

Violence and Corruption Reign

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Genesis 4:1-16 (Translation TR)

Birth of Cain and Abel. They offer Gifts to Yahweh. God takes note of Abel's Gift, not Cain's.

4:¹ Now Human (*Adham*) knew Life (*Chavvah*, Eve), his wife. And she conceived and gave birth to Cain (*Qayin*, Smith). Then she said, "I have produced (*qanah*) a man with YAHWEH's help!" ² And again, she gave birth to his brother Abel (*Hevel*, Vapor). Abel was keeper of a flock, and Cain worked the ground (*adhamah*).

³ After some time had passed, Cain brought some of the fruit of the ground as an offering to YAHWEH. ⁴ And Abel also brought some of the firstborn of his flock – the fat ones. And YAHWEH looked with favor on Abel and on his offering, ⁵ but he didn't look on Cain and his offering.

Cain reacts with Anger. God urges him to do Good and Warns him of the nearby Predator, Sin.

This kindled fierce anger in Cain, and his face fell into a scowl. ⁶ Then YAHWEH said to Cain, "Why are you burning with anger, and why is your face scowling? ⁷ Isn't it true that if you do what's good, you'll be lifted up? But if you don't do what's good, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is against you, and you must gain authority over it."

Cain Kills Abel. He Questions any Personal Responsibility for his Brother.

⁸ And Cain spoke to his brother Abel. Then when they were in the field, Cain rose against Abel his brother and killed him.

⁹ Then YAHWEH said to Cain, "Where's your brother Abel?"

And he replied, "I don't know! Am I my brother's protector?"

God Exiles Cain from the Ground he polluted with Blood. He also Protects him as he Wanders.

¹⁰ But he responded, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground! ¹¹ And now, you are cursed by the ground that opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹² When you work the ground it will no longer give its strength to you. You will be tossed about and wandering in the earth."

¹³ Then Cain said to YAHWEH, "My guilt is a burden too great to bear! ¹⁴ Look! You're expelling me today from the face of the ground, and from your face I'll be hidden. I'll be tossed about and wandering in the earth. Anyone who finds me will kill me."

¹⁵ But YAHWEH said to him, "Because of that, anyone who kills Cain will suffer seven-fold vengeance." Then YAHWEH put a sign on Cain lest anyone who found him should strike him down. ¹⁶ So Cain went out from the presence of YAHWEH and lived in the land of Wandering (*Nod*), east of Eden.

Genesis 8:15-22 In between: 10 generations. Violence multiplies. Noah, ark, flood.

After the Flood Noah, Family, and Animals Leave the Ark. Noah builds an Altar and Sacrifices.

¹⁵ Then God spoke to Noah and said, ¹⁶ "Come out of the ark, you, your wife, your sons, and their wives with you. ¹⁷ All the animals that are with you of all flesh, including birds and livestock, and every animal that moves on the earth – bring them out with you! And they'll swarm across the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth!"

¹⁸ Noah went out along with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives with him. ¹⁹ Every animal, every moving thing, every bird, and all that moves on the earth went out of the ark in their families. ²⁰ Noah built an altar to YAHWEH. He then took some of all pure livestock and from all pure birds and brought offerings on the altar.

Yahweh Chooses to Sustain the World. The Flood failed to change the Human Inclination to Evil.

²¹ And YAHWEH perceived the soothing aroma and YAHWEH said in his heart, “I’ll never again curse the ground because of the human (*adham*), since the inclination of the human’s heart is evil from youth. I’ll never again strike down everything that lives, as I did. ²² While the earth endures, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.”

Genesis 6:5-6, 11-13 (The evil, corruption, and violence before the flood)

⁵ YAHWEH saw that the human’s evil was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their heart was only evil all day long. ⁶ And YAHWEH regretted that he made the human on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ...

¹¹ Now the earth was corrupted before God, and the earth was filled with violence, ¹² ... for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. ¹³ And God said to Noah, “An end for all flesh is before me, for the earth is filled with violence because of them...”

Matthew 5:21-22 (Jesus’ focus on anger in his Sermon on the Mount)

²¹ “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ ²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever says to his brother, ‘Idiot!’ will be liable to the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, ‘Fool!’ will be liable to the gehenna of fire.”

Romans 7:7-11 (Paul’s description of sin as a living power in human life)

⁷ ... I would not have known coveting/desire if the law had not said, “You shall not covet/desire.” ⁸ But sin, taking a starting point through the commandment, worked in me all kinds of desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. ⁹ I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. ¹⁰ The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. ¹¹ For sin, taking a starting point through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

Sin Attacks – Family & Religion; Ignorance and Anger

Gen 1-11: Parabolic stories. Twists to make us think. How did we get in alienation and exile?.

1: Creation of Cosmos. 2: Creation of Human. 3: Knowing good & evil and exile from life.

Gen 4: Sin emerges: Family/brothers. Religion. Cain & Abel bring offerings. God’s two views!

Most striking is what we don’t know! Why does God favor Abel? Justified? Arbitrary? No explanation given. Humans, like Job, want to know “Why?” We must deal with not knowing.

Cain burns in anger. Unfair to me. God comes but doesn’t explain. “Go forward. Do the good you can do.” Anger at God/Abel is the opening for sin to attack. You must rule over it. But rage empowers sin, breaks relationship of brothers. Murder. Uncaring. The ground exiles Cain, people threaten him, but God is still gracious and protects him even in wandering.

Paul also personifies sin using a good command to kill. Jesus: don’t react to evil & be drawn in.

Floods Don’t Work to Turn Hearts from Evil

How does God deal with sin? 10 long generations ... evil and violence. God regrets creation!

Wipe sin off the earth. Start new with Noah. The Flood is an interim story (like making animals), not the great narrative (Abraham...). Fascinating details about ark, flood, birds.

But what God sees after the flood is that it didn’t work. We learn a Human heart universally inclines to evil. Weakness, meanness show even in Noah. The earth is good but suffers under human rule. The failure points to why God chooses such a long road to deal with sin: Abram, Israel, Moses, David ... Messiah, all the world. God stays with broken people.