

**Brotherly Love**

- INJXp, sis/bro/Xp – listen to this: **“Live in harmony w/oa; be sympathetic, love as bros” (1 Pt 3:8, '84). “Keep on loving eo as bros” (Heb 13:1, '84). “Have sincere love for your bros, love oa deeply, fr the hrt” (1 Pt 1:22, '84).** And my fav: **“Be devoted to oa in BL” (Rom 12:10, '84).** All these psgs speak re BL. But obvs prob w/BL: bros/sis don't always act like love oa! Very often sibs do not get along! And if broaden this: very often fam mems don't get along – spouses, sibs, prnts/chlrn, in-laws. W/in fams: in-fighting, bad-mouthing, grudge holding, forgivns withholding, passive aggrsv beh/lang, distrust, disagreements. Fam mems hurt oa, very deeply. God designed fam unit be closest human bond on earth. But closer you are to smone, more deeply they hurt you, more pain cause you. They say blood thicker water. And there may be fams out there that get along perfly; but I've never met a fam like that. And so, when Bible emphszs BL, the bitter irony: bros/sis are bad at loving oa. And nowhere is that more evident than in tragic acct of C&A.
- You heard story, know story, learned it in school/SS. In Gen 3, after fall/sin, A&E driven fr GE. Now in ch 4, Eve gives birth to 1<sup>st</sup> baby born on earth. **“W/help/Lord I have brght forth a man.”** 1) Shows Eve's faith/Lord; she trusts Sav God. 2) No one's ever given birth before. Eve: no idea what like give birth; Adam's obvsly clueless; no help fr him! And Eve was warned: great pain in childbirth. But Lord gets her thru it; and: **“w/help...”** That's what name Cain means. Later, Eve gives birth to Abel. C&A: not twins; Jacob & Esau were the twins. But here we have first bros, in the first nuclear fam.
- And things certly get nuclear. It strikes me: acct of C&A one of clearest illstrtns of original sin. Bible teaches we inherit fr our parents a sinful nature; they pass it on to us, so that we're not born good or even neutral; born evil; that's called original sin. A&E were made in sinless image/God, but now their son commits murder! How could this be? Well, they lost that image/God and passed their sinful nature onto C/A/all other children; we're told later: **“[Adam] had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth” (Gen 5:3).** Original sin means: from here on out, all fams, incl ours, are doomed to have conflict/strife, bec all fam mems have same sinful nature as AECAS.
- C: farmer; A: herdsman. And we don't have to assume young men. Know Cain married; Abel prob too; maybe both frs, possbly even granfrs. Fast forward to after murder: Cain's worried ppl hate/kill him. Who'd do that? Prob Abel's side/fam. **“There's U. Cain, guy who killed dad, grandpa.”** So here: these adult men whose mom/dad have taught them re GE, fall/sin, God's prom/Sav, and re how give thank offrngs to Lord. So, **“In course/time Cain brght some/fruits/soil as offrng to Lord. But Abel brght fat portions fr some/firstborn/flock.”** There's nothing inhrntly better/worse re either offrng. The fundmntl diff btwn their offrngs is not what bring but why bring them. IOW, when comes to offrngs, what matters: what's in hrt. Abel clearly is a bel; loves/trusts/thanks Lord w/his offrngs. Cain is unbel – disregards Lord as his Sav God. So: **“Lord looked w/favor on Abel & his offrng”** (bec Abel had saving faith); **“but on Cain & his offrng he did not look w/favor”** (bec of Cain's unbelief).
- Now, many lessons for us learn here! 1) Do not give \$ to ch, serve on ch cmnts, volntr time in school, put talents to use in cong, unless you're doing it out thnkflnss/Lord, bec if hrt is not in right place, if you're making offrng begrudgingly, or bec forced to, or bec you want show off, look good in front of others, then Lord will not look w/favor on you & your offrng, just like he didn't on Cain & his. Heb 11: **“By faith Abel brght God a better offrng than Cain did. By faith he was commedd as righteous, when God spoke well of his offrngs” (4).** Abel teaches us how to live & give in thankful faith.
- 2) Cain teaches us what unbelief looks like. He simply dismissd/disregardd Lord. It's not like Cain came right out, said: **“I'm atheist; I reject God.”** Cain dialogues w/Lord; they have convrstn! And yet what makes Cain an unbel: he dismissd/disregardd Lord. Just didn't care! There were a million other things more imp to him than his Maker/Sav. Today, chs, like St. Jn's, are filled w/ppl who'd never come right out, say **“I'm atheist; reject God,”** but who are dangerously close to dismissing/disregarding their Maker/Sav – by: hardly ever coming ch; hardly ever coming Com; hardly ever giving offrngs for right reasons; making a million other things more imp to them than Lord & Word. What is most imp to you in your life? For Abel, it was Lord. For Cain, it was not. What is it for you?



- 3) This sad story of C&A is a direct/immediate fulfillment of Lord's words to Satan in Gen 3: **"I will put enmity...hers"** (15). Her/Eve's true offspring: bels like Abel. Devil's offspring (not having babies): unbels like Cain. And btwn bels/unbels, the Abels & Cains of this world, there is & always will be enmity, hostility, animosity, division, disunity. 1 Jn 3 (NT): **"This is how we know who chldrn/God are and who chldrn/devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their bro/sis... We should love oa. Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his bro. And why did he murder him? Bec his own actions were evil and his bro's were righteous"** (10-12). In Mt 23, J called him **"righteous Abel."** And Jude 11 says, **"Woe to [those who take] the way of Cain."** So, there's enmity btwn: bels/unbels. But man, there's enmity btwn: bels; ch mems; fam mems; sibs; bros. **"Cain said to his bro Abel, 'Let's go out to the field.' And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his bro Abel and killed him."**
- You'd never do that, would you? You're not a murderer. Or aren't you? You don't need criminal record to be murderer. 1 Jn 3: **"Anyone who hates a bro/sis is a murderer."** Tell me you've never hated anyone; tell me your heart has never been filled w/wrathful rage vs someone, whether they deserved or not. Probly scariest thing re this acct of C&A, teaches us: there is a Cain in evone of us. And just bec you've never offed anyone, bec didn't have chance/guts, doesn't mean you didn't have desire or sinful nature to do it. So do not look at Cain today & say, "What evil!" Instead look in mirror & say that. **"Be devoted to oa in BL."** BL!/? Our BL looks more like Cain's BL more often than we'd like to admit.
- After murder, Lord was still gracious. Patiently asked Cain: **"Where is your bro Abel? What have you done?"** – kinda like how asked Adam: **"Where are you? Who told: naked? Have you eaten fr tree I comdd you not eat fr?"** (Gen 3:9,11); kinda like how J asked: **"Judas, betraying Son/Man w/kiss?"** (Lk 22:48) – qstns to prompt repntnc. Also gave Cain some kind of mark/sign to protect him. All grace! God showed grace to A&E; showed grace to Cain; shows grace to us when we sin. And all Cain does is whine re punshmnt: **"More than I can bear!"** No remorse; no guilt over murder of bro. So Lord says, **"Listen! Your bro's bld cries out to me fr the ground."** Cries out for vengeance, justice! "Lord, where's the justice; avenge me; punish that sinner!" That's what Abel's bld cries out.
- But what does Xp's blood cry out? Xp shed his bld too, as an innocent victim of violent hatred too. He offered up his life as a sacrifice to God, for all our sins of hatred. And what does his blood cry out? Vengeance? Justice? No: forgvns! It cries out: "Forgive that sinner!" The bld of JC cries out forgvns: for you/me, C&A, A&E, for whole world. Bld of J, shed on cross, preached in Word, poured out in Sacrmnt – that bld of J **"purifies us fr all sin"** (1 Jn 1:7). It's the bld: to which all the OT sacrifices pointed ahead; of **"Lamb/God who takes away sin of wrld"** (Jn 1:29); **"of the eternal covenant"** (Heb 13:20) that sets us free fr our sins (Rev 1:5); in which we will wash our sin-stained robes and make them white, when we come out of this great tribulation into glory/hv'n (Rev 7:14). Lenten hymn: *"Abel's blood for vengeance pleaded to the skies, but the blood of Jesus for our pardon cries"* (402:4). It's based on a psg fr Heb 12 re **"the sprinkled blood [of J] that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel"** (24) – better bec it speaks not vengeance but forgiveness & pardon for all of us.
- There's a lot more that could be said re this tragic story of C&A: like how sin crouches at our door, ready to pounce on us; like how yes, we are our bro's keeper; like how unbelief is like wandering restlessly in the land of Nod, east of Eden. But probably our main take away today should be: BL. Look how sin decimates BL. Look how Xp shows us BL. Look how the Lord wants us to imitate Xp's BL. Look for ways to control temper, cool anger, **"live in harmony w/oa"**, and **"be devoted to oa in BL."**