



The Curious Case of Cain

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Of all the rogues and evildoers in the Bible, one looms over them all: Cain. Cain is the first child born to Adam and Eve and the first human never to live in the Garden of Eden. He was also the first murderer.

Shortly after Adam sinned against God by eating the forbidden fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the third chapter of Genesis, God placed a curse upon Adam and Eve. The curse upon Adam is found in Genesis 3:17-19, where God says to Adam,

¹⁷...Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; ¹⁸Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; ¹⁹In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Then, having cursed Adam and Eve, God banished them from the Garden of Eden in verses 22-24:

²²And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: ²³Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. ²⁴So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Thrust into this strange new fallen world, Adam and Eve began a new life and soon their first child was on its way. In Genesis 4:1 we read that "...Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain". The excitement of bearing a son prompted Eve to say, "I have gotten a man from the LORD." This phrase seems to have led to the naming of Cain. The online Hebrew language site, *Hebrewversity*, states:

The original meaning of the Hebrew name 'Cain' {קַיִן} is very unique. In the original Hebrew Eve used the verb 'Kaniti' {קָנִיתִי} which was translated to English as 'I have gotten' and in Hebrew sounds similar to the name 'Cain.' (<https://www.hebrewversity.com/eves-firstborn-son-cain-hebrew-insights-creation-possessions-shopping/>)

It is also possible that Eve may have believed that her newly acquired son could be the promised seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15), that would bruise the head of the serpent.

Now this brings up a prevalent false belief about Cain taught in some circles that we need to dispense with. It is the Serpent-Seed or the Dual Seedline theory. Followers of this theory, in particular adherents of the Christian Identity Movement (CMI) and other white supremacist groups, are often referred to as "seedliners," claiming that Cain was the son of Satan (the serpent) and Eve. They further claim that today's Jews are the descendants of Cain and thus the children of the Devil, unlike whites who are the children of

Adam and Eve. As proof, they like to point to Jesus saying to the Jews in John 8:44, "Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." Consequently, they like to refer to Jews as Satan's Spawn or the Devil's Spawn.

(As an interesting, yet pathetic, aside, many in the CIM and other white supremacist groups also hold a closely related false belief of pre-Adamic races. These people, they believe, are the progenitors of the non-white races, which they refer to derisively as Mud People, Mud-Bloods, or Muds, because they were created out of the mud. They teach that only white people are the descendants of Adam and that only whites are created in the image of God, as was Adam. All others are either Satan's Spawn (the Jews) or Mud-Bloods (the non-whites). Of course, believers in the pre-Adamic Mud-Blood nonsense either forget or are ignorant of, or just ignore the fact that Genesis 2:7 says, "And the LORD God formed man [Adam] of the dust of the ground". Now, I'll admit that I only had enough soil science related courses in college to qualify as an entry level Pedologist, but it seems to me that when you mix dust (dirt) with water you get mud, meaning that Adam was a mud man himself.)

The clearly antisemitic and racist Serpent-Seed theory is easily disproved by the Bible. The Bible clearly shows in the first three chapters of Genesis that Adam and Eve were the first two human beings God created. God created them on the sixth day; Adam first and then Eve. There is no evidence in these chapters, or anywhere else in the Scriptures, that Adam and Eve had any children prior to the Fall in chapter three, nor is there any evidence that God created any other people. In fact, Genesis 3:20 states that Eve, whose name means "life-giver" in the Hebrew, "was the mother of all living." Interestingly, the study of genetics indicates that every human being is descended from one specific woman, referred to as "Mitochondrial Eve." It also finds that we are all descended from one specific man, called "Y Chromosome Adam," as well.

Another reason to reject these false theories is that, as noted above, the Bible clearly states in Genesis 4:1 that Cain was the biological son of Adam and Eve, not Satan and Eve. "...And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain." Also, even though Jesus referred to the Jews as being of their father the devil in John 8:44, He also referred to their father as Abraham in John 8:56. In the first case, Jesus was speaking of their spiritual father, Satan, whom they were following. In the second, He was referring to their ancestral father, Abraham, whom they should have been following. These passages, along with the genealogies of Jesus Christ and the Jewish people found throughout the Bible prove conclusively that the Jewish people are the descendants of Adam and Eve through their son, Seth, who is the ancestor of Noah, who is the father of Shem, who is the ancestor of Abraham, who is the father of Isaac, who is the father of Jacob, who is the father of the 12 tribes of Israel, who are the ancestors of both Jesus and the modern day Jews.

Another false belief regarding Cain is that he is father of the black or dark-skinned peoples. This stems from the curse placed upon him for killing his brother, Able, in Genesis chapter 4 where Cain, proud of his ability to overcome the curse through the work of his own hands brought his sacrifice of produce before the Lord. Unfortunately, this was not what God had demanded. God had set the standard of a blood sacrifice in Genesis 3:21 when He rejected Adam and Eve's futile attempt to cover the effects of their sin (nakedness) with aprons of fig leaves and, instead, slew an innocent animal to make coats of skins to clothe them. Cain, filled with anger and jealousy because God rejected his sacrifice yet accepted his brother's, killed Abel in Genesis 4:8.

We can estimate that Cain was likely in his late 120's when he killed Able. Now, we figure this because Adam must have been about 129-130 years old when Cain murdered his brother. According to Genesis

5:3, Adam was 130 years old when his son, Seth, was born. Since Genesis 4:25 indicates that Seth was born as replacement for Able, who was murdered by Cain in Genesis 4:8, we can assume that Seth was most likely born within a year or so of his brother's death. That would mean that both Cain and Able could have been in their late 120's when Cain murdered Able (remember, Adam and Eve were created as mature adults and could have begun having children right away).

God then confronts Cain and condemns him, in verse 12, to be a "fugitive and a vagabond...in the earth." Cain objects to his punishment in verses 13-14 saying, "...My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me." God counters Cain's objection in Genesis 4:15 by saying, "...Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him."

The mark placed upon Cain has engendered much speculation. Although the Bible never describes just what this mark is people have come up with a variety of possibilities:

1. A continual shaking and trembling of his limbs.
2. An inability to be killed.
3. To be continually followed by Able's dog.
4. A circle of the sun always on him.
5. One or more letters marked on his forehead.
6. A horn growing out of his forehead.
7. A wild, ghastly, or disturbing appearance.
8. An earthquake every time he took a step.
9. Some sort of special mark or symbol on his forehead.
10. A special miracle God performed to reassure him.
11. Some sort of strange phenomena or occurrence that accompanied him.
12. Leprosy or some other disease.
13. Dark skin.

Now, if we look at Genesis 4:17-18 we can safely eliminate some of the more bizarre possibilities suggested above. In these verses we learn that Cain had a wife, bore several children, and built a city. So, it would seem that whatever the nature of the mark placed on Cain was, it was not something that prevented him from living around other people.

We can also eliminate dark skin as a unique mark as well due to the genetics underlying skin color. Since Adam and Eve were created with all the genes necessary to produce all the various shades and tones of skin colors that we see today, they most likely had medium brown skin themselves. The various combinations of recessive and dominant genes occurring in their children would mean that Adam and Eve could give birth to children with skin colors ranging from white to brown to black to every color in between. Although brown skin colors would have been most common in the early generations, neither very dark nor very light skin would have been unusual or unknown.

The most likely possibility, or so it seems to me, is that the mark was some sort of visible symbol, letter, or word marked on Cain's forehead. Here's why. There are at least three other instances in the Bible where people are marked on the forehead and, as a result, spared from being killed.

The first is in Ezekiel 9:4-6: "And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary..." Here, God instructs an angel to place a mark visible to the destroying angels. Seeing the mark the destroying angels passed over those marked and spared their lives.

The second is in Revelation 13:15-17 where we read that the False Prophet makes an image of the Antichrist and causes "...that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." In this case, the mark is visible to people and prevents those who receive it from being killed for failing to worship the Antichrist as God. (Of course, Revelation 14:9-11 tells us that all those who receive the mark of beast will be condemned to the Lake of Fire for all eternity.)

The third case is also found in Revelation 14:1, where John says, "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." These 144,000 are the 144,000 Jewish men sealed in their foreheads in Revelation 7:4-8. The mark on their foreheads will be visible to angels meting out judgment on the earth during the Tribulation, causing them to be spared.

Consequently, it seems reasonable to assume that God marked Cain's forehead with some sort of visible symbol or writing as a warning against killing him. Regardless of the nature of the mark, word of Cain's evil deed no doubt traveled far and wide along with God's warning against killing him. And, though we cannot know for sure what exactly the mark was, we can be sure that the people living in Cain's day did.

Another interesting thing we can learn from the curse placed on Cain is that the population of the earth had risen greatly since the time that Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden. Since Genesis 5:4 tells us that Adam lived for 800 years after Seth was born, producing sons and daughters, it is reasonable to assume that Cain and Able were not the only children born to Adam and Eve prior to the birth of Seth. In fact, figuring conservatively an average of only one child every two years and no multiple births, Adam and Eve could have produced 65 children during their first 130 years.

But we need to also figure that their children would have begun producing children as they grew and matured. If they had started producing children around age 20, or a few years earlier, they would have added greatly to the world population themselves during the same 130 years. So, using the same conservative average of one child every two years, Cain could have had 55 children, Able could have had 54, and so on. With long lives and low death rates, by the time Cain murdered Able there would have been more than 1500 people living on the planet. And, considering that these early people were much more genetically pure than we are today, therefore much more apt to produce multiple births, the world population could have easily been two, three, four, or more times that amount.

Consequently, the "every one" mentioned in Genesis 4:14 would have been the potentially thousands of offspring and descendants of Adam and Eve born during the 130 years or so prior to the murder of Able. Cain would have been related to all of them, either as a sibling, an uncle, or a direct ancestor (father, grandfather, great-grandfather, etc.), but would not necessarily have known all of them personally.

Yes, Cain is a curious case indeed. He was born with great promise and high hopes that he would deliver humanity from the Evil One but in the end was corrupted and became evil himself. The Devil used him to hate, hurt, and destroy those whom God loved then and does the same today, using him to justify racist and antisemitic attacks on those whom God loves as the "apple of His eye (Zechariah 2:8)." And, finally, Cain stands as a stark warning that, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death (Proverbs 14:12)." "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall (1 Corinthians 10:12)."

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