



... Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him...

*And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* (Gen 6:5)

That same heart and imagination of the first men to inhabit earth has not changed from that early day to this. The will of man is not free if it is not conformed to that perfect Will that was in Christ Jesus. What man considers his free will (i.e. to make his own decisions and to do as he pleases) is not a free will at all, but a will that is in subjugation and bondage to that same Old Serpent that deceived Eve in the Garden at Eden. If you do not believe the unrestrained will of man is evil, please observe the atrocities occurring in our own day by those who call themselves ISIS and who murder, maim, and rape in the so-called name of their god, Allah. It is true Allah is their god, but he is not God<sup>1</sup>, that is the God of Mercy and Grace who is the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If Satan desired to choose a god to mask his evil ways, I have no doubt Allah would suffice nicely.

The Firsts addressed today are actually three-fold:

1. First son born to mankind
2. First prophet on earth
3. First murder

You will remember the words of God to Eve after the Fall at Eden: *Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.* (Gen 3:16) This same promise is confirmed in the New Testament: *And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.* (1 Tim 2:14-15) Herein we read one of the strongest principles of male-only clergy. Adam was not a better person than Eve for, unlike Eve, he sinned purposefully; however, it was the trusting and loving heart of Eve which caused her to be deceived. In those churches today that practice extravagant gifts of the spirit and twist the word of God by the preaching of wicked men who present themselves as ministers of God, we see a preponderance of women. It is not because the heart of woman is more inclined to evil

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<sup>1</sup> There is only one God, there are many gods. God is a Triune God; Father, Son and Holy Ghost. He is the Creator of the Universe and all that therein is. He is perfect, loving and rational. He has rules and follows those rules. On the other hand a god, that is the lower case god, there are many of. They are things or beings people put above others and worship. In this sense, Allah is a god, of course, Allah is another name for the Devil.

than man, but that she is more trusting through her natural, nurturing instincts, and therefore more easily deceived. At least, that is my non-politically correct opinion. At any rate, Eve was deceived and Adam was not.

In the process of time, after being expelled from the Garden at Eden, Eve bore a son: *And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.* (Gen 4:1) Conception of children is a gift of God, and Eve recognized that gift in her proclamation. By his sinful nature and subsequent conduct, Cain proved himself to be more the seed of the serpent than of the woman, for he was the very first child born, and the very first murderer. It is our hearts that determine whose we are, and not the accident of birth. We find a circumstance in the birth of Cain and Abel that defies the traditions and mores of ancient culture. *And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.* (Gen 4:2) There are acres of diamonds concealed in these first two verses of Genesis. Let us consider them in detail.

Cain was the first-born and, therefore, considered to be the predominant son. Abel was the second son and, in accordance with historical custom to follow, would have been considered of lesser prominence than the first-born, Cain. However, Cain was wicked. He sinned greatly by murdering his brother. Of what significance is this to us? Adam, the father of Cain, was also the first man; but Adam did not predominate, but distinguished himself only in being the man who brought grief and death to his progeny. But God had promised a second man, the Seed of the woman, who would gain the ascendancy over all. Who was that Seed to which God made reference in Genesis 3:15? No sinful man has yet to crush the head of the Serpent (Satan), but there is One Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, who did so crush the Serpent's head. That was the second and righteous Seed of the woman!

*And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.* (1 Cor 15:45-49) I hope this passage does not make your head swim for wonder, but it is truly a passage of wonder and truth! We bear that earthly image of our primitive father, Adam; but if we are Christ's, we bear His spiritual image as well. We have ascribed to us that perfect righteousness that is not our own, but imputed by Christ and His redemptive blood. Adam, being the federal head of humanity, has begotten us in our earthly and sinful frames; but Christ, through His quickening Spirit (Life-Giving Spirit), has become the parent of all who are the Children of God. So Adam is the first man, and Christ is the second man – or Seed of the Woman – to which Abraham looked forward (as we look back upon as accomplished fact) for salvation. Christ is that Promised Seed of all ages and time!

God's ways are not man's ways<sup>2</sup>. So from that early time, man has considered the first son to always be of greatest importance for purposes of inheritance and blessing; but with God, it has always been the second son. Abel was righteous and a prophet – Cain was a lost sinner! Abraham had two sons – the first was Ishmael, and the second was Isaac. But Ishmael did not come forth according to the will of God. Isaac was the rightful son of Abraham since he was born of the true wife of Abraham, Sarah. Jacob, too, was the second son, behind Esau; but Esau rashly traded his birthright for a pot of porridge when famished from hunting. Jacob was the son by whom the birthright was

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<sup>2</sup> This statement in and of itself is a wonder. A wonder we often forget quite readily. We are to follow God's ways, He provides what we need for the time. We want Him to follow our ways, to provide what we want. Imperfect creatures with free will, what could possibly go wrong?

established; therefore, our God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Abel was the first prophet (see Matt 23:34-35; Luke 11:50-51; & Heb 11:4), perhaps because he understood virtue and righteousness. *And Abel was a keeper of sheep.* (Gen 4:2) Abel was the first shepherd. He raised sheep. He raised clean, living animals. It was one of the increase of his own flock that Abel brought later as a sacrifice! It is much like that sacrifice which no doubt exemplified the sacrifice made by God to cover the nakedness of his parents in Eden: *Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.* (Gen 3:21) Cain had a different source of livelihood: *Cain was a tiller of the ground.* (Gen 4:2) There is nothing wrong with being a farmer, but even a farmer must honor the example of sacrifice provided by God.

*And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.* (Gen 4:3) Let me point out here that Cain had precisely the same understanding of sacrifice that Abel had; however, the two brought sacrifices of a different nature on that day. What did Abel bring? *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.* (Gen 4:4) Why did God have respect unto Abel's, but not, Cain's, offering? Attitude was as much involved as the sacrifice itself. Cain knew that the only example of sacrifice that God had given was by way of the shedding of blood to make coats for Adam and Eve to cover their shame. There is no covering, or remission of sins, without the shedding of blood: *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.* (Heb 9:22) Abel brought a sacrifice that was not the produce of his own hand because life is given only by the Lord. What of Cain's offering? *But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.* (Gen 4:5)

Why did God reject Cain's offering? Cain's offering was one of works and not of grace. He had a bad attitude. He was doubtless jealous of his brother, Abel, who raised sheep. Knowing that an innocent lamb would make an acceptable sacrifice, Cain refused to appeal to Abel for a worthy sacrifice and, instead, brought the fruit of his own labors – a product of the earth. What was wrong with a product of the earth? What had God said to Adam after his sin was revealed? . . . *cursed is the ground for thy sake.* (Gen 3:17) Cain had knowingly brought an offering which was the fruits of his own labor (of works) and from a cursed source – the ground!

Envy and covetousness are the fruit of false pride which seemed to be an abundant feature of Cain. He hated his brother because his brother, Abel, was recognized in his offering and Cain was not. Pride and greed (its child) lead to every other sin – even MURDER, the very FIRST murder! *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.* (Gen 4:8)

I cannot imagine the misery caused by that first murder. Adam and Eve had only two sons. Now, one is murdered by the other. Abel is lost to them, and so is Cain because he was forced away in exile. How tragic! The righteous son, Abel, died due to the sin of his brother, Cain, and at his very hand. Christ, too, died for our sins, and at our very hands in reality. One small sin leads to ever larger and increasing sins. Eve arose and went to the ill-fated Tree. She lingered there before the Tree. She conversed with the serpent of the Tree. She made herself at home there before that Tree by partaking of its fruits. How like the counsel of God in Psalms 1 – ***Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*** (Psalms 1:1)

I hope the readers of this devotion are the blessed men and women of God, and not the family of the disgraceful Serpent of Eden!