

“The Lord Set a Mark on Cain”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction: Genesis 4

A. Who was Cain?

1. Cain (Hebrew: קַיִן, Qayin; Koine Greek Κάιν, Ka-in) was the first child of Eve, and had a promising beginning - Gen. 4:1
2. He was the first murderer, and the first to fall under a curse.
3. He was the first human born and Abel was the first human to die.
4. Cain is the first city-builder, and the forefather of tent-dwelling herdsman (ironic), harp and pipe players, and bronze and iron smiths
5. Cain treacherously murdered his brother Abel out of smoldering rage and jealousy, lied about the murder to God, and was cursed and marked for life.
6. Cain's curse involved receiving a mark from God, commonly referred to as the mark of Cain. This mark serves as God's promise to Cain for divine protection from an untimely death, to prevent anyone from killing him. It is not known what the mark is, but it is assumed that the mark was visible.
7. With the earth cursed to drink Abel's blood, Cain was no longer able to farm the land. He was punished as a fugitive and wanderer; memories of this murder would pursue him for many generations - Gen. 4:23-24
8. All of Cain's descendants died in the Flood; none of them were ever noted as worshipers of God; and one of his great grandchildren was a murderer like Cain
9. The name Cain appears in the Bible twenty times in seventeen verses. His name appears only three times in the New Testament, and each time it appears there, it is used in a negative way.

B. What was the mark of Cain?

1. Unknown, but subject to a lot of silly speculation
 - a. Abba Arika said that God gave Cain a dog.
 - b. Abba Jose ben Hanan said that God made a horn grow out of Cain's head.
 - c. Abba Hanin Rashi said that it was one of the Hebrew letters of the Tetragrammaton
 - d. In Kabbalah, the Zohar states that the mark of Cain was one of the twenty-two Hebrew letters of the Torah, tau or vav
2. The Hebrew word *tya oth*, which translates as a mark, signifies a sign or token. In Gen. 9:13 the rainbow was to be *tyal leoth*, for a sign or token that the world would not be destroyed by water; therefore the words, “And the Lord set a mark upon Cain,” should be understood that the Lord placed on Cain a token or sign that no one is permitted to slay him.
3. The mark would serve him as a constant reminder of his sins; but, in spite of that, there is no record that Cain ever repented - Heb. 11:4; 1John 3:12; Jude 11

4. What was the mark of Cain? It doesn't matter and it is a foolish waste of time to speculate. It wasn't the mark that saved or condemned Cain; it was his sin and failure to repent.
5. The only true curse is sin, and the only answer to it is the Gospel.

I. CAIN'S MARK FOR US TODAY

- A. Serve God according to His will - Prov. 16:25; Jude 11; Heb. 11:4; Rom. 10:17
 1. Cain was instructed by God, and he still did it his own way
 2. Matt. 7:21-23
- B. Believe God with all of your heart - Heb. 11:4
 1. Cain talked with God and still did not believe Him - Gen. 4:4-14
- C. Everyone must choose to work righteousness - Gen. 4:7
 1. Cain and Abel grew up together in the same home. They had the same parents, received the same instructions, saw the same things, and shared the same experiences.
 2. They both chose honorable vocations. Cain followed in his father's footsteps and became a farmer. Abel became a shepherd. Both vocations were important to sustain the family. Both worshiped God.
 3. But their choice to obey or disobey God was theirs alone, and all of the similarities or differences between them are irrelevant in this decision - Phil. 2:12; Rom. 14:10, 12
- D. Those who sin, must repent - Gen. 4:13-14; Mark 2:17
 1. Cain did not care about his sin; he cared that he was going to be punished for it; "It's not fair!"
 2. Cain did not care about losing his soul; he cared about losing his life
 3. God cannot help someone like Cain. No one can. The person who refuses to acknowledge his spiritual condition and who refuses to repent of sin cannot, and will not, be saved.
- E. Being angry at the righteous doesn't help the sinner - Gen. 4:3-7
 1. Why did Cain kill Abel? He was jealous. Abel had something Cain did not have. Abel had a faithful relationship with God, and unbelievers often demonstrate animosity and anger toward people of faith.
 2. 2Peter 2:9-12; 1Peter 4:1-5
 3. They could have it, too, if they wanted. But they don't want to do what is necessary to get there; so they think somehow it will help to tear down those who are doing it
 4. The condition of the heart determines the course of the life. What is seen in the life externally is a revelation of the character of the heart internally - Prov. 4:23; Matt. 12:34-35

Conclusion:

- A. There is the way of Cain - Jude 11
- B. Then there is the only living way - John 14:6