

## A Story From Primeval Humanity

Genesis 4:1-13

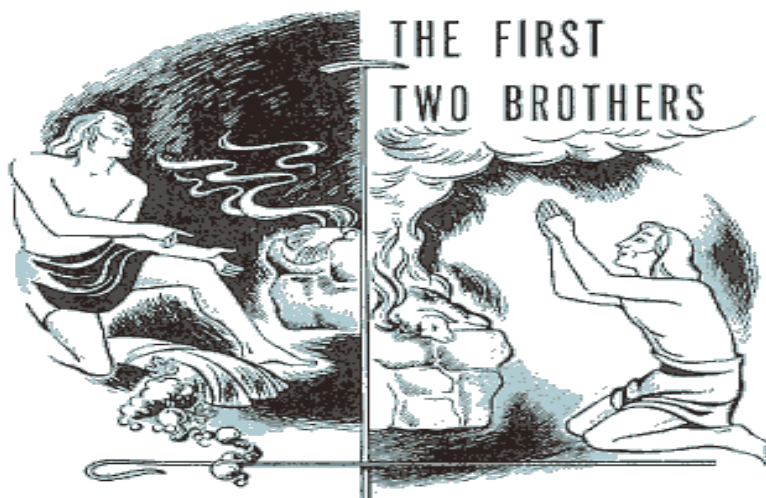
By Bill Bjoraker, Ph.D.

This is a story from the earliest period of the human race. It is concerning only the second generation of humans on earth, and of the first two brothers. Adam and Eve, and their family lived east of the Garden of Eden since their original sin, called "the Fall of Man," and their expulsion from the Garden. The couple had gained the knowledge of good and evil by partaking of the forbidden tree, but they had lost connection with God. As The Creator God was sentencing the couple for their sin, and the serpent that tempted them, he gave them also the first good news—that Eve's own seed would crush the head of the serpent's seed (Gen. 3:15).

By the LORD God's instruction, in this primeval period, food for humans and animals was to be only what the ground produced (Gen. 1:29-30). Adam and Eve tried to hide from God, covering themselves with fig leaves; but God killed animals and clothed them with their skins. How would Adam and Eve feel about this death? How must God have felt about having to kill these creatures that He had delighted to create? What was Creator God teaching them through this drastic act of violently taking the lives of these animals?

God had told the couple that if they sinned they would die (Gen. 3:3). But these animals would die in their stead and by their death a covering was provided to hide the human's sin and shame (Gen. 3:21). Adam had just named these beautiful creatures that God had created. Now they would have to be killed and the couple would have to wear their skins, and so would be constantly reminded that these creatures had to die because of their sin. Blood sacrifice was the precedent the Creator set for approaching him after the alienation of sin. A striking fact — anthropological studies show us that most cultures of the world, throughout history have believed in the efficacy of blood sacrifice, in some form or another.

The two brothers in this story would have known this lesson taught so graphically to their parents, about the tragic consequences of their sin, including the killing of the animals. Surely this first family talked often of all these events around their family meals and at special times they had set aside for communing with God. This is the first murder of the human race, the archetypal story of crime and punishment.



Scene 1: **1 Now** Adam slept with his wife, Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. When she gave birth to him, she said, "*With the Lord's help, I have acquired another human being!*" **2** Later she gave birth to his **brother** and named him Abel.

Scene 2: **When the brothers grew up**, Abel became a keeper of flocks, a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground and became a farmer. **3** At a certain time after the harvest, Cain presented **some of his crops** as an offering to the LORD. **4** Abel also brought an offering —**firstborn** lambs from his flock, and their fat portions. The Lord accepted Abel and his offering, **5** but he did not accept Cain and his offering. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected, sullen and glowering. And the Lord said to Cain,

*6 "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen?  
7 If you do well, will you not be accepted?  
And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at your door.  
Its desire is to devour you, but you must master it."*

Scene 3: **8 One day** Cain suggested to his brother, "*Let's go out into the fields.*" And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his **brother**, Abel, and killed him.

Scene 4: **9 Afterward** the Lord asked Cain, "*Where is Abel your brother?*"

"*I don't know,*" Cain responded. "*Am I the one that is supposed to take care of my brother? Am I my brother's keeper?*"

**10** But the Lord said, "*What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground! 11 Now you are cursed and banished from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 No longer will the ground yield its good crops for you, no matter how hard you work! Now you will always be a fugitive and a homeless wanderer on the face of the earth.*" **13** And Cain said to God, "*My punishment is greater than I can bear! [Is my sin too great for you to bear?]*"

**Observation Questions:** Beyond the facts that make up the story, from what those in the story say and do, and the choices they made and did not make, and the consequences and impact of those choices, what can we learn?



1. Remember this is the earliest days of the human race. What would these brothers have known about God and His ways from their parents? What would they have known about sin, how to atone for it, and how to approach God?
2. Eve, whose name, “Chavah” means life, “because she was the mother of all living” (“chai”) (Gen. 3:20), brought forth only the third human being ever. She conceived, she labored, she gave birth and another human being emerged out of her substance. So she imagines herself as a king of partner with God in man-making. Her exclamation in verse 1 can be translated, *“I have acquired (or “created”) a man equally with God!”* or plainly, *“God created a man, and now so have I!”* What might be some of the implications of this, for Eve?... for Cain? ... for their relationship as mother and son?
3. An interesting thought is to recall the first good news given by God after the Fall. After God cursed the serpent, He said that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent’s head (Gen. 3:15). Eve and Adam were promised victory over the evil that Satan had allured them into, and to which they had succumbed. So when Eve gives birth to this, her first seed, do you think she thought that he, Cain, was the one? Perhaps they thought *“Very soon we will get back to the Garden!”*
- 4 God later accepted both animal and grain sacrifices (Leviticus 6:14-30). Why then do you think God rejects Cain’s sacrifice?
5. The story says the brothers brought their sacrifices “at a certain time.” What might this tell us about what the brothers knew or practices their family had set up?
5. Remember, according to the LORD God’s instruction, in this primeval period, food for humans was to be only what the ground produced (Gen. 1:29-30). Do we know from the story if the lambs Abel brought were offered alive, or were to be killed? (from Intro).

6. For many who read this story, God seems to be unfair to Cain. Abel brought an offering from his livelihood. Cain was a farmer and brought an offering from his livelihood—crops he had grown, and his offering is rejected! Was God unjust? Was He showing favoritism? Was Cain a victim?

- What do you think of God’s preference for offerings?
- Recall that God had animals killed for Adam and Eve’s clothing. Surely God knew that clothing could have been made from wool or fiber, avoiding the need to kill animals. Yet he had animals killed. Why? What would Adam and Eve have remembered when they wore the clothes of the animals God killed for them?
- Compare that to what an offering of slain animals would cause the offerers to feel and remember, in contrast to what an offering of produce would cause them to feel and remember? (the ground was cursed; the animals were God’s beautiful creations).
- Notice God’s response—“He accepted Abel **and** his offering, but did not accept Cain **and** his offering.” So was it only the offering God was accepting or rejecting? If not, discuss the implications of this.

7. Let us think of the **series of choices** Cain made. Let’s look at some choices God could have made in response to Cain. Think about what Cain’s choices reveal about his heart and character. What do his choices cause you to wonder about Cain? At each point of decision—both in terms of his inner mental-emotional responses and his outer actions—what were alternative responses and choices Cain could have made?

- When a gift is presented, who is supposed to be honored by the gift? If the receiver of the gift is not honored, how would the giver appropriately feel? (Disappointed, surprised, sad, regretful, no?). What did Cain allow himself to feel? What does it reveal about Cain’s heart attitude? What could the giver do to remedy the receiver’s unhappiness?

-What other **choices** could Cain have made as to the offering he presented to the LORD?

- He could have bartered/purchased from Abel an animal for a blood sacrifice
- He could have given the very best of his crops firstfruits, rather than just “some,” thus showing more devoted honoring of God with the best he had.
- He could have done so with a more obedient heart of faith.

-What other (inner and outer) response could Cain have made when he learned the LORD was not pleased with his offering, but was pleased with Abel?

- He could have said, “I repent, forgive me, I will purchase an animal sacrifice from my brother Abel, please have mercy.”

*-NOTE: The LORD responded to Cain’s anger by asking him a question. Why didn’t God directly accuse Cain? What does this reveal about God? What other choices did God have in responding to Cain?*

- *Rethinking/second-guessing His rejection of Cain’s offering?*
- *Striking Cain dead?*

*-God asks him, “If you do well, will you not be accepted? **But if** you do not do well, sin is crouching at your door, it desires to have you, ...but you must rule over it.”*

- *From this can we conclude that Cain knew what was right?*

- *How much freedom of choice was God offering to Cain? How much opportunity?*

-What response could Cain have made after the LORD spoke a warning to him?

- He could have said, “I deeply repent, please give me strength to overcome sin.”

-Do you think Cain’s murder of his brother was premeditated? Give evidence for your answer from the story.

- We know from the story that Cain’s heart was full of anger and jealousy. With this in his heart, Cain’s invitation to go out to the fields seems to be a hostile pretext to get Abel where he wanted him.

*-NOTE: The LORD responded to Cain’s murder of his brother by asking him another question— Where is Abel your brother? (as if God did not know?) What was God’s intent in asking this question? What does this reveal about God?*

-What response could Cain have made when God confronted him with the question, “Where is your brother?” He said “I don’t know,” the first lie of the human race.

- He could have said, “I killed him, but he deserved to die, because he shamed me.”
- He could have said, “ I killed him. And I am profoundly, acutely, extremely sorry, remorseful and repentant. I will never stop regretting this. Have mercy on me!”

-From the verbal response Cain did give to God (lying, insolence), what do you observe about his state of heart and by extension, his character?

- He was not, at this point at least, repentant. He was trying to cover it up, deceive God. And spoke in insolence (disrespect) to God and possibly even sarcasm and ridicule of his dead brother (his brother was a “keeper of sheep,” Cain says, “Am I my brother’s “keeper”?)

8. What dynamics of sin, how it works, do you observe in the pattern here, the series of choices made and their consequences?

- There are two images here: a crouching animal, a beast of prey on the prowl, and a door. How do these images depict sin and temptation? Think of sins of addiction (alcohol, drugs, pornography and sexual addictions). When a person opens the door to one of these sins, often that beast will pounce, will grab a hold of a persons mind and will not let go. Then, “**sin will take you places you don’t want to go, sin will keep you longer than you want to stay, and sin will cost you more than you want to pay.**” The beast is lying in wait for you; you must kill it or it will kill you.
- Sin is dynamic, not static. It does not lay dormant, but like the crouching animal is poised to spring and move in to take further prey.
- There is a downward spiral— *Desire (evil)* > *Deception* > *Disobedience* > *Death*. There is a *sinister sequence*— “lust when it is conceived brings forth sin, and sin when it is accomplished brings forth death” (As James 1:14-15). There is a *Conception* > *Gestation* > *Delivery* progression. At any of the pivotal points calling for a new decision, Cain could have aborted the gestation process that was

leading to death. He instead allowed the progression to continue downward to murder and then to an attempted cover-up of the crime (Cf. King David's sin of adultery with Bath-Sheba, which he tried to cover-up by murdering her husband, or President Richard Nixon's Watergate cover-up. Both attempted cover-ups of which were worse than the original sin they sought to cover up).

9. When God approached Cain about his disregard for what was required, we saw Cain got angry at God, displaced his anger on Abel and then finally suggested that God should have taken better care of Abel. How does this remind you of Adam and Eve's responses when they were confronted with their sin? Is there a general observation that hold for all humans, for human nature here?

10. What do you observe about the penalty that strikes right at the heart of something important to Cain? (he is cursed from he ground. His occupation as a farmer is taken away).

11. What do you think was Cain's motive in the murder? Was it pure jealousy and envy of God's acceptance of Abel's offering; a crime of rage and passion? (remember how the brothers talked before going out to the field).

12. What do you think Cain thought he would accomplish? Was it to silence Abel? Was it to insure that only he Cain would remain to be blessed by God in the future? Did Cain accomplish any of his objectives?

13. If Abel was killed because he obeyed God, how do we classify such a death? Does Abel's witness and testimony live on?

14. How might Abel's innocent blood be a type of Messiah's blood?

## **Application Questions**

1. Today, do people go against what they know is right?
2. Do we know if all people today know what sin is? (knowledge of good and evil, conscience)
3. Do you think Adam and Eve had had awareness of the long-range consequences of their sin? Today when people sin, are there immediate direct results, as well as long range consequences for generations?
4. From the series of choices Cain made, and from God's questions to him, what can we hope to remember when we are tempted to sin? (I Corinthians 10: )
5. Today, do people do things that are supposed to honor God, or appear to others as if they honor God, but may not? How might we discern what those things are? And what truly honors God, as Abel's offering did?
6. If, in God's dealing with Adam and Eve after their sin, His justice was satisfied, the sin atoned for by the death of an animal, and if Abel and his blood sacrifice

were accepted by the LORD, what could that show us for today? What does God require to approach Him today? How can we help people find an acceptable blood sacrifice today? Can you bring them to avail of the blood of the Messiah's atonement?

7. Again and again in this story, we saw Cain making his own decisions and then expecting God to conform to or approve those decisions.
  - i) Today, do people ever live and act as if God should conform to their desires rather than seeking to know what God wants from them?
  - ii) In what ways might that happen?
  - iii) Have you, or someone you know, ever decided to do something for God because you wanted to do it or it seemed right to you, but you didn't really try to find out what the Lord wanted. If so how did that happen? What were the results?

8. Did you notice that several times, God approached Cain to point out Cain's error? Cain had many opportunities to admit his sin and go back and make a right decision that would have pleased the Lord. But instead of going back and doing the right thing, Cain kept plunging ahead and going deeper and deeper into sin and rebellion against the Lord and on his way tried to cover up and hide his sins.

i) Today, when people sin, do you see an option available of going back and facing the sin, and confessing it and of doing the right thing or deciding to forge ahead and get deeper and deeper into sin?

ii) Do people today sin and then try to blame others or to cover it, even trying to hide it from God? In what ways have you experienced this, or seen it happen? How successful were the denials, cover-ups and blame?

iii) We saw Cain disrespect the Creator God over and over in this story, yet the LORD showed incredible mercy and patience. Even at the end of the story we see Cain still arguing with God, complaining that his sentence is unfair, resisting his responsibility. Finally, the Lord imposes severe consequence on Cain for his sin.

9. Today, when people sin, is their first tendency to take responsibility? Have you ever seen rebellion? I mean, people rebelling against the LORD, committing sin, and then blaming others for the results of the sin? In what ways have you experienced this or seen it happen?

10. Remember also, how Cain refused to bring the sacrifice that the LORD required and then would not admit his sin, and instead kept moving deeper and deeper into sin? Also, we saw Cain try to cover his sin, lying even to the LORD!

11. Today, do you think people have that same tendency to hide their sins, or to run deeper into trouble, rather than facing their sins and confessing them, to try to lie to God about the sin? Have you ever seen anyone succeed at hiding their sin and lying to God? What might we learn from all of this, running from sin activity?



12. Are you your brother's keeper? How so? What brothers and sisters do you keep?



*"Where is Abel your brother?" Cain replied, "I don't know. Am I the one that is supposed to take care of my brother? Am I my brother's keeper?"*



**The Following excerpt is from THE GREAT DIVORCE by C.S. Lewis (1945), Chapter 11:**

In this story, Lewis envisions a bus trip from hell to heaven and describes the different responses of the ghostly figures of the underworld to the painfully real, brighter, and more solid world of heaven— and their sometimes tragic and chilling reasons for deciding to return to hell. This story includes the famous line “There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says, in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’”

**(Think: How does a lesson from the Cain & Abel Story compare and converge with the lesson of this encounter with the ghost, the red lizard and the angel on this fictional bus ride between Heaven and Hell)**

... I saw coming towards us a Ghost who carried something on his shoulder. Like all the Ghosts, he was unsubstantial, but they differed from one another as smokes differ. Some had been whitish; this one was dark and oily. What sat on his shoulder was a little red lizard, and it was twitching its tail like a whip and whispering things in his ear. As we caught sight of him he turned his head to the reptile with a snarl of impatience. "Shut up, I tell you!" he said. It wagged its tail and continued to whisper to him. He ceased snarling, and presently began to smile. Then he turned and started to limp westward, away from the mountains.

"Off so soon?" said a voice.

The speaker was more or less human in shape but larger than a man, and so bright that I could hardly look at him. His presence smote on my eyes and on my body too (for there was heat coming from him as well as light) like the morning sun at the beginning of a tyrannous summer day.

"Yes. I'm off," said the Ghost. "Thanks for all your hospitality. But it's no good, you see.

I told this little chap," (here he indicated the lizard), "that he'd have to be quiet if he came -which he insisted on doing. Of course his stuff won't do here: I realise that. But he won't stop. I shall just have to go home."

"Would you like me to make him quiet?" said the flaming Spirit—an angel, as I now understood.

"Of course I would," said the Ghost.

"Then I will kill him," said the Angel, taking a step forward.

"Oh-ah-look out! You're burning me. Keep away," said the Ghost, retreating.

"Don't you want him killed?"

"You didn't say anything about killing him at first. I hardly meant to bother you with anything so drastic as that."

"It's the only way," said the Angel, whose burning hands were now very close to the lizard. "Shall I kill it?"

"Well, that's a further question. I'm quite open to consider it, but it's a new point, isn't it? I mean, for the moment I was only thinking about silencing it because up here-well, it's so damned embarrassing."

"May I kill it?"

"Well, there's time to discuss that later."

"There is no time. May I kill it?"

"Please, I never meant to be such a nuisance. Please-really-don't bother. Look! It's gone to sleep of its own accord. I'm sure it'll be all right now. Thanks ever so much."

"May I kill it?"

"Honestly, I don't think there's the slightest necessity for that. I'm sure I shall be able to keep it in order now. I think the gradual process would be far better than killing it."

"The gradual process is of no use at all."

"Don't you think so? Well, I'll think over what you've said very carefully. I honestly will. In fact I'd let you kill it now, but as a matter of fact I'm not feeling frightfully well to-day. It would be silly to do it now. I'd need to be in good health for the operation. Some other day, perhaps."

"There is no other day. All days are present now."

"Get back! You're burning me. How can I tell you to kill it? You'd kill me if you did."

"It is not so."

"Why, you're hurting me now."

"I never said it wouldn't hurt you. I said it wouldn't kill you."

"Oh, I know. You think I'm a coward. But it isn't that. Really it isn't. I say! Let me run back by tonight's bus and get an opinion from my own doctor. I'll come again the first moment I can."

"This moment contains all moments."

"Why are you torturing me? You are jeering at me. How can I let you tear me to pieces? If you wanted to help me, why didn't you kill the damned thing without asking me-before I knew? It would be all over by now if you had."

"I cannot kill it against your will. It is impossible. Have I your permission?"

The Angel's hands were almost closed on the Lizard, but not quite. Then the Lizard began chattering to the Ghost so loud that even I could hear what it was saying.

"Be careful," it said. "He can do what he says. He can kill me. One fatal word from you and he will! Then you'll be without me for ever and ever. It's not natural. How could you live? You'd be only a sort of ghost, not a real man as you are now. He doesn't understand. He's only a cold, bloodless abstract thing. It may be natural for him, but it isn't for us. Yes, yes. I know there are no real pleasures now, only dreams. But aren't they better than nothing? And I'll be so good. I admit I've sometimes gone too far in the past, but I promise I won't do it again. I'll give you nothing but really nice dreams-all sweet and fresh and almost innocent. You might say, quite innocent\_\_\_\_"

"Have I your permission?" said the Angel to the Ghost.

"I know it will kill me."

"It won't. But supposing it did?"

"You're right. It would be better to be dead than to live with this creature."

"Then I may?"

"Damn and blast you! Go on can't you? Get it over. Do what you like," bellowed the Ghost: but ended, whimpering, "God help me. God help me."

Next moment the Ghost gave a scream of agony such as I never heard on Earth. The Burning One closed his crimson grip on the reptile: twisted it, while it bit and writhed, and then flung it, broken backed, on the turf.

"Ow! That's done for me," gasped the Ghost, reeling backwards.

For a moment I could make out nothing distinctly. Then I saw, between me and the nearest bush, unmistakably solid but growing every moment solider, the upper arm and the shoulder of a man. Then, brighter still and stronger, the legs and hands. The neck and golden head materialised while I watched, and if my attention had not wavered I should have seen the actual completing of a man-an immense man, naked, not much smaller than the Angel. What distracted me was the fact that at the same moment something seemed to

be happening to the Lizard. At first I thought the operation had failed. So far from dying, the creature was still struggling and even growing bigger as it struggled. And as it grew it changed. Its hinder parts grew rounder. The tail, still flickering, became a tail of hair that flickered between huge and glossy buttocks. Suddenly I started back, rubbing my eyes. What stood before me was the greatest stallion I have ever seen, silvery white but with mane and tail of gold. It was smooth and shining, rippled with swells of flesh and muscle, whinneying and stamping with its hoofs. At each stamp the land shook and the trees dindled .

The new-made man turned and clapped the new horse's neck. It nosed his bright body. Horse and master breathed each into the other's nostrils. The man turned from it, flung himself at the feet of the Burning One, and embraced them. When he rose I thought his face shone with tears, but it may have been only the liquid love and brightness (one cannot distinguish them in that country) which flowed from him. I had not long to think about it. In joyous haste the young man leaped upon the horse's back. Turning in his seat he waved a farewell, then nudged the stallion with his heels. They were off before I well knew what was happening. There was riding if you like! I came out as quickly as I could from among the bushes to follow them with my eyes; but already they were only like a shooting star far off on the green plain, and soon among the foothills of the mountains. Then, still like a star, I saw them winding up, scaling what seemed impossible steeps, and quicker every moment, till near the dim brow of the landscape, so high that I must strain my neck to see them, they vanished, bright themselves, into the rose-brightness of that everlasting morning.

While I still watched, I noticed that the whole plain and forest were shaking with a sound which in our world would be too large to hear, but there I could take it with joy. I knew it was not the Solid People who were singing. It was the voice of that earth, those woods and those waters. A strange archaic, inorganic noise, that came from all directions at once. The Nature or Arch-nature of that land rejoiced to have been once more ridden, and therefore consummated, in the person of the horse. It sang,

*"The Master says to our master, Come up. Share my rest and splendour till all natures that were your enemies become slaves to dance before you and backs for you to ride, and firmness for your feet to rest on.*

*"From beyond all place and time, out of the very Place, authority will be given you: the strengths that once opposed your will shall be obedient fire in your blood and heavenly thunder in your voice.*

*"Overcome us that, so overcome, we may be ourselves: we desire the beginning of your reign as we desire dawn and dew, wetness at the birth of light.*

*"Master, your Master has appointed you for ever: to be our King of Justice and our high Priest."*

"Do ye understand all this, my Son?" said the Teacher.

"I don't know about all, Sir," said I. "Am I right in thinking the Lizard really turned into the Horse?"

"Aye. But it was killed first. Ye'll not forget that part of the story?"

"I'll try not to, Sir. But does it mean that everything-everything-that is in us can go on to the Mountains?"

"Nothing, not even the best and noblest, can go on as it now is. Nothing, not even what is lowest and most bestial, will not be raised again if it submits to death. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. Flesh and blood cannot come to the Mountains. Not because they are too rank, but because they are too weak. *What is a Lizard compared with a stallion? Lust is a poor, weak, whimpering whispering thing compared with that richness and energy of desire which will arise when lust has been killed.*"

**APPENDIX:  
EXAMPLES OF HOW THE LEGACY OF CAIN STILL ECHOES IN POPULAR  
CULTURE**

**The American Civil War (1861-65) was surely a war in the way of  
Cain... brother killing brother...**

**The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down  
Songwriter: Robbie Robertson**

**Virgil Caine** is the name and I served on the Danville train  
'Til Stoneman's cavalry came and tore up the tracks again  
In the winter of '65, we were hungry, just barely alive...By May the 10th  
Richmond had fell. It's a time I remember, oh so well.

The night they drove old Dixie down And the bells were ringing  
The night they drove old Dixie down And the people were singing  
They went, "Na, na, na..."

Back with my wife in Tennessee, when one day she called to me  
"Virgil, quick, come see, there go the Robert E. Lee"  
Now I don't mind choppin' wood, and I don't care if the money's no  
good. Ya take what ya need and ya leave the rest,  
But they should never have taken the very best.

The night they drove old Dixie down  
And the bells were ringing  
The night they drove old Dixie down  
And all the people were singing  
They went, "Na, Na, Na..."

Like my father before me, I will work the land  
And like my brother above me, who **took a rebel stand**  
He was just eighteen, proud and brave, but **a Yankee laid him in his  
grave**. I swear by the mud below my feet  
**You can't raise a Caine back up when he's in defeat.**

The night they drove old Dixie down  
And the bells were ringing  
The night they drove old Dixie down  
And all the people were singing, they went, "Na, na, na..."

The night they drove old Dixie down And all the bells were ringing  
The night they drove old Dixie down  
And the people were singing  
They went, "Na, na, na..."

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**The Future**  
**Songwriter:** Leonard Cohen

**Cohen often begins this song, saying,  
"I have seen the future, brother, it is murder."**

Give me back my broken night  
my mirrored room, my secret life  
it's lonely here,  
there's no one left to torture  
Give me absolute control  
over every living soul  
And lie beside me, baby,  
that's an order!  
Give me crack and anal sex  
Take the only tree that's left  
and stuff it up the hole  
in your culture  
Give me back the Berlin wall  
give me Stalin and St Paul  
I've seen the future, brother:  
it is murder.

***Refrain:***

*Things are going to slide, slide in all directions  
Won't be nothing  
Nothing you can measure anymore  
The blizzard, the blizzard of the world  
has crossed the threshold  
and it has overturned  
the order of the soul*

When they said REPENT REPENT  
I wonder what they meant  
When they said REPENT REPENT  
I wonder what they meant  
When they said REPENT REPENT  
I wonder what they meant

You don't know me from the wind  
you never will, you never did  
I'm the little Jew  
who wrote the Bible



I've seen the nations rise and fall  
I've heard their stories, heard them all  
but love's the only engine of survival  
Your servant here, he has been told  
to say it clear, to say it cold:  
It's over, it ain't going  
any further  
And now the wheels of heaven stop  
you feel the devil's riding crop  
Get ready for the future:  
it is murder

***Things are going to slide ...***

There'll be the breaking of the ancient  
western code  
Your private life will suddenly explode  
There'll be phantoms  
There'll be fires on the road  
and the white man dancing  
You'll see a woman  
hanging upside down  
her features covered by her fallen gown  
and all the lousy little poets  
coming round  
tryin' to sound like Charlie Manson  
and the white man dancin'

Give me back the Berlin wall  
Give me Stalin and St Paul  
Give me Christ  
or give me Hiroshima  
Destroy another fetus now  
We don't like children anyhow  
I've seen the future, baby:  
it is murder

***Things are going to slide ...***

When they said REPENT REPENT ...

(1992 Sony Music Entertainment)

You may value some interpretive comments on this shocking song by Jewish poet/songwriter Leonard Cohen. I have included mine in red below (Bill Bjoraker).

The narrator of the song is a nameless "everyman" who stands in the long legacy of Cain, as it is expressed in the modern and postmodern West. The history of the human race, from this very first pair of brothers, all through has been murder, and without Redemption through Messiah, the future of the human race, stretching out as long as there are humans, is only "murder."

### "The Future"

**Give me** back my broken night (**"Give me" is demanded 4 times in this first stanza...this is the selfish demand of Cain**)

my mirrored room, my secret life

it's lonely here, **(those in they way of Cain will finally be isolated, and die alone, in darkness)**

there's no one left to torture

**Give me absolute control (Satan, Hitler, Stalin) over every living soul**

And lie beside me, baby,

that's an order! **(sexual abuse, degradation of women)**

**Give me** crack and anal sex **(addiction, sexual perversion)**

Take the only tree that's left **(the Eco-crisis- "What have they done to the earth? What have they done to our fair sister!?... ravaged and plundered and ripped her and bit her..." in the words of The Doors lead singer Jim Morrison)**

and stuff it up the hole

in your culture

**Give me** back the Berlin wall

**Give me** Stalin and St Paul **(moral relativism)**

**I've seen the future, brother:**

**it is murder (the way of Cain, the first fratricide of the human race and its legacy will endure to the end of time, except for those redeemed through faith in Jesus the Jewish Messiah and Savior of the world)**

**Things are going to slide, slide in all directions (the center will not hold...sin is not static, but dynamic, total depravity permeates all of society and culture)**

**Won't be nothing  
Nothing you can measure anymore  
The blizzard, the blizzard of the world  
has crossed the threshold  
and it has overturned  
the order of the soul**

**(This describes well the blizzard of Nazi evil that blasted Germany and all Europe... "overturned the order of the soul"... the evil was "nothing you can measure any more"... at the Nuremberg War Crimes trials in 1945-46 they had to invent new words to name the monstrous measure of the crimes: "Genocide"..."Crimes against humanity"...)**

**When they said REPENT REPENT  
I wonder what they meant  
When they said REPENT REPENT  
I wonder what they meant  
When they said REPENT REPENT  
I wonder what they meant**

**("REPENT" is the only answer...but the speaker "wondered what they meant" ...a sad comment on our modern/postmodern culture... when persons sin against their conscience long enough, ignoring it, it is deadened and seared... most today in the West are so far gone, they don't know what the word means)**

**You don't know me from the wind (Jesus said, "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but you don't know where it comes from and where it is going...")  
you never will, you never did (the world, who is in the way of Cain, has never understood the Jewish people, or the Gospel, hence anti-Semitism and persecution of Christians throughout history. Out of their spiritual blindness and dead consciences, they lash out in rage, in hatred of the light that would call them to account before God)**

**I'm the little Jew  
who wrote the Bible**

**I've seen the nations rise and fall (Indeed the Jewish people have seen them rise and fall, as Mark Twain said, "All things are mortal but the Jew. All other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?")**

**I've heard their stories, heard them all  
but love's the only engine of survival (Indeed. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever**

**believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life")**

**Your servant here,** he has been told

to say it clear, to say it cold:

It's over, it ain't going

any further **(Jews and Christians are his servants who carry his prophetic word to a mostly heedless society)**

And now the wheels of heaven stop

**You feel the devil's riding crop**

**Get ready for the future:**

**It is murder**

*Things are going to slide ...*

**There'll be the breaking of the ancient**

**Western code (moral decline of Western Civilization. See "The Western Book of the Dead" below)**

**Your private life will suddenly explode**

There'll be phantoms

There'll be fires on the road

and the **white man dancing (White, Western man's triumphalism)**

You'll see **a woman**

**hanging upside down**

her features covered by her fallen gown

and all the lousy little poets

coming round

tryin' to sound like **Charlie Manson (The Manson murders of 1969 can be understood as a logical conclusion to the postmodern shift that reached popular culture by that time. The Nietzschean philosophy of the transvaluation of values; the philosophy of the "Übermensch," who, like Napoleon, or so he believes, can overstep the most basic bounds of morality in order to achieve a high end. Make himself into an extraordinary man by choosing. As Dostoevsky's character Raskolnikov, in *Crime and Punishment* says: "The extraordinary man has the right to find in his own conscience a sanction for murder, if it is essential to the practical fulfillment of his idea. Our rulers destroy men by millions themselves and look on it as a virtue." You end with no ego, no morality, and no truth, only the "will to power"...this is what Nietzsche envisioned.**

**and the white man dancin' (Since the European Enlightenment dominated modern Western culture, making reason a god, rejecting the authority of the Bible, the brilliant Renaissance-Reformation culture of the Western world, and the gift of**

**Christianity, has delinked and leave "the white man dancin" over the phantoms and fires on the road).**

**Give me back the Berlin wall**

**Give me Stalin and St Paul**

**Give me Christ**

**or give me Hiroshima (the Hindu concept that there is no difference between good and evil, in the a-moral universe, monstrous evil and the highest good are all the same... "maya" illusions...the Eastern religious worldview has increasing influenced the West since the 1960s)**

**Destroy another fetus now**

**We don't like children anyhow (abortion on demand...73 million American citizens murdered by abortion since it was legalized by the infamous Supreme Court decision "Roe v Wade" in 1973)**

I've seen the future, baby:

**it is murder**

Things are going to slide ...

When they said REPENT REPENT ...

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## **On the Death, by Murder, of a Culture:**

### **The Western Book of the Dead**

(This document was recently brought in by our foreign correspondent.)

- I. In the beginning— i.e. before the beginning— there was NOTHING. And MATTER came out of NOTHING. And MATTER was CHAOS.
- II. Strangely, and for no reason whatsoever, CHAOS started to change. Simplicity begat complexity, randomness begat order and, most peculiar of all, inanimate MATTER begat organic MATTER.
- III. May, many, many years passed and quite by chance organic MATTER developed in a strange direction. It became more and more complex, and then for no apparent reason at all, it became conscious of itself. It called consciousness MIND and it gave itself a name and that name was MAN.
- IV. Now, MAN equipped with MIND found that MIND played peculiar tricks on him. He found that instead of just accepting himself as part of MATTER, he had a longing for significance, a desire to live

- for a purpose. Instead of being pushed about by blind chance, he wanted to direct his own affairs. He also found that there was a state of being that was entirely satisfactory and he called it LOVE.
- V. Man kept on searching for purpose and meaning and after a while strange rumors began to spread— rumors that spoke of Creator-God who was LOVE, who had created man in his own image. Many men believed the rumors. It gave their lives meaning; it told them the universe was not purposeless after all. Inspired by hope, these believers started to write, to paint, and to chip away at blocks of stone. Some of these craftsmen were extremely skillful. They seemed to be expressing the longings and aspirations of all men. To these exceptional pieces of craft a name was given, and that name was ART. And the men who wrote them, painted them, or chipped them out were called ARTISTS. And all their art said: MAN IS SIGNIFICANT.
- VI. It was also rumored that the son of LOVE became a MAN, showed men how to live, and then died. A legend has it that the son of LOVE came back from the dead and disappeared in a cloud. In some parts of the Western World the BELIEVERS of this legend spread a very influential form of the message: MAN IS SIGNIFICANT.
- VII. For many years this state of affairs existed, but MAN became restless. Was it so? Was MAN a creation of LOVE? Why should he simply believe a rumor? Had anyone used his REASON—a very special activity of MIND that had proved to be successful in understanding MATTER—to find out if the rumor was true? Did the rumor actually correspond to what really was? A thorough investigation began and it lasted many years.
- VIII. After an era of investigation MAN came to certain conclusions: 1) The rumors were certainly false. REASON found no EVIDENCE to verify the God hypothesis. God, they said, was the result of wishful daydreams, a figment of IMAGINATION— which itself was an early aberration in primitive MAN, now happily under the control of REASON. And if the rumor of God was false, so surely was the complex rumor about his son. 2) MAN was not some mysterious higher being who was significant. He was, on the contrary, of no importance at all—simply a complex product of cause and effect. A meaningless piece of MATTER on a larger but equally meaningless piece of MATTER called EARTH. He had emerged from primordial slime and was really neither more nor less than that.
- IX. At first nothing much changed. But a few years passed and a few perceptive men began to notice a difference. Music didn't sound the same, painting didn't look the same, and books didn't read in the same way. Some people started to complain, but the ARTISTS— always very honest, transparent people—simply said, “we are interpreting REALITY. If REALITY is meaningless, then we must imitate that meaninglessness. You must not give yourselves airs. You are nothing. You are a conscious bit of protoplasm condemned

to death on this planet." At that, the critical group stopped carping and started to say how beautiful the NEW ART was. They didn't want to use the word "beautiful" because everybody knew it didn't mean anything, but it had been around for so long, why not use it anyway?

- X. Then, too, a few perceptive men noticed changes in the way men and women behaved. Once they had loved each other. And there LOVE was thought to be a reflection of the LOVE that was God. But now there was just SEX—liaisons of the moment. And families began to die as families and children were left to the whim of the courts. And men called these liaisons LOVE, though they knew the word didn't mean anything.
- XI. All sorts of startling consequences followed. Some men said, "If MAN is only a machine caught up in the vast mechanism of nature, why not treat him accordingly?" So the MANIPULATORS set to work and used men just like other objects of nature. And behold, there came a very efficient system called UTOPIA, and the occupants were called NECROPHILES. Of course, it was really nothing new, for the MANIPULATORS had picked up their model from the ANTS, a natural group of beings who years previously had attained the perfect state of affairs. Another group of man resisted UTOPIA. They said, "In spite of all that REASON has proved, we will continue to believe that our longings and aspirations are meaningful." So they tried to forget their DESPAIR (a feeling that MAN experienced when he wanted to hope and did hope knowing that it was hopeless), by taking chemicals and behaving like animals, living only for each successive moment and trying hard to make each moment pleasurable. Most of them got tired of playing these games after a while and disposed of themselves in various ways. Some went to DEATH, some to PSYCHEDELIA (a beautiful country with a synaesthetic landscape), some to NIRVANA. Some even went to UTOPIA. And so nonsense was worshipped instead of sense (they called it the absurd). Finally, REASON was abandoned—because you see it couldn't give answers to the really big questions after all. In its place came UNREASON (they called it irrationality). And MORALITY was abandoned—because that peculiar ability to distinguish between THE GOOD and THE BAD was simply regarded as a mere matter of taste or caprice. THE GOOD and THE BAD had been popular once, but that was when rumors of God were rife. THE GOOD was God's holy character and had to be obeyed. THE BAD was disobedience of revolt against THE GOOD. But THE GOOD and THE BAD departed with REASON and with God. And now there was no longer TRAGEDY—only MISERY.
- XII. So MAN ceased to be MAN—a rational moral creature, a being who once transcended the causality of nature. Instead he became a meaningless, enigmatic, machine-like piece of MATTER. Even the MANIPULATORS, who controlled UTOPIA ceased to be MAN in the old sense of the word. After denying their mannishness for so long,



they finally lost it and so became the most terrifying animal on the face of the earth.

### **Postscript**

The old rumors still persist— found in outlying regions and small cliques of NON-CONFORMISTS in UTOPIA, that LOVE is. Some still say MAN is. But these are the same ones who say no MAN has ever really died, that even the ancients are alive (some well, some not) and living in OTHER WORLD. Such rumors are being suppressed wherever they are being found.

(InterVarsity Press, 1970)

***“Then Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is too great to bear....You have driven me this day from the face of the earth...and I shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth.” ....***

**And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and settled in the Land of Nod, east of Eden.” (Genesis 4: 13-16)**

**“But, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering. <sup>23</sup> You have come to the General Assembly of God’s firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the Judge over all. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect.**

**<sup>24</sup> You have come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to **the sprinkled blood**, which speaks of better things, of forgiveness and mercy, instead of crying out for vengeance like **the blood of Abel.”** (Hebrews 12: 22-24)**