

# **“Who will Stand in the Gap for the Lord?!” (Slide 1) Abel!!**

## **Reading: Genesis 4:1-15**

From the prophecy of Ezekiel that we studied last week, we see the great need for someone to stand up and lead. The prophets, priests, and men of influence, the leaders of the politics of the day, were failing to do what God demands.

Their influence was so great that even the common man was straying further and further away from God and His Holy commands. (Slide 2) And Ezekiel asks; *“Who will stand in the gap?!!”*

There are some who are born to be leaders and some born to follow but each person will answer for how they lead or who they follow because in one way or another, they will influence others to follow their lead.

We don't think of Abel this way but he was a *leader*. The path of truth and righteousness has been forged by men such as Abel. These are the paths of old that Jeremiah must have referred to when preaching to a rebellious nation. He states in:

## **Jeremiah 6:16 (Slide 3)**

***Thus says the LORD,***

***“Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths,***

***Where the good way is, and walk in it;***

***And you will find rest for your souls.***

***But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’***

Each generation looks back on what they once experienced and says; *“I miss the good ‘ole’ days.”*

Some of the old ways of doing things were better. I remember a time in my life when people were more friendly, more helpful, more tolerant of what is good, even if they didn't practice it. Now it's looked down upon to follow God and to *“present ourselves as a living sacrifice.”*

I believe in this modern era of technology that we have lost the personal touch and have become cold in more ways than one.

Speaking to what is undoubtedly a remnant of God's followers Isaiah says in:

## **Isaiah 58:12 (Slide 4)**

***“Those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins;***

***You will raise up the age-old foundations;***

***And you will be called the repairer of the breach,  
The restorer of the streets in which to dwell."***

Every generation needs men and women who will stand up for truth and what is right. Every generation needs men and women to be a guiding light to their children and to lead them on a moral path by "*Standing in the Gap*" and supporting the "*Wall of Morality*."

Yet it is increasingly becoming more and more difficult to find them. So, it is in the hands of the remnant.

The murder of Abel happened after the fall for all mankind which was caused by the sin of Adam and Eve in the garden. Despite their fall, Adam and Eve accepted their punishment which is now handed down to all generations to come after them.

Their first two children were named Cain and Abel.

There were major differences between Cain and Abel even though they had the same parents and likely the same upbringing.

It's interesting that after offering his sacrifice that God spoke directly to Cain. A personal message and one that is, I believe, of deep concern for his spiritual welfare. (Slide 5) ***6 "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."***

God is passionately pleading with Cain; you can overcome your feelings, your thoughts to do wrong; ***"but you must master it."***

Brother Paul Jarrett gave a great lesson on the differing approach to life between Cain and Abel. In our pursuit to understand the type of man and woman God is looking for too "*Stand in the Gap*," I want to share just a few thoughts from his lesson.

The difference between Cain and Abel is most easily understood from the Hebrew writer in:

**Hebrews 11:4** (Slide 6)

***By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.***

As Brother Paul points out, Abel is the first one mentioned in the "*Faith's Hall of Fame*" chapter in Hebrews 11. I don't think that's an accident.

Cain walked by sight. It was what he could see that was appealing and important to him. So important, that even speaking person to person to the Lord, had no effect on him. Cain killed Abel after the Lord spoke compassionately to him.

What sins were at the door? Jealousy, envy, animosity, hatred that was equal in his own eyes to murder. His own brother. He, like his parents, sinned before God.

From what we know, 3 of the 4 to first inhabit the earth were the first examples of human nature, that is; sinful man and in their case, a selfish desire.

Cain's lack of faith and his desire for self over God, condemns him. God's punishment for Cain was undoubtedly greater than execution. I believe the harshness he endured caused him many times to wish for death. But instead of killing Cain, God marked him and to this day we hear the phrase *"The Mark of Cain"* in reference to evil.

What of Abel? Abel's faith caused him to have favor with God. Undoubtedly, if Abel's life had not been taken, he would have continued to find favor with God. But that opportunity had been taken away from him. His life snuffed out by one who should have been a steadfast partner in life.

His hopes and dreams are gone. Taken by a violent plot of a loved one driven by pure jealousy and envy.

We don't know for sure, but given what we do know about Abel's character is that he likely loved his brother a great deal. Abel, had he lived, perhaps would have been able to influence Cain to honor God.

In my mind, though I cannot know for sure, Abel was a good listener. When God had spoken to Cain, the Bible says; ***"Cain told Abel his brother."*** Wouldn't it be interesting to know what Abel said in response to Cain. I think perhaps at that revelation, Abel was encouraging to his brother Cain.

I believe Abel was a man who was blessed because he was what Jesus called a ***"peacemaker."*** Abel's faith was an active faith. In fact, much of what Jesus says in what we commonly call the *"beatitudes"* or the *"Sermon on the Mount"* describes Abel.

**Matthew 5:5-10** (Slide 7)

**5 *"Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth."***

**6 *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."***

**7 *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."***

(Slide 8) **8 *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."***

**9 *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."***

**10 *"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."***

Those characteristics certainly describe the man, Abel.

What would have Abel become? Perhaps he would have been just like the son his mother Eve called her (Slide 9) *"offspring of replacement,"* that is; Seth (**Genesis 4:25**) since Cain had taken Abel away.

Seth lived to be 912 years old. Can you imagine the impact that Abel would have had on all those around him if he would have lived that long and passed on his faith and Love for God.

His short life was one that blesses us all because we learn from him to have enduring faith. Perhaps that's why the Hebrew writer says; (Slide 10) ***"though he is dead, he still speaks."***

Abel can indeed *"Stand in the Gap"* for the Lord. His great gifts to us are his righteousness, his faith and his example of *giving God our best.*

I offer Abel as our first example of what God through Ezekiel is looking for in a person to *"Stand in the Gap"* of His *"Wall of Morality."*

(Slide 11) We focus so much on what Cain said such as, *"am I my brother's keeper"* that we sometimes fail to see the great qualities of his brother Abel.

One I **haven't** mentioned is that Abel was *trusting*. If Abel didn't trust Cain and had concern that he would do him harm while they were in the field, he wouldn't have gone with him.

Undoubtedly, Abel had empathy and/ or Pity for Cain, his brother. He could see distress in Cain's eyes and Abel felt it in his own heart.

Trust is so important in our relationships. With our spouse we must have trust. Our children and grandchildren must learn to trust that we are looking out for their best interests. But more importantly, we must have such a close relationship with God that we trust Him in all that he does and expects.

However, we know from the example of *Cain* and *Abel* that trust must not be misplaced. There are many who intentionally want to do us harm, if given the opportunity.

We need to be discerning in our relationships and always aware of our surroundings and the "*company we keep*."

Most importantly we need to be well versed in God's Holy word.

Invitation

Today, you can and should place your trust and your soul in the hands of The Savior, Jesus, The Christ. Come to God through Jesus by being baptized into Him. Buried with Him in the watery grave to raise a new creature. Please "*Hear the Gospel call*."

If you have once walked with God but have failed to walk in that straight and narrow way, may we pray for you and with you so that once again you can trust in the Lord as He would have you to do.

Please let us know how we can help you this day to serve Him.

**Reading: Genesis 4:1-15**

***1 Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD." 2 Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. 4 Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; 5 but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. 6 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." 8 Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.***

***9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" 10 He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground. 11 Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you; you will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth." 13 Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is too great to bear! 14 Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I***

***will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." 15 So the LORD said to him, "Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one finding him would slay him.***

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