement to the church that will deliver Israel. That's where Abel got it. Because he had not a Bible.

He had not a treasury. He had not a source to draw but only the scant reference of his own parents being clothed with skins. How did he know what Cain did not know? He had an intimate knowledge.

An intuitive. I think he's even called the prophet as well as righteous. Because he's labeled with the prophets who were stoned between the porch and the altar.

He had the kind of prophetic relationship of intimacy by which he knew that he knew that he knew. Which the busy striving Cain who was acquisitive did not have the time or the disposition to obtain. And instead of being pricked onto contrition and brokenness maybe I have invested my life wrongly and too much time spent in acquiring I should take a page from my brother's example instead of the contrition and brokenness which was an option before him he chose to become angry in God favoring his brother's offering over himself.

How should Cain know himself as a sinner? Because the self-righteous man always sees himself in exalted categories and looks with contempt and disdain upon the righteous as being somehow in the wrong. He should know that he was a sinner because God said sin is lying at the door. In other words he refused God's word to identify his condition and his need.

He's repeating or replicating the error of his father in refusing the word of God that said thou shalt not eat of this tree. What is sin? But the rejection of the word of God which is the rejection of God because sin is by its nature deceptive and will not reveal itself as sin. It is a self-justifying thing by which you're entitled to that fornication that illicit relationship or whatever you're doing even the mastery over your brother or your anger against him is justified.

That's the nature of sin. How shall we know it? God tells us. Tells us in his word.

Indicts us. Tells us by the sacrifice of his son. By showing us the sacrifice required.

That that's the magnitude of sin that would not have required the sacrifice of this kind. It's a good question. When the Lord says why are you angry? He might well have said against whom are you angry? Is it your brother that is the source of your anger or is your ultimate anger against me because I have not received your sacrifice and you've got a contention with me you're contending with God because I have not acceded to you on your terms but I have my own terms upon which I insist and because you insist like that you get me mad.

Why can't you be a more accommodating God and go along with the flow? Your conditions are unreasonable. And so the option is either broken surrender to the God who speaks and it's a grace of God to not accept that sacrifice. What a mercy for God not to be the kind of soft sock we are that we don't want to hurt anyone's feelings and we don't want our children to grow up with a complex so we'll not upbraid them or chastise them and we'll look the other way.

No. God knew that this was going to be a stabbing indictment for Cain and because of it there was hope for redemption that he might have been brought to a place of repentance. Instead he chose the place of anger not so much only against Abel but against Abel's God because what Abel was was that reflection.

How many of us have a controversy with God that's angry? Because you didn't do this. How come I but not the other? Why did I lose my child? My sister has had several pregnancies and happy deliveries. Why me? Why am I suffering this? Only the Lord knows the weight of unspoken and even spoken anger and controversy against God because he has not accommodated us on our terms.

Seeking also maybe even an inequality with God and a counterpart by building its own towers as high as the heavens and seeking for realization in its values and its technology that makes it a pseudo-Garden of Eden a false utopia a civilization and its values as being the very antithesis of God's Edenic intention for man just for tending the Garden. Where was his love for a righteous son so faithful in his sacrifice and so clear in his walk? Did he have to suffer death? Probably he was a young man. Isn't that a tragic allowing of his life to be taken when God foresaw what the consequence of Cain's anger would be? Why did he not intervene to preserve a favored son? Why will he not intervene to preserve us? Why is it that in Revelation 13-7 it says it shall be given to the beast to make war with the saints and to overcome them that the blood of the martyrs will cry out from the altar of God? Are we saying that God allowed the sacrifice of Abel that could have been prevented in order to bring a more penetrating indictment of Cain in the hope of and the intention for his own ultimate redemption? Is the whole genius of the redemptive faith with Jesus that God loves Cain as much as Abel in his sin and so much so that he's willing for the sacrifice of the beloved Abel in the hope that this would be the factor that will save the erring brother? This is love.

And doesn't it go back to our prayer time comments about hating the iniquity but not the sinner. God hated the iniquity. Murder is antithetical to God.

He's the God of shalom and life. But his love not only sought to save Cain from his act but even after it gives him a mark that he'll be spared by others and gives him a sentence that is far more just than what he deserved. He did not take his life and allowed it to be walked out as a wanderer in the hope that this would come upon his heart understanding and bring him to the place of redemption.

So great is the love of God. And how far God is willing to go for Cain. So understanding all these things what would you recommend for our brother's message in Burundi addressing men who have been at each other's throats in the most recent genocidal tribal warfare in history.

What's the message out of Cain and Abel? What is the message of God to men who either see themselves as victims and self-righteously angry at those who have perpetrated the injustice and the violence upon them and the message to those who have performed the violence. What can you say about God that can bring both down on their faces in the most abject repentance both victim and victimizer that when they come up out of their repentance they are brothers in fact with one altar and one sacrifice before the living God that will affect all the nation and the continent. That's the challenge.

That's the gospel. That's the message. The love of God not only for Abel but for Cain.

So greater love willing for the sacrifice of the one for the other and that when the time came in the ordination of God he gave the greater Abel whose blood speaketh more than the blood of Abel. What is righteousness? What is righteous Abel? In the last analysis what is righteousness? One of the most difficult words to define but on the basis of what we're considering now I would say righteousness is not righteous except that it's willing not just for the sacrifice but the sacrifice of itself because if you those that live godly lives in Christ will suffer persecution. Your righteousness is the very thing that makes you the candidate for persecution even unto death and your willingness and unquestionable necessity to continue in the righteousness of God even if that is the payoff is what righteousness itself is.

Righteousness is not righteousness except that it is righteousness unto death. Anything short of that is not the loving of your life unto death. That's righteousness.

And I suspect that Abel intuited that. That if I continue in this way with the kind of brother who has already shown himself and whose anger I sense I'm making myself a candidate for death at his hand but I will not defer or defect from the course of righteousness no matter what will be required. Righteousness is unto death.

The reason we don't seek it is because it's so costly. What is more scandalous than a pseudo righteousness than an affected humility than a play acting at worship that this better not to take a stab at it and playing at it than to obtain the real thing. Don't confuse this righteousness unto death and martyrdom as some kind of saccharine, melodramatic, self-affected glorious end for oneself that we have an entry to heaven with a crown.

That's false. True righteousness has its own consequence and its own conclusion. We don't have to seek it.

We don't establish it. We don't set the stage. It's not a scenario that we have affected.

It is the logic of a life rightly lived not an end sought for some distinction that it would confer to us because that kind of motive, however subtle, is itself unrighteous. Because that has been sought in the past in church history. There have been times when people sought martyrdom.

When you read the history of Anabaptism you'll note that there were times when men stubbornly so conducted themselves as to invite persecution and martyrdom because for them martyrdom was the signature of true faith and they wanted the assurance that they were in the faith because they had invoked martyrdom but what they did was they provoked and invoked rather than received it as the life that was mindlessly lived before God without thought of what the end would be. Do you know what I mean? I'll tell you what will save you from the counterfeit, saccharine, melodramatic self-appointed and invoked martyrdom. That you would have this end.

It's the recognition that martyrdom is not an end but a mode of being and that we are in that mode now. We are living as martyrs now. Our life is not being lived unto ourselves or for ourselves now.

We do not count our lives as being dear to ourselves. It's given to be expended and so when the final moment comes of what matter is it to us what form that takes whether we're beheaded shot, hung or whatsoever. We are already as dead men who have been brought from death to life and are in the resurrection realm and when it pleases the Lord for that final and last act let him be glorified in the mode that is with him.

You see what I mean? So you're safe from a melodramatic enactment of a final moment because all your moments are lived as martyrs and I want to say that that is living and wonderful freedom from fear of what the end will be or the consequence of because death where is your sting and grave where is your terror. I've already settled the issue. My life is not my own.

It's the Lord to determine the length of it, the end of it, the purpose of it. See what I mean? It's a wonderful freedom that delivers a martyr is really to live and it's interesting that the word martyr in Greek means witness. It's the witness of our confidence in God and of eternal reward and of eternal communion and fellowship that enables us to live bravely in this life and it's a testimony that there's something beyond this

life that transfigures this life that the world has to know or it will perish.

And what did Jesus say to Pontius Pilate? Don't you know that I have the power to release you or to crucify you? You better shape up buddy. And Jesus said you could do nothing against me except it were given you from above. That's right.

You have that confidence for yourself? We are walked through this life in such remarkable freedom and such abandon. I'm not talking about reckless arrogance but we're living in a world of people that are terrified to death that are afraid to get up in the morning without first taking their drugs and beefing themselves up. They're paralyzed with fear to go to the office.

To go on the freeway with the driving rage. Men are living in fear but to see a people free unintimidated and walking through this life with a wonderful assurance that nothing could come upon them except it be allowed from above. So when we're talking about martyrdom as mode of living we're not talking about the threat of bullets but the threat of a daily dying of intimidation of fear of man of a loss of dignity and prestige and status.

Are we willing for that death? There's a martyr's life that is of multiple deaths daily of men who are willing to take the risk of trusting God and standing before men with their reputation at stake trusting that by the Spirit a word is going to be given that's life giving. And if it doesn't come then you suffer the reproach and if it does come you suffer the reproach either way you'll suffer but there's a glory in that and a rejoicing. What could more diffuse the anger of men against God and their disappointment about God than to learn that his love of them is so great despite their controversy with him that he's willing to give up his able for their salvation.

If that doesn't break a man's heart there's nothing else that God can do in grace to them. How would you like it at the end of the age that in order for Israel that has become Cain and historically has been Cain throughout its whole apostate history will be saved because there's a people in the earth willing to be the able of God's sacrifice to show them his love. How would you like that? That that's our destiny and that's our call for them for Cain's sake that Cain might become righteous.

Am I getting the goose pimple thing? And I'm not one who's easily so affected. I think we've touched the very heart of God at the end of the age of his intention to a church willing as able was for Cain's sake to be for Israel's sake the one thing alone that will demonstrate God as God that will win them because they do not know God as they ought. They don't know his love and his mercy and how far he will go to win even giving up their sacrifice for their sake.

He said I've given men for your life. And then he mentions Ethiopia and Cush. I think that there's a destiny for black believers of a kind of suffering for Jews that as I've said often will come at the hands of their own race when they stand in defense of this people whom the blacks will be ignited to hate because they are their landlords and their exploiters and they'll be driven to such a place of hatred against the Jew that the black believer who will stand between his outraged own people in defense of the Jew will be a sacrifice of God giving people for your sake and he'll be willingly given not only to suffer the physical assault but the sense of being identified as a betrayer and being a Uncle Tom deferring to white men rather than standing in identification with your own black people.

It'll take a saint of a righteous kind to be willing for that. And when Israel sees it that God did not think it too extravagant an offering and sacrifice to make for their sake. Let's pray for our preparation and our

willingness to be that sacrifice.

A righteous sacrifice pleasing in God's sight and that the fire that will fall upon it will be as the fire that fell upon the sacrifice made by Elijah that when the apostate people saw it they cried out the Lord he is God the Lord he is God. So Lord we pray for the end of the age for our destiny black or white as believers who will have part my God in bringing that fire from heaven as an ultimate demonstration to the unbelieving nation that the Lord even Yeshua Hamashiach he is God. Thank you my God for this morning who could have imagined where we would have been led in such directions as this.

Thank you my God for your unfolding for your instruction that somehow the seed of what is the issue of our life at the end of the age is here in this episode in the beginning. So we bless you Lord and praying for myself I pray Lord I'm afraid that I'm going to lose this it will flip from me my memory can't retain it your word will fall to the ground and I ask Lord for myself and for your sons and daughters whom you have assembled that the same grace that has given us a depth of instruction of this kind so fought with last days implication will keep it for us and sift it through us and bring it my God to the whole totality of our being that our inner man will receive this truth and will say Amen remembering what you said yesterday it's not just mere acknowledgement of your Lordship and of your restrictions and of your callings it's the receiving of it with joy and with praise and we thank you Lord for this high calling in Christ Jesus.

Oh we bless your name my God for the privilege of such righteousness as this that we could never have obtained, never have attained, we could never have wrought it ourselves, it could never be ours by acquisition by striving it's only ours by gift it's only ours by God because we have fellowship with the God who is righteous and that righteousness has been imparted to us that we might be as you are thank you Lord oh bless your holy name Lord may our mouths drool at the word righteous and righteousness may we love it and we love you because what is righteousness other than what you yourself are and what you have demonstrated in that righteous son the greater able whose blood speak of greater things than able so we bless you Lord for the privilege my God that no man could have attained or grasped that is given what a privilege Lord and what an eternal blessedness it will take eternity and eternity to give you the praise and the acknowledgement for the privilege of this life lived in this way and ended in such conclusion thank you my God oh Lord seal these things, change us by the understanding that comes into our deeps that we will henceforth never refrain from sacrifice henceforth we will be willing for the death that come of embarrassment and the threat of failure that we will not have to come on to the teeth to meet every situation to retain our dignity we're willing for that loss we're dead men that you might be glorified in what it pleases you to give in that moment to bless men and to impart your life oh we thank you for the high calling of Christ Jesus in Yeshua's holy name Amen renew covenant with the Lord this is covenant you're willing agreement to this life as a sacrifice unto the Lord, my house shall be a house of sacrifice tell him you're willing and when you tell him you're willing and you're affirming this covenant of agreement it will not be long before the word is hardly out of your mouth when you'll be tested in that day mark my words to see if you're not only covenant remembering but covenant keeping in the moment of crisis that will come because you covenanted with the Lord on his terms I just invite you right around the table we don't have to wait for a final class to seal something right now the Lord is wrangling something and he's taught us and spoken enough for us to know those who whose lives will not be dear unto themselves

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