

Before We Begin

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Sermon Series

Power of Promise



Sermon Series

Power of Promise

February 13: Love is a Promise



Sermon Series

Power of Promise

February 13: Love is a Promise

Today: Promise presents Choice



Cain and Abel: Bio

- Children born to the first human beings (Adam and Eve)
- Brothers among many siblings



Bio: Genesis 5:1-4 (NIV)

1 This is the written account of Adam's line. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.

2 He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them "man."



Bio: Genesis 5:1-4 (NIV)

3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.

4 After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters.

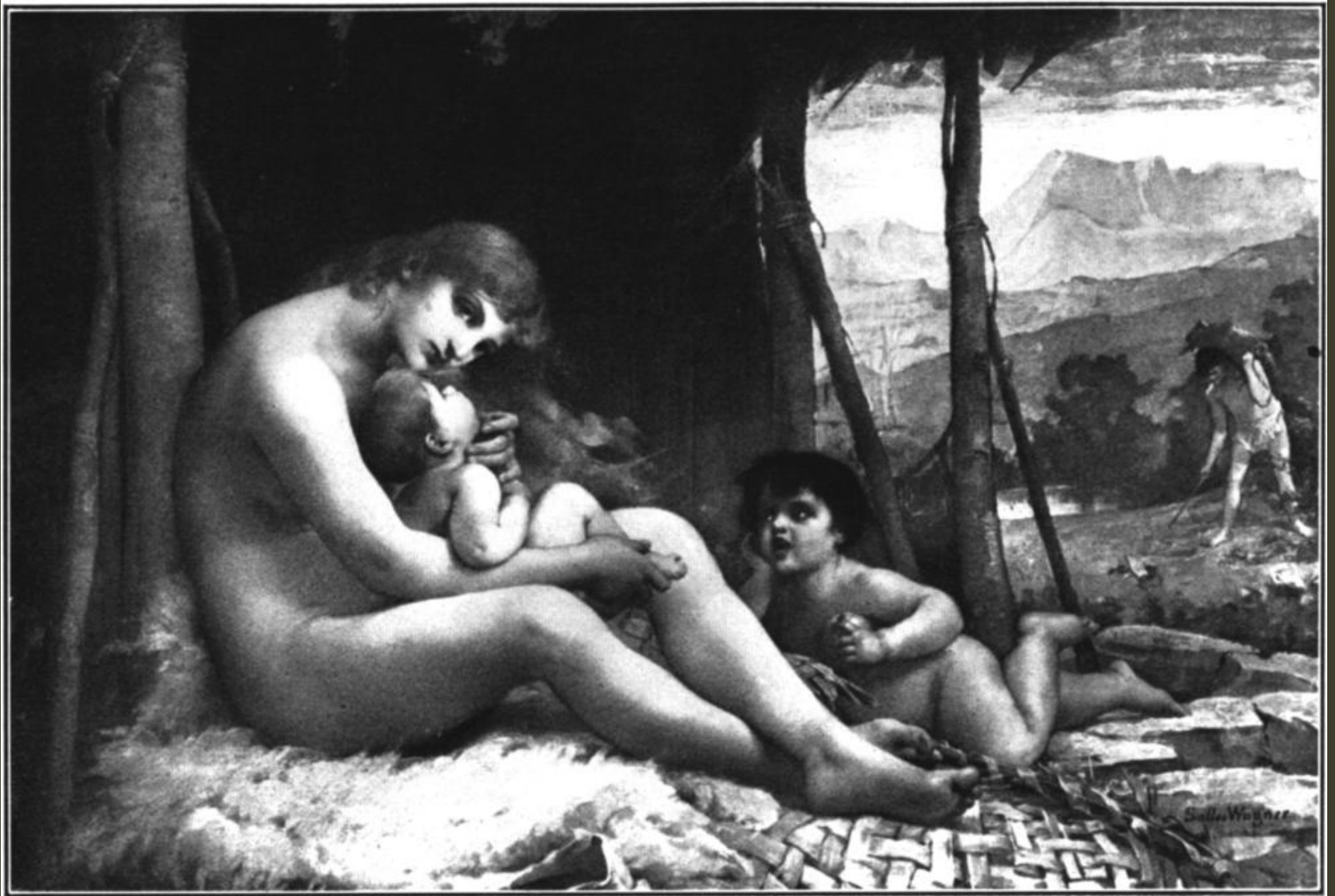


Bio: Genesis 4:1-2 (NIV)

1 Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, “With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man.”

2 Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.





Cain and Abel: Story

- Cain and Abel present offerings to God
 - God accepts Abel's offering
 - God rejects Cain's offering
- God counsels Cain
- Cain murders Abel
- God confronts Cain



Offerings: Genesis 4:2-5 (NIV)

2 ...Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil.

3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD.

4 But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock.



Offerings: Genesis 4:2-5 (NIV)

4 ...The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering,

5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.





Counsel: Genesis 4:6-7 (NIV)

6 Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?”

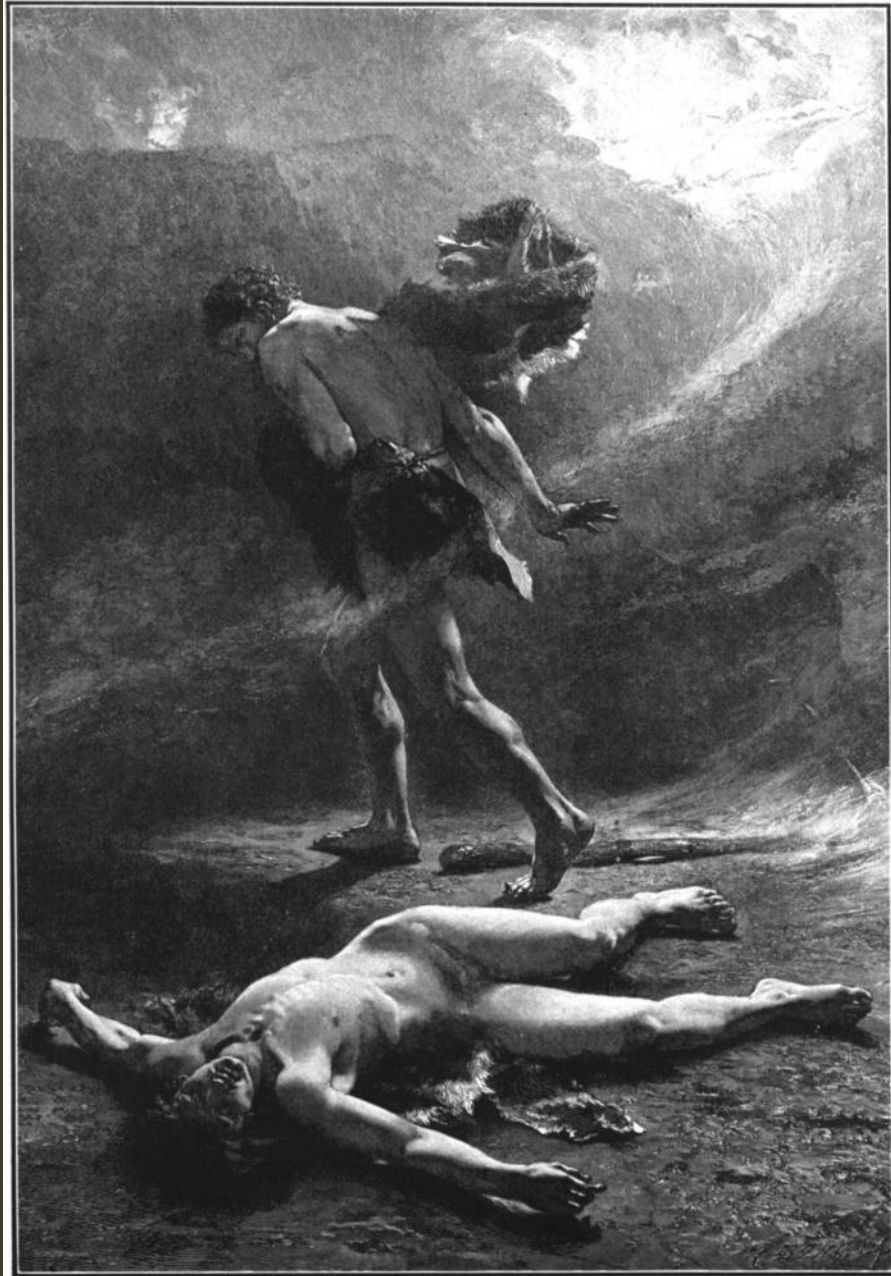
7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”



Murder: Genesis 4:8 (NIV)

8 Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.





Confronted: Genesis 4:9-16 (NIV)

9 Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

10 The LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.



Confronted: Genesis 4:9-16 (NIV)

11 Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

12 When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”



Confronted: Genesis 4:9-16 (NIV)

13 Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is more than I can bear.

14 Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”



Confronted: Genesis 4:9-16 (NIV)

15 But the LORD said to him, “Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him.

16 So Cain went out from the LORD’s presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.





What was life like for the first people to ever live?

- Readers who interpret Genesis literally usually think about Adam and Eve in their solitude





What was life like for the first people to ever live?

- Readers who interpret Genesis literally usually think about Adam and Eve in their solitude
- Relatively speaking, their solitude didn't last that long



Relatively Speaking

- You know how to think in “dog years”
- Now try to think in “Genesis years”
- Adam lived to be 930 years old
- People of the 20th century A.D. can live to be in their 90s
- So: 1 year today = 10 Genesis years



Relatively Speaking (cont.)

- Eve gave birth to Seth when Adam was 130 Genesis years old, so relatively speaking, he was like a 13-year-old today
- But Cain and Abel were born before Seth...



Bio: Genesis 4:25 (NIV)

25 Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, for she said, “God has appointed for me another child instead of Abel, because Cain killed him.”



Relatively Speaking (cont.)

- Compared to Adam's recorded lifespan, he and Eve's were only alone for a relatively short period of time
- They started their family early in life



Absolutely Speaking

- But Genesis years are intended to be taken literally...Adam lived to be 930
- Lifespans gradually got shorter
- Twenty generations later, Abraham died at the age of 175, which was by then considered to be “a good old age, an old man and full of years” (Genesis 25:7–8)



Absolutely Speaking (cont.)

- The stages of life for human development and aging appear to be approximately the same as in modern man
- At age 90, Abraham's wife Sarah had already gone through menopause
- It was preposterous for Sarah to give birth at age 90, but God told the couple it would happen (by a miracle)



Absolutely Speaking (cont.)

- Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?” (Genesis 17:17)
- Sarah was past the age of childbearing. So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, “After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?” (Genesis 18:11-12)



Absolutely Speaking (cont.)

- Eve gave birth to Seth when Adam was 130 Genesis years old
- We're not sure how many more children Adam had by Eve had, but "After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters." (Genesis 5:4)
- Lots of potential for exponential growth of the human race



Meaning for Original Readers

- Let's try to understand what the story of Cain and Abel meant to its original readers
- Who were the original readers?
- Probably, Moses was the person who wrote the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy



Moses: Prophet and Historian

- Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it... (Exodus 17:14)
- Moses finished writing in a book the words of this law from beginning to end (Deuteronomy 31:24)



Time between the life of Adam and Genesis publication

- Earlier we learned that there are twenty generations between Adam and Abraham
- 1 generation = many Genesis years, but exact figures are not given
- We have some additional details between Abraham and the Moses' "publication"



Time between the life of Adam and Genesis publication (cont.)

- Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.
(Genesis 21:5). = 100 years
- Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them [Jacob and Esau].
(Genesis 25:26). + 60 years
= 160 years



Time between the life of Adam and Genesis publication (cont.)

7 Then Joseph brought his father Jacob in and presented him before Pharaoh. After Jacob blessed Pharaoh,

8 Pharaoh asked him, “How old are you?”

9 And Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty.

(Genesis 47:7–9).

+ 130 years

= 290 years



Time between the life of Adam and Genesis publication (cont.)

- Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt was 430 years.
(Exodus 12:40) + 430 years
= 720 years



Time between the life of Adam and Genesis publication (cont.)

- Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three when they spoke to Pharaoh (Exodus 7:7) – 80 years
 - Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died (Deuteronomy 34:7) + 120 years
- Subtotal* = 760 years



Time between the life of Adam and Genesis publication (cont.)

- 20 early-Genesis generations, plus
- 760 years from Abraham's birth to Moses' death

For more information, see

<http://www.bibletime.com/theory/history/adam>



Meaning for Original Readers (cont.)

- Q: Who were the original readers?
A: The generation following Moses
- This was the same generation whose life began and ended under the rule of the Law of Moses (Ten Commandments)
- Commandment #6: “You shall not murder.”
(Exodus 20:13 NIV)



Meaning for Original Readers (cont.)

- It is reasonable to believe that the story of Cain and Abel was used to reinforce the lesson that
 - Murder is sin
 - God punishes man for sin



Meaning for Original Readers (cont.)

- Genesis 9:6 (NIV) Whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human shall that person's blood be shed; for in his own image God made humankind.
- Numbers 35:33 (NIV) You shall not pollute the land in which you live; for blood pollutes the land, and no expiation can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of the one who shed it.





Meaning for Original Readers (cont.)

- This emphasis on God being wrathful, vengeful, and merciless prevailed for a very long time
- “Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.” (Matthew 1:17)



Transition to Modern Interpretation

- Jesus came to fulfill (complete) the Law of Moses! (Matthew 5:17)
- The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus represents a new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31; Hebrews 8:8,13; 12:24) or new testament (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20) that supersedes the Law of Moses



Transition to Modern Interpretation (cont.)

- As a result, the interpretation of Cain and Abel necessarily changes



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Cain and Abel: Story

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Counsel: Genesis 4:6-7 (NIV)

6 Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?”

7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”



Cain and Abel: New Testament Interpretation

- God reminded Cain of a promise that he had made to Adam's entire family
- Each individual had the choice to make concerning whether they would:
 - Believe God's promise and act on it, to "do what is right"
 - Ignore God's promise and fall victim to sin, "it desires to have you"



Abel's Choice

- Abel chose to believe God's promise, so his sacrifice was acceptable in the sight of the Lord

Believing God's promise = FAITH



Abel: Hebrews 11:4

4 By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain's. Through this he received approval as righteous, God himself giving approval to his gifts; he died, but through his faith he still speaks.

FAITH → RIGHTEOUSNESS



Cain's Choice

- The question is often asked,
“Why was Cain’s offering not accepted?”
- Some have observed this difference:
 - Cain brought his offering “in the course of time,” whereas
 - Abel selected his offering from among the “firstborn of his flock.”



Cain's Choice (cont.)

- The exact reason is not given, but this detail is really not relevant to the story
- Cain did not “do what was right” for some definition of “right” that God had revealed to Adam, Eve, and all of the children
- Cain failed to act IN FAITH on that promise
- In effect, Cain did not believe God's promise



Cain's Choice (cont.)

- Cain had to be punished for the crime (sin) that he had committed
- But the story of Cain does not end with a vengeful act of God, but with God showing mercy and giving him protection



Confronted: Genesis 4:9-16 (NIV)

13 Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is more than I can bear...

14 ... whoever finds me will kill me.”

15 But the LORD said to him, “Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him.



Cain's Second Choice

- God made another promise to Cain and sealed it with a “mark”
- Cain had another choice to make: would he believe God this time?



Cain's Second Choice (cont.)

- Cain's fear was that his settled and life of farming was over

“Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth....”

(Genesis 4:14)



Cain's Second Choice (cont.)

- It appears that Cain lived the rest of his life trusting in God's promise of protection

“So Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden... building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch.” (Genesis 4:16-17)



Cain's Second Choice (cont.)

- Cain was a murderer, but by believing in God's promise the way was open for him to have a restored relationship with God

Believing God's promise = FAITH

FAITH → RIGHTEOUSNESS



Everyone Has This Choice

- Every person has the same choice as Cain and Abel
- Do you believe in God's promise, or no?



