

# OpenTheo

## Q&A#48 The Story of Cain and Abel

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Today's question: "I was wondering if you would comment on the Cain and Abel story and possibly develop some of the symbols, foreshadowings, etc. It is a rich passage that I would love to get your take on, especially since it is the first thing we are told after the fall of Adam and Eve."

Peter Leithart highlights some of the illuminating parallels between Genesis 3 and 4 here: <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/leithart/2018/09/in-the-beginning-were-diptychs/>.

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## Transcript

Welcome back. Today's question is, I was wondering if you would comment on the Cain and Abel story and possibly develop some of the symbols, foreshadowings, et cetera. It is a rich passage that I would love to get your take on, especially since it is the first thing we are told after the fall of Adam and Eve.

Thank you and God bless. There are so many things to say on this particular narrative, so I think I'll take the narrative sequentially and read verses and comment on them as I go along. Now, Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.

Cain's name is a play on the word for acquire, and so she has acquired a man from the Lord, and Cain is acquire. He's also associated with the word for smith. He's associated

with, later on, Tubal Cain, who is the father of all smiths and those who are the people of the forge.

And so Cain is not created, described as being created or formed, but acquired. That's interesting. In some sense, he's a replacement for Adam, who has died.

He is an ish for the ishah, a man for Eve. She has acquired a man from the Lord. So just as Adam was her man before, but failed and as a result was sentenced to death, Cain is now, in some sense, a replacement, someone who can do for Eve things that Adam can no longer do.

It's a new act of creation also. The first, something akin to a new act of creation after the advent of death on the scene. So there's been the fall and there's been the exile from the garden, and the creation story has ended, but now we have the entrance of new life into the world.

And so this is a remarkable event, particularly for Eve. Eve is experiencing this entrance of new life, and she speaks of getting or having acquired a man from the Lord or with the Lord, that the Lord has given her the capacity to bear this child, to have a man who will be able to do for her what Adam cannot. And maybe she expects Cain to be the one that's going to fulfil the promise that's given to her in Genesis 3.15. Maybe he's going to be the seed that crushes the serpent's head.

And so she looks to this man, to her seed, to fulfil what Adam can no longer do. Adam's not going to be the one that salvation comes from, rather it's going to be the seed of the woman. And so she looks to this man that she has acquired from the Lord.

And this new act of creation is a remarkable thing, particularly if you imagine Eve going through this experience, it would have been quite a dramatic thing. The first childbirth, the first advent of life following the coming of death on the scene. Cain is associated with the service of the ground, as we see in the next verse.

Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And their names are very interesting.

Abel is associated of course with Hebel. Hebel is the word for vapour, the word that's at the very heart of the book of Ecclesiastes. Vapour of vapour, all is vapour.

Or Hebel, Hebel meaning breath or mist. Or Hebel is something that you can't grasp onto it. You can't marshal it and you can't move it or control it.

You can't gain purchase upon it. You can't see through it. It's something that's transitory and it's something that gives you no grip and it has no purchase upon reality.

And so Hebel is also, it's mist, it's breath, it's vapour. It's something that is associated

with the more ethereal heavenly realm. Whereas Cain is associated with the smith and he's also associated with the ground.

He's someone who works upon the ground and Abel is someone who works with sheep. So Abel is associated with breath and Cain is associated with the ground. And in some respects, this is a bifurcation of Adam's identity.

Adam is a man who was formed of the ground and breathed into him. He has the breath of life breathed into him, vapour, life. And that breath of life is in some sense seen in the character of Abel.

Abel and Cain are these bifurcation of the Adam figure. And so both of them represent some aspect, some facets of what Adam's place within the world is. We see within the calling of Adam, there are a number of different ways in which he's prepared.

He's first prepared in being given rule within the garden, within a realm of vegetation, working relative to the ground. And then he's given rule relative to the animals as he names the animals with his voice and he establishes rule over them. And so one is a sort of raising of the human spirit over the animal world and giving order to it.

And the other is raising up fruit from the earth to husband the earth or to husband animals. And in both of these cases, we see in the one Cain's vocation expressed and the other Abel's vocation expressed. Both of these things are good.

Adam was created in the first place to be a tiller of the ground. And then he was supposed to rule over the animals. And so in Cain and Abel, we see two aspects of Adam's vocation being played out in his sons.

One associated with the breath and the air and the more heavenly realm. And the other associated with the earth. So God created heaven and earth.

God created the man as the offspring of the heaven and earth, the generations of the heaven and earth introduce the creation of Adam because he is born of mother earth and of father heaven. And then he brings those two things together. And in Cain and Abel, we see those two aspects of Adam's identity.

There's a pattern then of man as cultivator of gardens and then man as ruler over animals. Sacrifice works the other way around. Sacrifice involves animals first and then plants.

Animals are closest to us. Animals are ways in which we give ourselves to God. They are representations of the human being being offered, the living animal of the human being being offered to God.

And so it's significant as we come to the issue of sacrifice. Cain didn't bring first fruits.

He brought his just average produce and we'll read in this section.

In the process of time or in the cutting off of days, it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat and the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but he did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry and his countenance fell.

So we see these two offerings. Abel brings the firstlings and the fat of his flock, the very best. Whereas Cain just brings some of his fruit of his toil, which is a different sort of thing.

It's not the first fruits. It's just the average produce. And so there seems to be a difference here.

Now, Cain and Abel are presumably bringing their gifts, their tribute to the gates of Eden, to the cherubim that are guarding. And they act as priests to take apart these animals and bring them or take apart Abel's animal and bring it up into the realm of the garden. And they do not accept, God through them does not accept the offering of Cain.

That's what I presume is taking place here. Now, the significance of the sacrifice within this context is in large part, the fact that to receive the sacrifice is to receive the person who has given it. And to be part of this gift exchange is to be part of that community, to be recognized in oneself and to become part of the cycle of gift.

And God does not recognize Cain's gift. He's locked out of the cycle of gift. And that is a denial of his existence, or it feels that way when we are cut out in that way, when we're rebuffed, when our gifts are rejected.

And so this is a very significant situation for Cain. And the question is, how has he gone to respond to it? Now, why did God respect Cain's, Abel's sacrifice and not Cain's? First of all, we see that Cain did not give the best. He presumably just gave the average produce.

But beyond that, I think that it's because the animals were the means of sacrifice. Within the sacrificial system, we see that there are sacrifices of produce, but those are memorial sacrifices, drawing God's attention back to calling for God to pay attention to the person on the basis of previous sacrifice and previous action. And it's involved, for instance, in the inspection of jealousy.

Now, Cain has not offered a sacrifice of an animal. Cain has not offered himself in that sense. He's offered certain fruit of his toil, but he's not offered himself in the symbol of an animal.

And I think that's significant, that there is this sacrifice of an animal, in part recognizing that the human person is worthy of death, but also recognizing that the human being

has to be taken up into God's presence, has to be accepted by God before the human person's works will be accepted. And so Cain offers his works first and foremost, but in offering a lamb, Abel is not offering that primarily as a fruit of his works, although it is a fruit of his works, but he's offering it as a token of his person. And that is a significant difference, and that is what sacrifice should involve.

It should involve a sacrifice of our persons. Now, it's interesting that Cain is the one who offers first, presumably. I mean, it says, Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord, Abel also brought.

The impression given is that Cain brings his offering first. Cain is the firstborn. Cain is the one who leads in this act of worship, and Abel comes second.

Abel's the secondborn, but as the firstborn, Cain is rejected, whereas Abel is accepted. And that is, again, is significant. Cain, if he was going to offer properly, would need to go through Abel in some sense, to receive an animal from Abel, and maybe he's too proud to do that.

There's a firstborn and a secondborn dynamic here, then, one that we see on a number of other occasions elsewhere in the book of Genesis, when we look at Ishmael and Isaac, or Esau and Jacob, or the two sons of Tamar, or as we look at characters like Joseph and his older brothers. All of these involve some sort of firstborn-secondborn dynamic, and with the firstborn place being taken by the secondborn. Here we see that the sacrifice of the secondborn, of Abel, is accepted, whereas the sacrifice of the firstborn is not.

And in some sense, it's because Abel is the more fitting priest. Abel is the one who is the man of breath. He's the one who keeps the sheep.

He's the one who is related to this animal world, and he's the one that provides the sacrifices that will be brought in to the garden, to the realm of God's presence, to the sanctuary. Whereas Cain is someone who works upon the land. Cain is also a kingly-type figure.

Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden and brought into the land from their eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is associated with kingly rule. And now they're dressed in animal tunics and they're put out of the garden, and they're placed to, in part, rule over the land.

And Cain, as the oldest son, he is the king. He's the one who's supposed to guard over that realm. And this is significant.

He's called to exercise a particular sort of kingly rule within that realm, whereas Abel ends up turning out to be the priestly figure. And Cain should have submitted himself to that. Now, Cain faces a fork in the road.

And Cain was very angry and his countenance fell. So the Lord said to Cain, why are you angry and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door and its desire is for you, but you should rule over it. So Cain is angry with his brother.

He's angry with his brother because God has accepted his brother's sacrifice and not his. Rather than thinking, as he should have done, I can do well, I can improve my behavior and I will be accepted and blessed. I'll be lifted up.

I'll be raised up to a position of proper firstborn rule and I will be the true king if I do right. But he faces this fork in the road. Which way is he going to go? Is he going to do well and be lifted up and we're left to think about what would that lifting up involve? Or is he going to do evil? And if he does evil, or if he does not do well, sin lies at the door.

It's crouching at the door and its desire is for him, but he must rule over it. Now, this is something that should draw attention back to Genesis 3.16. In the previous chapter, the description of the judgment upon the woman and she will bring forth children with pain, et cetera, and then her desire will be for her husband, but he will rule over her. And there seems to be such a close similarity between these two verses that would be, we'd have to have fairly tin ears if we did not recognize that they're playing off each other.

There's a significance and a relationship between the two that we have to deduce. We have to think about why exactly are these so similar. I think there are a number of connections, but one of the most obvious ones is the fact that both the woman and sin have a desire for this party that is for some other party.

The woman desires the man and sin desires Cain. Now, what does that desire mean? The desire, I think, in large measure is that they want to have that person for their own. And the woman naturally wants the heart of her husband.

She wants her husband to be in her corner. She wants her husband's strength to be exercised on her behalf. Likewise, sin desires the heart of Cain and sin would rule over the heart of Cain, but he must master it.

Now, this mastery in the case of the judgment upon the woman has a negative dimension to it. It's seen in terms of the man's domination of the woman, but it's also seen, there's some ambivalence there because it can also be seen in the man's resistance to the woman, that he will rule over her, overrule her in those cases where she's drawing his heart astray. And part of this is the judgment upon Eve, Eve's sin, that Eve's sin was in leading her husband astray, that she has such power over the heart of her man that she was able to lead him into sin.

He just meekly goes along. He doesn't actually resist at that point. And Adam is judged in part because of his listening to the voice of his wife, with the implication being that he

listened to the voice of his wife rather than the voice of the Lord.

Now, Cain is faced with a choice. Is he going to listen to the voice of sin and give in to that sin's desire is for him, or is he going to overrule it? Is he going to master it? Is he going to direct his desires in a proper direction? And rather than feeling angry about Abel, his brother, because he was accepted and Cain was not, is he going to be responsible and turn to God and improve his actions and receive blessing as a result? And of course, Cain takes the wrong path. And so we read, now Cain talked with Abel, his brother, and it came to pass when they were in the field that Cain rose against Abel, his brother, and killed him.

Then the Lord said to Cain, where is Abel, your brother? And he said, I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, what have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. So what we see here is something again that is very similar to things that we've already seen in Genesis chapter three, that Cain is one who is involved in the first murder.

There is an extension of the original sin. There is the sin of the garden, and now there's a sin in the land, in the field. So there's a movement out into the world, this inkblot of sin, as it were, spreading out throughout the creation.

And so what began in the garden is now spreading out to the land and the field, and it will spread out finally until the whole world is full and every thought and intent of man's heart is only evil continually, as we see prior to the flood. But there's a developing, a growth of sin over this period of time. And in the case of Cain, what we see is he has allowed the sin to come in.

Sin is crouching at the door. It's in that liminal spot. And so the serpent entered into the garden from the outside.

The serpent was not one of the creatures, domestic creatures of the garden. He was a creature from the wider world. And so he came into the garden through the entrance.

He wasn't, the entrance wasn't guarded against him, and he was not guarded when he was within the garden. It was one of the basic failures of Adam. And so he was not guarding the garden.

And then when the serpent comes in, he is a beast who comes into the garden and he's the one who leads astray. And Cain must guard the garden of his heart because there is this beast crouching at the door. Now the serpent in Genesis chapter three seems to be standing on his legs.

Someone, a creature that has a similarity to human beings in some respects. He's a creature that can speak. He's a creature that has legs.

It's a creature that can walk upright. It's a creature that, or seemingly, would seem perhaps to walk upright. And it's a creature that has wisdom.

And in all these respects, that creature is a creature that comes fairly near to humanity and a creature that presents a particular set of temptations, drawing human beings towards the bestial, towards something that's similar to them on a superficial level, but very different on another level. And so here we have the serpent that has been brought down, now crouching at the door. And if Cain submits to the serpent, he will be brought down even further than his father.

And so we see these two paralleled events in different respects. Cain is, after the killing of Abel, he's confronted by God. And God says, where is Abel, your brother? Where has Abel, your brother, gone? It's not just, where is this guy? It's your brother Abel should be here.

Where has he gone? That's the sense that the word has, where in this sense, in this context. And he said, I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? And yes, he was his brother's keeper.

He was the one who led him in worship. He was the one who took the first action of worship. He was the one that led the conversation in the garden, or in the field.

So the first sin was in the garden. Now there's a second sin in the field. And he talks with Abel, his brother.

He's the one who's leading in the conversation, leading in the act of worship, leading in the act of conversation. He's the older brother. He's the one who's supposed to protect.

And here we see a very close parallel with Adam. Adam is the firstborn of humanity. He's the one that's first created.

And he's the one that's supposed to guard the garden. He's placed in the garden to guard and to serve it. And he's given the rule concerning the tree.

Eve is not given the rule concerning the tree. She's given that second hand from Adam. Rather, she is under Adam's care.

He is supposed to guard her. He's supposed to protect her from the serpent. And he's supposed to guard the tree and uphold God's law within the garden.

And he fails. And then God confronts him. And God confronts Adam, where are you? Where have you gone? So he said, I heard your voice in the garden.

I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself. Et cetera. And then he blames the woman.



And he, rather than seeing himself as he should have done, as the one who was responsible to guard his wife and protect his wife, he takes a sort of am I my wife's keeper approach and say, in fact, it was this one that you gave to me. It was her fault that this happened. Cain in many senses is playing out his father's sin again in a new realm and extending that sin.

And we see this sin developing and mutating in a way. It becomes something even further developed within this context. And so the result of this is a further curse.

And he said, what have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. So now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you, a fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.

Again, this is significant that Cain was once the king of the larger land. He was the firstborn, the one who was supposed to rule. He was the one also who was the man of the ground, who tilled the ground, who acted upon it.

And he fails within that realm. And so what is going to happen to him? Is he going to be allowed to carry on or is something going to happen to him in terms of judgment? And here we see a very similar judgment to that which befell Adam, but it's an extension of that. And so Adam was judged, cursed is the ground for your sake, in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life, both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you.

And you shall eat the herb of the field, in the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you are taken, for dust you are, and to dust you shall return. And so we see some basic parallels. There's two missing persons.

Where has Adam gone? Where has Abel gone? And both Adam and Cain speak of hiding from the Lord. So Cain talks about, Cain later on in verse 14, I shall be hidden from your face. And Adam hides himself from God's face.

So both cases, they're hiding from the Lord. In both cases, they're banished from a realm. Adam is banished from the garden and Cain is banished further still.

He's banished from the land and cast out into the wider world. And there's an intensification of the curse. The ground will bear a curse to Adam.

And so it mediates a curse. He'll struggle and it was with toil that he'll raise fruit. Whereas Cain will be cursed from the ground.

He will no longer find that it will yield its strength to him. And so not just with toil will he bring forth fruit, but he won't bring forth fruit at all. It just won't serve him in the same way anymore.

And again, he'll be cut off from the land. He will be without a home. And so Adam and Eve will cast out of the garden.

They lost their first home, but they found a home within the land. Whereas Cain is rendered homeless. He eventually creates a city, but he's lost his homeland.

He's no longer in a place where he belongs. And so there isn't just a parallel here. There is a parallel, but there's a progression and an intensification.

The earth has opened its mouth to receive the blood of Cain. And now Cain is banished from the earth. And so the earth is a central player within the story.

The earth nourishes and grounds us. It gives us a place to be. And so Cain has been cast out from the earth.

It's significant to read this in the context of the broader creation narrative. Adam is born of the earth. He's formed of the earth and breathed, has the breath of life breathed into him from heaven.

Cain is, and Adam is born of the Adamah and he's born from his father in heaven. And so his father in heaven and the earth bring forth this man. And we see this within the days of creation four to six, that things are created or five to six particularly, that things are created from things that have already been created.

In the fourth day, the light gathered together to form these different stars and the sun and the moon. And on the fifth and sixth days, the waters teeming to create fish and the birds being created. And then the ground bringing forth animals.

And then mankind is created from the dust of the earth and formed and breathed into them the breath of life. And so there is this creation with mother earth and God acting from heaven. So heaven and earth acting together within this.

And so there's a parallel later on when Cain talks about his judgment. And Cain said to the Lord, my punishment is greater than I can bear. Surely you have driven me out this day from the face of the ground.

I shall be hidden from your face. I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth. And it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me.

And the Lord said to him, therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark on Cain unless anyone finding him should kill him. So what we see here is that there is, first of all, a hiding of the, he's hidden from the face or driven out from the face of the ground.

And then he's driven out from the face of God or hidden from God's face. So there are two faces here. There's the face of mother earth that he was once working upon to bring

forth its fruit.

She is now going to hide her face from him. There was something of a turning away of the face of the mother earth to Adam, but not a complete hiding and casting away from. Whereas here we see that further progression of that curse.

Likewise, God's face is going to be hidden from him. Just as Adam hid from God's face, so Cain will be hidden from God's face. God's presence will no, he will no longer be seen in God's presence, which is a fearful thing.

And so there's an intensification of these judgments. It's also Cain entering in part into the judgment on the serpent. Because you have done this, you are cursed from all cattle and more than any beast of the field.

On your belly you shall go and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. He's cut off from the other animals. He's banished from the other animals.

And then the same way Cain is like the serpent, he's allowed the beast crouching at the door to come in. And so he shares that beast's fate, the serpent's fate. The serpent is cut off from other creatures and Cain is cut off from other human beings.

And he becomes a wanderer, someone who's homeless. Now he eventually forms a city, but he is homeless. He is cut off.

And this is a significant action that God takes here. There's again a similar pattern that we see in Genesis 3, that there is God searching for the, there's a sin that takes place with a couple. And then God searches for the one who's missing.

There's a missing person. Where is Adam? Where is Abel? And then there's the questioning. Have you done this particular thing? And then there's the judgment, the curse that comes from that.

And then there's some sort of action of mitigation. So God gives graciously clothing for Adam and Eve. And here God gives a mark for Cain, something that will set him apart so that his life will not be taken.

Now, who is Cain afraid of? It could be other human beings, but it could just be the animals, that the animals will take the life of Cain. As he's banished from God's presence, he's just a lone man, or he's just a guy with his family out in the wider world, the animals might just take his life. He's no longer seen as a proper ruler.

He's no longer truly a king in God's land. Rather, he's banished. And as a result, he's associated with the beasts and his life could be taken by them.

He founds a city, having left his homeland. Death is at the foundation of the city. And there's a sort of city of man theme here.

And we see this in the story of his offspring as they develop. Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nad, or a land of wandering on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife and she conceived and brought forth Enoch.

And he built or was building a city and called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch. To Enoch was born Irad, and to Irad, Mehugiel. And Mehugiel begot Mehushiel, and Mehushiel begot Lamech.

Then Lamech took for himself two wives. The name of one was Ada, and the other name of the second was Zillah. And Ada begot Jubal, and he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock.

And his brother's name was Jubal, and he was the father of those who play the harp and flute. And as for Zillah, she also begot Jubal-Cain. An instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron.

And the sister of Jubal-Cain was Nema. Then Lamech said to his wives, Ada and Zillah, hear my voice. Her wives of Lamech, listen to my speech, for I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me.

If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech 77-fold. And so we see this development out of the story of Cain, that Cain builds a city. There's an initial development of culture, and we see this city of man theme unfolding, that there has been a founding.

The death of Abel is in some sense a founding event of a new civilizational order, a Canaanite civilization. And there is a pattern that develops within the story that comes to a head within the story of Lamech. As we see this story, there are a number of pairs.

There's the pair of Cain and Abel, and then there's the pair of these various Lamech, his two wives, and then his two sets of two, the two sets of two children that belonged to them, which is interesting. Those children are significant. Each one of those sons has a name that's similar, that plays on a similar theme, Yaval or some sort of stream out from, flowing out from Lamech.

And it's a coming to fruition of the true line of Cain, or the line of Adam through Cain, rather. And so in these figures, we see almost a return to the pattern of the two brothers, but again, a bifurcation of that, or an advancement upon it. So you have Yaval, who's the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock.

And that's familiar. He's someone who's a wandering herdsman, and he's someone associated with livestock, and cattle, and with sheep. And he's very similar.

His name is similar, and his profession is similar to that of Abel. And associated with him, his brother, is the one who plays the harp and the flute, Jubal, and associated with the

ram's horn, for instance, which comes from that name. And then Zillah, the other wife, bears Tubal Cain, who has Cain's name as part of his name.

Tubal Cain is one who works with the forge. He's instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron. And so if Cain's name meant smith, here's Tubal Cain, who fulfills Cain's destiny.

So here we see an Abel-like brother, or pairing with Yaval and Jubal, the musician and the herdsman. And then we see Tubal Cain and his sister, Nehema, whose name suggests that she is a sweet singer, which again might be associated with her mother's name, associated with pretty voice. And so there's a flowing out of the pattern of Cain and Abel.

And so we see in Yaval, they're parallel to Abel, and then in Tubal Cain, they're parallel to Cain. And the one is associated with herds, and the other is associated with metalwork and the ground, and getting the strength out of the ground. And then Lamech is an interesting character.

We have this song or his speech, or the words that he declares to his wife. "Oh, wives of Lamech, listen to my speech, for I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold." This is a peculiar story, and there are various speculations about it.

Something that some people have drawn attention to is the name of Tubal Cain, that Tubal Cain is possibly associated with the figure Vulcan. Tubal Cain, Vulcan, Vulcan. You take off the Tu, and that's what you're left with, that there is this character who's associated with the wounding of his father, and then being judged on the basis of that, that the son, Tubal Cain, is the one that's killed for wounding, and that this is associated with that particular myth.

And here we see the true roots of it. That's something James Jordan suggests. Others have, within Midrashic accounts, there is a story of Tubal Cain and his father going out hunting and killing inadvertently this creature that turns out to be a man, and not just any old man, but Cain.

And having killed Cain, and recognizing that it is his ancestor, Lamech is distraught or shocked, and he ends up killing his son, Tubal Cain, in his shock. And so there is a twofold killing, the killing the lad, or killing a man for wounding me, and a young man for hurting me. There's two men involved here.

There's the killing of Cain, and then there's the killing of Tubal Cain. And this also suggests, is associated with a reading of the judgment of the vengeance upon Cain. I mean, what would it mean to be avenged sevenfold for killing Cain? The suggestion that some have made is that Cain will be avenged in the seventh generation.

And so Tubal Cain is the seventh generation, Lamech, Tubal Cain, they come in the seventh generation, and that's the judgment upon Cain that occurs. At that point, Cain is cut off for his sin. And so that is one reading, and it's definitely speculative, but it draws together some of the themes that are taking place here.

And there's more taking place here that we can pick out as we read what happens next. There is the story of Seth. Seth is begotten, and Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, for God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.

And as for Seth, to him was also a son was born, and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the Lord. And then you read later on, and Adam lived 130 years and begot a son in his own likeness after his own image and named him Seth.

After he begot Seth, the days of Adam were 800 years, and he begot sons and daughters. So all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died, and it goes on listing Enosh, and then after Enosh, Cainan, and then Mahalalil, and then Jared, after Jared, Enoch, Enoch, Methuselah, and then Methuselah, Lamech, and Lamech begets Noah. And one thing that's really interesting to notice are the parallels between these two.

So you have the wicked line of Cain, or the line of Cain ending up destroying itself at the end of days, that there is that point where the sin of Cain comes back upon his head, and it plays out within his particular line, the line of Cain. And then you have the line of Seth, and Seth begets Enosh. Enosh is associated with, it's the word for man, that Enosh is a man who replaces Adam, who's associated with the human.

And then after Enosh, you have Cainan, which again, some have suggested is associated with Cain. So here we have a sort of mirror image, or not quite a mirror image, but something that's paralleled with the line of Cain, but which is different from it, that responds to it, that corresponds to it, but in a way that is juxtaposed. And there are differences, but also similarities.

And so you see other characters that are very similar within Jared or Erad, perhaps, or you have Methuselah and Methuselah. You have Enoch in both ones. And then both of them come to a climax in the character of Lamech.

Both genealogies arrive at that point. And at what age does Lamech die? Lamech dies at 777 years. That does not seem to be accidental.

The former Lamech was told, if Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech 77-fold. And Lamech dies at 777 years. It would seem there's something going on here.

We're supposed to see a parallel between the two. And then the judgment, the 770, is associated with the judgment of the flood. It's a cutting off of Lamech's generation, the

cutting off of Cain's descendants once their sin has arrived at its full height in the seventh generation.

And if you see Tubal Cain and other figures associate Jubal and Jabal, these figures that build this quite advanced civilization that is skilled in metallurgy and that has these musical culture and all these other sorts of things, that's cut off at this point. And we have another civilization that's developing alongside it, one that's far more modest and far less developed, but is a righteous one. And what happens at the end is Lamech dies at 777 years, and Noah is the one that follows.

So Noah is the one that corresponds in many ways to the characters of Tubal Cain, to Jabal and Jubal and to Nema. And some have suggested that Nema was the wife of Noah or maybe one of his sons instead. So these are significant genealogies that need to be read alongside each other.

And the numbers are very significant. There's something going on here. I'm really not sure what to make of it.

A lot of these things that I've mentioned have been fairly speculative, but these stories are significant and we should be looking for meaning. We should be trying to discern what it's all about. Elsewhere in scripture, we see these stories played upon in various ways.

And I'll just give one example to show how this story can be played upon elsewhere in scripture. So there's the wise woman of Tekoa, who is Joab, the son of Zeorah, this is 2 Samuel 14, perceived that the king's heart was concerned about Absalom. And Joab sent Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman and said to her, please pretend to be a mourner and put on mourning apparel.

Do not anoint yourself with oil, but act like a woman who has been mourning a long time for the dead. Go to the king and speak to him in this manner. So Joab put the words in her mouth.

And when the woman of Tekoa spoke to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and prostrated herself and said, help, oh king. Then the king said to her, what troubles you? And she answered, indeed, I'm a widow. My husband is dead.

Now your maidservant had two sons and the two fought with each other in the field. And there was no one to part them, but the one struck the other and killed him. And now the whole family has risen up against your maidservant.

And they said, deliver him who struck his brother that we may execute him for the life of his brother whom he killed. And we will destroy the heir also. So they would extinguish my ember that is left and leave to my husband, neither name nor remnant on the earth.

Then the king said to the woman, go to your house and I will give orders concerning you. And the woman of Tekoa said to the king, my Lord, oh king, let the iniquity be on me and on my father's house and the king and his throne be guiltless. So the king said, whoever says anything to you, bring him to me and he shall not touch you anymore.

Then she said, please let the king remember the Lord your God and do not permit the avenger of blood to destroy anymore, lest they destroy my son. And he said, as the Lord lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground. Then the woman said, please let your maidservant speak another word to my Lord the king.

And he said, say on. And the woman said, why then have you schemed such a thing against the people of God? For the king speaks this thing as one who is guilty in that the king does not bring his banished one home again but we will surely die and become like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. Yet God does not take away a life, but he devises means so that his banished ones are not expelled from him.

And so she's trying to get Absalom to be returned to the land and she's using in many senses, the story of Cain and Abel in a veiled form. Now I think David was expected to recognize the story of Cain and Abel within this account. He was supposed to recognize the parallels and recognizing those parallels, consider what was to be done.

You have these two brothers, the older, or one of them has killed the other and the other and that son is in the position of the avenger of blood, but he's also the murderer. And so there's a strange position here. Also here you have a situation where a whole line might be cut off because of the unfaithful, the sin of one member.

And David intervenes in a way that's similar to God putting a mark upon Cain so that he will not be killed by the avenger of blood. And so this story is one that has shadows elsewhere that cast its shadow elsewhere within the story of scripture. Another example might be the story of the confrontation of Elijah with Ahab in Nabal's vineyard.

Again, Nabal and the field and having been killed by the older brother, the king, who should be guarding him. And there are a number of other examples, but I'm going to have to end there. I've gone quite long enough and I hope that some of this was helpful.

A lot of it is speculative. We just do not know. There are a lot of things that are curious and uncertain within this passage, but there is much to reflect upon.

And I hope that this has given you some grist for the mill. If you have any further questions, please leave them on my Curious Cat account. If you'd like to support this and other videos, please do so using my Patreon account and the links for both of those will be below.

Lord willing, I'll be back again tomorrow. Thank you very much for your time. And I hope to have further questions in the next few days and Lord willing also book review.



Thank you.