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Recommended Citation

Vaught, W. O., "How Did Cain Kill Abel?" (1978). *Vaught Sermon Notes: John*. 20.
https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/vn_john/20

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HOW DID CAIN KILL ABEL?

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF 1 JOHN
NUMBER 21
1 JOHN 3:12-13

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1 JOHN 3:12-13 "Not as Cain, who was of that 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."

In these two verses 1 John 3:12-13 we have a parenthetical dissertation on hatred. There are many ways we can better understand love, and one of the simplest ways to understand love is to understand hatred. If we are to understand hatred, we might as well go back to the beginning where the precedent was set, and that means Cain and Abel.

1 JOHN 3:12 "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." "Not as" is the way the Greeks would quite often introduce a parenthesis. They had no parenthesis marks like we do in our writing, therefore, they would indicate a parenthesis by words. This is a negative ouk plus the adverb kathos and from these two words we have "Not as." Cain was the first child of the human race and the first murderer. We see this in Genesis 4:5. Genesis 4:5 described Cain as being very angry and this was a mental attitude sin and this mental attitude sin motivated murder. Mental attitude sins are the sins that motivate all other kinds of sin. Such sins as gossip, maligning, hatred, bitterness, judging are all sins that emerge from mental attitude sins. Many of us try to believe that overt sins are the worst sins, but actually the worst sins come right out of the mental attitude. Mental attitude sins are the antithesis of agape love. Agape love is minus mental attitude sins. This is why hatred is brought in here so we can have an illustration about agape love, which is a relaxed mental attitude.

Thinking Most Important

What you think is more important than anything else. The Bible never commanded you to love (phileo) every body but we are commanded to have an agape love toward everybody. This is the relaxed mental attitude kind of love. You see phileo type love is a total soul love and you can love only a few people with total soul love. Hatred is the sum total of mental attitude sins and is the exact opposite of agape type love.

So this passage begins with the words "not as Cain" and this is the first pattern of mental attitude sin that led to the first murder. Next we have "was of that wicked one." The "was" is the imperfect, active, indicative of eimi and this means that a picture of his mental attitude for quite some time in the past had been this mental attitude hatred and bitterness. Satan was working on Cain now. He had been working on Eve, but since she had been converted, he now leveled his guns on Cain. Satan assumed immediately that Cain was the seed of the woman, so he let out after him. Of course, in this conclusion, Satan was wrong. But Satan decided that he would get the jump on the incarnation, so he takes out after Cain.

Next we have the word ek and this means out from the source of the wicked one. The wicked one is Satan himself. The word peneros means "the wicked one." Cain apparently nursed a hatred for his brother for a long time. Satan didn't succeed on Abel so he confined his major attack to Cain. (Adam and Eve had been converted, as we saw from Genesis 3:20-21.) Cain was Satan's man, an unbeliever. Abel responded to the gospel and was converted. We know this from the way Abel brought his offering to The Lord. Cain's mental attitude brought on hatred.

Hatred Never Stands Alone

I want you to remember this principle. Hatred never stands alone. It is built on another mental attitude sin called jealousy or pride. Pride and jealousy are built on anger. From this mental attitude Satan was able to use Cain.

JOHN 8:44 "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." This verse gives us a very accurate picture of Satan. Satan was a murderer from the beginning and Cain will be motivated from Satan to kill his brother.

Next we read, "He slew his brother."

THE DOCTRINE OF MURDER

1. The Devil was a murderer from the beginning. (John 8:44)
2. The Devil motivated Cain to murder his brother Abel. (1 John 3:12)
3. Hatred or the mental attitude sin that brought on the hatred was the motivation for this murder.
GENESIS 4:5 "But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell."

4. Murder is prohibited.
EXODUS 20:13 "Thou shalt not kill."
DEUTERONOMY 5:17 "Thou shalt not kill."
MATTHEW 5:21 "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:"

But these verses do not say, "Thou shalt not kill" but rather "Thou shalt do no murder."

The Bible says that killing is legitimate under Capital punishment and in war time in the defense of your nation. There is a difference between murder and killing. Murder is prohibited because this causes you to deprive someone else of his own human rights. Murder is the invading of another man's privacy to the maximum. Murder is mental attitude sins carried to the maximum.

5. Capital punishment is the penalty for murder.
GENESIS 9:6 "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."

ROMANS 13:4 "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

NUMBERS 35:30-31 "Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die. Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death."

6. Murder is one of the seven worst sins in God's sight. It is the only overt sin in the list of the seven worst sins. These seven worst sins are listed in Proverbs 6:16-19. Three of them are sins of the tongue, three of them are mental attitude sins, and one is an overt sin, which is murder.
7. Anger is considered to be mental murder.
MATTHEW 5:21-22 "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."
8. It is possible for a believer to commit murder.
1 Peter 4:15
9. However, every murderer is not a believer. Every murderer does not have eternal life abiding in him.
GALATIANS 5:21 "Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
1 JOHN 3:15 "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." The last part of this verse is incorrectly translated. It should read, "And ye know that not every murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."
10. Murder involves mental attitude sins.
ROMANS 1:29 "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,"
GALATIANS 5:21 "Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
Jealousy precedes murder in these passages. Here in our passage we are studying in 1 John 3 hatred precedes murder.
11. Murder is a part of crime. (Jeremiah 4:31)
A rise in the crime rate is a sign of approaching national downfall.

"And slew his brother." Here is a place where we can do some detective work by knowing the original language. The word for "slew" is the aorist, active, indicative of sphazo. This is derived from a 5th Century B.C. attic greek word sphatto and it means to slaughter animals

by cutting the throat. The Koine Greek shortened the word. There was the slow burn of hatred for a long time, and the aorist tense of "slew" tells us that the point of time arrived when Cain took the slaughtering knife in his hands and cut his brother's throat. This aorist tense means sudden violence. In Hebrews 11:4, we learn that both Cain and Abel had been taught about animal sacrifice and their meaning.

It Probably Happened This Way

Hatred had been burning in Cain's mind for a long time. One day he walked up to Abel and said, "Let me see that knife you use to kill the sheep." And before Abel knew it Cain jerked the knife from Abel's hands, grabbed him by the hair and pulled his head back and cut his throat. He had seen Abel kill the sheep this way. Cain knew if the knife would kill a sheep, it would also kill a person. A little later the Lord will say to Cain, "Thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground." This same knife that had been used for an act of grace is now used for an act of murder. Abel fell dead right at Cain's feet. (Now the Mosaic Law on murder hadn't been written down at this time, but the same principle applied.) The reason these things were written down in the Mosaic Law is that they were true and murder has always been wrong since the beginning of time. Many people believe that the law sets the standards, but the standards were there long before the law spelled them out in written form.

The First Death

This was the first death in the human race and it came by murder. The word here for "brother" is adelphos and it means his blood brother, a brother from the same two parents.

Next we have "And wherefore slew he him?" Here we have a particle charin plus tinis and it means "For the sake of why?" Then we have "Because his deeds kept on being worthless and his brother's righteous." So, the issue between Cain and Abel is human good versus divine good. Cain would come up with his turnips and rutabagas and peppers and nothing that was a blood sacrifice or that was pleasing to God. From this we get a principle--The believer can produce divine good but the unbeliever can only produce human good. Therefore, you see how Satan was able to get to Cain.

So get a corrected translation of this verse--"Not as Cain, who was constantly out from the source of the wicked one, the Devil, and he murdered his brother. Why? Because his own deeds were worthless (human good) and his brother's deeds were righteous (divine good).

THE DOCTRINE OF HUMAN GOOD

1. Human good is a work that is dead to God. (Hebrews 6:1)
2. Human good is performed by legalistic religious individuals.
3. Human good is never acceptable to God.
ISAIAH 64:6 "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."
4. Therefore, human good has no part in the plan of God.
2 Timothy 1:9

5. Human good will not save mankind.
TITUS 3:5 "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"
6. A distinction must be made between human good and morality.
Romans 13:4-5
Morality is necessary for the perpetuation of the human race.
7. At the judgment seat of Christ all of the human good of every believer will be destroyed. This is outlined in 1 Cor. 3:11-16.
8. Human good is the basis for the indictment of the unbeliever at the Great White Judgment Throne. This is explained in Rev. 20:12-15.

THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE GOOD

1. There are three sources of divine good.
 - a. From God--through the filling of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. From the human spirit--the exhale of faith toward God.
 - c. From the Edification Complex within the soul.
2. Divine good is the basis for victory in the Angelic Conflict.
ROMANS 12:21 "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."
3. The Christian life was designed for the production of divine good.
EPHESIANS 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."
4. The grace life is so designed that it will produce divine good.
2 TIMOTHY 2:21 "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."
5. Grace is the principle upon which divine good rests.
2 CORINTHIANS 9:8 "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:"
6. The production of divine good is a sign of stability in living the Christian life.
2 THESSALONIANS 2:17 "Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work."
7. Divine good will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
2 CORINTHIANS 5:10 "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Therefore, in the first great murder, a sin was committed by Cain, but the basis for it was human good. It all came out of mental attitude sins.

1 JOHN 3:13 "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you."
"Marvel not" is a present, active, imperative of thaumazo plus the negative me and it means "Stop being surprised." This is addressed to believers. Next we have a first class condition and the statement is true. "If the world hate you" means the world does hate you. This is the kosmos and it means the organized world of Satan. We find this same principle in John 15:18 "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you."

Today the kosmos system hates Christians. Today the unbelieving world hates the believer.

So this verse says, "Stop being surprised, my fellow believers, if the world hates you and it does."

Our next study will be on love to contrast with this study on hatred.