

1 John 3:10-24

¹⁰ In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. ¹¹ For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, ¹² not as Cain *who* was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. ¹³ Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother abides in death. ¹⁵ Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. ¹⁶ By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. ¹⁷ But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? ¹⁸ My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. ¹⁹ And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. ²⁰ For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. ²¹ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. ²² And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. ²³ And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment. ²⁴ Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us. *NKJV*

As we have been learning, John is persistent in reminding us that we ought to return to the message that was given to us “since the beginning.” (1.1) Along with this repetition to reinforce our learning, in 1 John 3:10-24 he illustrates this message with the story of the origin of mankind. He returns us to the era of time just after the fall of man in the Garden of Eden—to some of the first people to walk this earth.

John brings Cain and Able into his letter to picture for us the self-styled worship and murderous anger of an unregenerate heart. But this illustration doesn't stand alone. Being consistent in his style of using contrast to express truth, John actually pits “Cain who was of the wicked one” up against the sinless Son of God to prove his point: that Love for God and others is THE KEY DIFFERENCE between children of God and children of the devil.

We typically view comparisons as being a strong and forcible way to prove our argumentation. **But this comparison, due to the subjects used, could perhaps be the most stark contrast of spiritual truth!**

Jesus told His opponents in John 8:

“As it is, you are determined to kill me...If God were your Father, you would love me...You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding the truth.” (John 8:40, 42, 44)

It is not that by murdering his brother that Cain became a child of the devil; but, being a child of the devil, his actions were evil and culminated in the murder of his brother. **By refusing to worship God on God's own terms (through God's appointed sacrifice) Cain revealed that he was not believing upon God for his justification before God.**

Cain had no love for Able. He hated Able because of Able. The reason? His brother's acts were righteous; they were in submission to God's authority.

Righteousness draws hatred from the devil and from children of the devil. **Darkness cannot tolerate light; immorality-morality; hatred-love; greed-sacrifice.**

Note: *The word for murder is the word used for butcher or slaughter.*

Using the first offspring of Adam and Eve, the first children to experience growing up in a sin-cursed world, John contrasts the children of darkness (as illustrated by Cain) with the Son of God (Jesus).

Cain	Jesus
Had no love, v. 10b	We know love b/c of Him, v. 16a
Of the wicked one, v. 12a	God's Son, v. 23b
Works were evil, v. 12b	Laid down His life, 16a
Abides in death, v. 14b	Passed from death to life, 14a
Worshipped in error, v. 12b	Worshipped in truth, 18
Loved neither God nor man, v. 10	Loves both God and man, v. 23

Because of Cain's hating heart, which led to the murder of his brother, he was cut off from the covenant community. His heart condition was wicked before his cold-blooded actions were manifested. **The murder of Able revealed what was already present in Cain's heart of unbelief and rebellion.**

The true test of love is not whether you will take someone's life, but whether you will sacrifice your own! (v. 16)

Cain is the pattern of every person who denies the saving work of Jesus Christ—the righteousness of God.

- Works were evil
- Abides in death
- Worships in Error
- Loves neither God nor man.

When mankind was fully deserving the judgment of God because of their murderous intentions towards the innocent Son of God, Jesus Christ, instead of banishing Adam's race to eternal punishment, Jesus laid down His life willingly as the substitutionary sacrifice that Able foretold in his obedience in the beginning of time. **All who will turn in faith toward Christ's sacrifice believing upon His righteousness in place of their own and turning away from their hateful sinful ways will pass from death to life.** (v. 14).

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. **Read Genesis 4:1-15 to learn of Abel's faith and Cain's rebellion. Review the chart in this lesson.**
2. **What chief characteristic of Cain do you see as opposite that of Christ?**
3. **Was Cain a murderer in heart as well in action?**
4. **What distinguishing mark does John say that Christians have in this fallen world?**
5. **Where do we gain confidence if our hearts condemn us?**
6. **What is the commandment in v. 23? Have you obeyed the commandment?**

CAPITOL SQUARE COMMUNITY MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY

Staff, Lobbyists & Capitol Community Welcome

Statehouse Room #44 ~ Wednesdays, 12:00