

Abel

Part 1

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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:00] And not so soon, chapter 4. Chapter 4 of Genesis. And we begin at verse 1, really just to get the connection. And Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived, and Bear came, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. And she again bare his brother Abel, and Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tither of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. 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. But unto Cain, and to his offering he had not respect, and Cain was very rough, and his countenance [00:01:02] fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, why are you rough, and why is your countenance fallen? If you do well, shall you not be accepted, and if you do not well, sin lies at the door. Unto thee shall be his desire, and you shall rule over him. 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. And could we turn to Matthew chapter 23, Matthew chapter 23, and verse 34, 23 verse 34, the Lord Jesus speaking, wherefore behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, [00:02:04] and scribes, and some of them ye shall kill, and crucify, and some of them ye shall scourge, in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city. That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom he slew, between the temple and the altar. Verily, verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them who are sent unto thee, how often will I have gathered thy children together, even a hen gathers her chickens under her wing, and thou wouldst not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. And into Hebrews chapter 12, Hebrews chapter 11, sorry, Hebrews 11, Hebrews 11 and verse 4, Hebrews 11 and verse 4. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent [00:03:12] sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts, and by it he being dead, yet speaks. And chapter 12, chapter 12 verse 18, for ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darks, and tempest. Verse 22, but ye are come unto Mount Zion, and so on it goes. Verse 24, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. And finally in John's first epistle, chapter 3. John chapter 3. John chapter 3 [00:04:19] verse 11, for this is the message that ye have from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain, who was of the wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love one another. He that loves not his brother abides in death. Thus far the word of God. I think you see that, you know, what the Lord has laid on my heart, just a few [00:05:02] remarks on the missing man between Adam and Enoch, the missing man. But I think, you know, there is a message from these New Testament scriptures concerning Abel for us today. There are three in which he's mentioned, his

name is mentioned, and a fourth very important one in which his name is not explicitly mentioned, but references made to him. And Abel, the first parents, Adam and Eve, first son born, Cain, and then second, she further bore his brother, Abel, meaning a breath, a breath. God had breathed into man the breath of life. And here is a breath, here. The Hebrew language, of course, has a way of playing around with things, often [00:06:01] doesn't have vowels in it and things like that. So this name is very close to the Hebrew word for breath. And she, she got this man, Abel. And it starts with saying that Abel was a shepherd. Cain was a husband man, a man that looked after the things of the earth. Now, they came with their offerings, a story we're very familiar with, Cain, the fruit of the ground. He, he wasn't aware, he probably had been told by his father, that the ground was cursed. Back in chapter three, the ground had been cursed. And God couldn't accept of that. There had to be the only way to God, approach God was on the ground of a sacrifice Abel brought for the firstlings of his flock. And he knew that it had to be a firstling that had to come. Not, no, leave leftovers for God, firstling, firstling had to be given to God. And he had that insight given to him by [00:07:09] God. And it says of his flock and the fact, and he realized the importance of the fact in the offering. We see that, don't we, the fact speaking of the energy and the devotion. And it plays a great part in the burnt offering in Leviticus one, the burning of the fat. And it is interesting to notice that in the sin offering, the fat is offered as a sweet smelling savor to God in the midst of the sin offering, which is normally a non-sweet smelling savor offering. Even there, there was that preciousness, that which accrued to God for his own satisfaction, one heart, how can I think of a better word, that which went up in praise to God. God appreciated even in that sin offering, the work of the sin, the work of the sin offering, that which went up to God, the fat. And so Abel had that given to him by God.

[00:08:12] A firstling was to be something from the flock, was to be a firstling and the fat was to be there. And the Lord looked upon Abel and on his offering. God was favorably disposed to order it, could see a movement towards him on the right lines. And that's a very blessed thing in this man Abel. And of course, Cain was angry about it all. We know the history. I don't want to really so much go into all the details of it, but to highlight the contrast between Cain, the man of the earth, as we see, and Abel, the man of God at that time. And so sad that Cain then killed his brother, the very first man that was born. Adam wasn't born and Eve wasn't born. Wonderfully created, formed, built. Actually she was built, wasn't she? Adam was created, Eve was built. [00:09:11] But Cain was the first man actually born and a murderer. Sad condition, sad story, sad title to put upon this world. Very first man born, a murderer, through evil.

And then the attitude of Cain, am I my brother's keeper? Am I my brother's keeper? And we see it on every hand around today, don't we? Well, it doesn't matter, I'll just do what I please. You see, I'm not concerned about the others and what goes on with other people and what I do. Or I can just about do anything I like as long as I don't harm other people. No consideration, care and concern for others. And that, of course, marks the world today, as we only too sadly know, am I my brother's keeper? [00:10:01] And then that significant verse 10, the voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground, seeking for an answer, for retribution, an answer. And that has gone down. God has always called for an answer for the righteous, culminating supremely in the death of his beloved son upon Calvary's cross. And the nation of Israel then said, his blood be upon us and on our children. Pilate, representative of the Gentile nation, sought to wash his hands of it. But he is fully implicated in it. And we'll see an answer to that presently in New Testament.

And verse 11, and now be cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. So we come now, as a result of that, we can now look at these scriptures in the New Testament in the light of the actual facts that are given us there, with the

pointers in these various verses. [00:11:11] And I thought I'd begin, not in the sequence that they occur, but beginning with chapter 11. That chapter of the men of faith, you see, faith is the absolute substantiating of things hoped for, the absolute assurance, the evidence of things not seen.

And so we begin with these men, that men of faith, various men of faith.

Beginning, first of all, in verse 4, with Abel, my faith, he had that faith, he relied upon God, he had the insight to go on in that way, a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. The epistle to the Hebrews brings out so often that which is more excellent, and here it's a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. [00:12:09] And notice the sacrifice before us, of course, in Romans chapter 12, the need for a sacrifice. There was a dear brother of ours, the Lord, who used to be up here regularly. He settled us here in 1953, when I first came here for a meeting of this character, and he used to always stress to us, and I remember when he ministered on that verse, tears were in his eyes, and he said that Christianity is a sacrificial system. Sacrificial system, now we don't like the word system, but it's a sacrificial matter, Christianity. And so he obtained a more excellent sacrifice, it was a firstling, it wasn't a throwaway, it was something that was a firstling, and there's that matter, there's the excellent sacrifice, and this he obtained, he obtained as a result of that, witness that he was righteous, witness that he was righteous. [00:13:12] This showed that he was on the right lines, he was one that would be right for God. You know that Noah was told that he is the heir of the righteousness, which is by faith, in the case of Noah, and here Abel is obtaining witness that he was righteous, he was on the right lines, he was one of those men that God had in the Old Testament, looking on to the work of Calvary's cross. Almost precursors of it in a way, looking on to it, and there he was, and here we have God's testimony of his gifts, wonderful thing to have God's testimony of your gifts, God testifying of his gifts.

And here it says, but he being dead yet speaks these things of all dear saints, speaking to us today, aren't they, he being dead yet speaks these things are coming out to us, and they speak to us, and it's a very blessed thing as the Margin says to speak about them, what do we speak about, hmm? [00:14:19] Here is something to speak about, a man of God, a man of faith, offering a sacrifice on that right line, bringing before us Christ in all the scriptures, Christ in all the scriptures, wonderful thing, isn't it, to begin with Christ in all the scriptures. These are the things indeed that we should truly be speaking about. So we see this blessed man, this man Abel.

So then we come back to Matthew 23, that chapter where the Lord speaks to the scribes and Pharisees, and he arranges them in many ways, he gives a woe to them, the seven woes that are there.

[00:15:07] All the various woes, write down, and he then finishes up with a terrible language about them, serpents, we had how Satan is a serpent, and here the Lord Jesus calls them serpents, a generation of vipers, another type of serpent, a snake, how can you escape the damnation of hell?

And then he says, Behold I say unto you prophets and wise men and scribes, and some of them you shall kill and crucify and some of them you shall scourge in your synagogues and persecute them from city to city. Now I know all the pundits will tell us this has a dispensational bearing, and very good and blessed, there's no doubt about it, I mean those who are attacking dispensational teaching today, don't listen to them, it's of the devil. [00:16:02] And we must uphold the truth of scripture, not because a certain man taught it, it's what the bible teaches us, dispensational truth. But I think there also is a voice to see what those followers of the Lord Jesus would do. And today of course we may not be great prophets, we may not be great wise men or scribes, but we have the message of God to

bring to this sad, needy world, and let us not shrink from what might come upon us. We probably won't be given to be killed and crucified and things like that, but nonetheless, we will be, as we see later on, we will be not given a very pleasant and happy life, as we know that, many dear saints here older than me, 20 or more years older than me, and they know that these things are true, that a christian does not have his life as a bed of rose petals, no. And it's not a simple, easy pathway through this life, on a bed of rose petals. [00:17:08] But then, you see that nation, these people would reject the testimony of God, and the Lord Jesus says in verse 35, that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel, he calls him a righteous person. Righteous Abel, you see it said in Hebrews 11 didn't it, that God gave witness and testimony that he was righteous, righteous, now we always, you know, all the people speak about the six just men's scriptures, six just men's scriptures, and I've always been puzzled about that, why there isn't seven, but I've found the seven here, in Abel, because the same Greek word is used for saying that Abel is righteous as it is used for saying that God is righteous. So they, well, five of the just men, because one of them is in the Old Testament, so he's another, he's the seventh just man, Abel, the blood of just or righteous Abel, and right down unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barakas, now I know you'll be saying, well Zacharias wasn't the last of the prophets, there was Isaiah, we hear that he was son of Sander, and there's all sorts of things that went on with the other prophets, they persecuted Amos, and many others, but I think it's because I believe in an early, [00:18:27] in compilation of the Hebrew scriptures, 2 Chronicles was the very last book in their Bible, so that in the scope of their Bible, Zacharias was the last one, although not in point of time, and that's why the Lord Jesus takes them from righteous Abel to Zacharias, the son of Barakas, and that, of course, was a real tragedy in the case of Zacharias, wasn't he? His father had, well his mother had taken the little boy Josiah, a year old, they're 18 months old, away from murderous grandmother Athaniah, she was even prepared to kill her grandchildren, and yet Joshua took this little boy and into the temple he was, and Zacharias' father had brought this boy up till he was about seven or so or eight, and brought him out as the king, and hear how sad it was. [00:19:24] That wonderful kindness was set aside, and Joshua was responsible for the killing of Zacharias, terrible tragedy indeed, whom he slew, you see it wasn't them that had actually done it, was it?

It was Joshua, it was that same generation, that same way, that same attitude came upon them, they were responsible right down, that same guilt lay upon them, and the same way they were going to put away somebody who was even more righteous and just than all these prophets. [00:20:04] They say, the blood of righteous Abel, the righteous blood shed upon this earth, and the Lord Jesus says all these things shall come upon this generation, think of that heartfelt cry of the Lord Jesus, oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem. Seven individuals are called twice, Abram, Abram, so on, right down to Saul, Saul, and of course in that seven we have one lady, only one woman, Martha, Martha, she's often set aside, and we don't think much of her, but she's in a good company, the only sister in the Bible that's referred to twice, Martha, so she's in very good company. And here's a group, a town, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them who are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathers under her wings, oh think of that, think of that. [00:21:07] We don't see very much of it nowadays, do we, with all these battery head fangs, but if you do get into the countryside, and you see the hens running freely, at the time the chicks have just been hatched, and as soon as there's a noise, they are there and she's gathering together, really true, the Lord Jesus had a real eye for nature, and he gave us many instances from it, and so we see it there. He says they kill the prophets, and we might say, well Abel wasn't a prophet, but it says he being dead yet speaks, he did show a prophetic message, we think of the prophets as those who have got glorious fore-events to tell, that prophets are first and foremost forth-tellers, not fore-tellers, prophets are forth-tellers, aren't they, and that's, it so happens that a great deal of men in the Old

Testament, they would tell us things, they would say things that were [00:22:03] coming, but the whole point of telling what things were coming was to warn them, to warn the people at the time, to awaken them to the reality of God they're living, and that's what a prophet does today, doesn't he, he awakens us, he gives the mind of God for the minute, he speaks to us, and awakens us in the power of the spirit, to things which should be our concern for the moment, as we move on the pathway of God's pleasure. Coming back into Hebrews again, of course we aren't, well I'm not so sure, but I don't think any of us were Hebrews, first and foremost, and so perhaps we may not have had that being brought up in that sense of the mount that might be touched, but I'm sure we've read the word of God so often, and we have the sense of Sinai and all that was there, this chapter coming, this bit coming in the chapter of chastening, nothing about the father in Hebrews 12 apart from the father's chastening hand, and culminating in the case of Esau, [00:23:19] and the apostle then begins in verse 18, as a result of that, what has been going on, he says, for ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, he says verse 22, these wonderful seven things, but ye are come unto mount Zion, what a wonderful change, what a triumph there is, but ye are come unto mount Zion, and he goes down all these things, notice the central one of the seven, is God the judge of all, and then unto Jesus, oh the blessed Lord Jesus, we've been noticing in Hebrews that we don't have Lord Jesus very much, or Christ Jesus, we just simply have Jesus, and all the power and the preciousness that's involved in that wonderful name, and it's at the name of Jesus, that every knee shall bow, the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, it might be a swear word on the lips of men today, [00:24:14] but may the Lord give us grace to remind them when we hear it, that they're going to give an account for that in the coming day, very soon, perhaps tonight, as we tell them, name of Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, the mediator, oh the mediator, the one who stood in between, the mediator between God and men of a new covenant, yes a new covenant, and we know of course that there was nothing we could do on our side at all, man was impossible, God had to reach out in the person of Christ and bridge the mighty gulf, oh the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary, you know in the figurative way of a covenant, the animal was cut in two pieces and was put there, and the parties to the covenant walked in between, and dear friend the Lord Jesus Christ has bridged the gulf at Calvary, oh the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary, wonderful covenanting work of the Lord Jesus Christ upon Calvary's cross, [00:25:10] dear saint of God, they will realize what he's done, many of the blessed things that have gone on there, and so the Lord Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant, and we've come to the blood of sprinkling, the blood of sprinkling, when they hear they're speaking of his being before them what went on in Exodus chapter 19 wasn't it, and the blood was sprinkled on it, I sprinkled there and then, all this that the Lord has said will we do, and here there's a new precious blood of Christ that's sprinkling on this new covenant figuratively, and it speaks, and think of the wonders, the blessings, the greatness of what the Lord had given of Abel, we'd spoken of the blood of Abel and yet this blood of Christ sprinkled in the new covenant, [00:26:02] bringing into this new relationship, speaks better things than that of Abel, what it must have meant for these dear Hebrew saints and what it does mean for us, that we've come to the Lord Jesus, to his precious blood, and we've brought into this wonderful new relationship, and we're linked up with the Lord Jesus Christ on the other side of death, on the other side of death, no link or relationship within this side of death, but we're linked up within the other side of death, beyond our death forever we can sing to the Father, we share thy son's blessed place, we're his, in joy he brings us to share his part and place, to know thy love and favour, the shining of his face, and that's the blessings that we are brought into dear saint of blood, we're under the relationship, brought to rest within the circle where love's treasures are displayed, we're under that blessed sphere, that blessed place, so that we can rise to the Father and give thanks to the precious God and Father, and then join the singing that he leads loud to God, and then to sing to the Father of the one that fills and satisfies his heart, his only well beloved son, oh the darling of his bloom, Joseph said, tell my Father of all my glory, dear saints of God, is that our prime consideration,

to tell the Father of all the Lord Jesus Christ is to us, tell my Father of all my glory. [00:27:25] So we're being brought to the Lord Jesus Christ, think of the greatness of the blood of Abel, and here's something that's speaking better things than that of Abel. This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, the message that ye heard from the beginning, this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, the Lord Jesus Christ had given this message in John 13, to love one another, to love one another, this wonderful message, [00:28:18] oh the bonds, the bands that are there, doesn't mean wishy-washy, soppy, love, no, but real links on to one another, as the beloved apostle could say there, we know, we know, the fourth know I think really, we know that we have passed from death to life, we've come, we've got eternal life, we've passed out of the environment of death, into the environment of life, enjoy that blessed place, and how do we know that? Because we love the brethren, isn't it? Wonderful to love the brethren, to meet dear saints of God wherever they're found, wherever they are, to love them, precious, and so the apostle says, you see there, that we should love one another, [00:29:11] he says, not as Cain, goes right back to the very beginning, who was of the wicked one, shows his source from Satan himself and slew his brother, on account of what, slew him because his words were wicked, and those of his brother, here's this word, righteous comes in again, now, verse 13 is a very significant verse, do not wonder, brethren, do not wonder, brethren, the word hates you, now, it's very significant, you know, we often like to count up the many times certain words are found in certain books, but you won't have much difficulty counting, brethren, not in the authorised version, but in Mr. Darby's translation, which I would suggest is just slightly more correct on this, and you won't have much difficulty counting only once, only once, in this first epistle, and it's very significant, isn't it? [00:30:04] This is the only time we love John, who lay on Jesus' bosom, knew the love of Christ first hand, only once does he use the word, brethren, brethren, to challenge our hearts, and we know what it means to be brethren, I challenge my own heart as well as yours, what is the reality of brethren, and John in this wonderful epistle, just once, wanting focus on brethren, do not wonder, brethren, he turns from the terrible example of Cain, and he says, brethren, outside there is a world that hates you, don't wonder about it, don't be surprised about it, you're here, as the answer to Abel, you're following the Lord Jesus Christ, you've got his message for this world, a needy world, what the world needs is Jesus, just a glimpse of him, as you go around here and there and everywhere, you find on every hand the need that this world has, [00:31:03] and the world does hate us, and we've got to bear that, and we realise it, we don't necessarily put ourselves into positions to make them hate us, but we bring the message of Jesus, take the world, take the Lord Jesus with us wherever we go, and first and foremost, of course, it will be shown by the love for the brethren, the sarcastic words that Shakespeare put in the mouth of Charlotte Indy, he said, how these Christians love one another, should search us, should search us, there's a real link, the brethren, that real love for one another, and that will really be a testimony, a testimony to this world around, the love that there is among the saints of God, and we need to do it, and show this love forth in every way, we've passed from death to life because we love the brethren, [00:32:01] that knows it, we talk about eternal life and all that sort of thing, well this is one of the features of it, nine features are given in this epistle about eternal life, and here's one of them, that we are passed from death to life because we love the brethren, dear saints of God, I need this exhortation as much as anyone else, we need this love for the brethren in these days, so this would be another, a fourth thought in connection with Abel, not mentioned here by name, but we know that it flows out from his case, he's Cain's brother, and the significance of this only mention here in John's epistle of the word brethren, and the absolute way that we love the brethren, we pass from death to life because we love the brethren, dear saints of God, may we go in for these things more and more in these days, for our awake, saved, our blessed Lord's face, for his name's sake. Blessed are thee, my beloved God, in whom thou dost perfection see, thy holy blessed one, two hundred.

[00:33:28] In whom thou dost perfection see, thy holy blessed one, When he impregnates the pilgrim's heart, in love to do thy will, [00:34:02] His truth is all truth to love, my pleasure to fulfill.

Only be God and be with me, I tell unto thy face, The Father of children, the King of kings, the King in all his ways.

But in his life, so in his death, he was devoted still, [00:35:14] For us in love with thy name's breath, O give them to thy will.

He glorified thee on the earth, Thy work by it was done, And thou didst do it for his worth, His glory by it's done.

[00:36:10] Thou crowned and seated on thy throne, He is thy Lord and rest, And we do offer praise, my foes, In hymn of holiness.

His branches held in sound to thee, to all immortal truth, [00:37:04] we ev'ry beauty give thee, and thy home, Lord, with you.