

# The Genesis Echo

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The Genesis Echo is an ongoing investigation of pre-Babel history as recorded in both the Bible and the characters of the Chinese language.

### Cain & Abel

According to the Genesis account, it would appear that Adam and Eve's first and second born children were boys – Cain and Abel. We often hear about children being as different as night is from day. That was the case with these two. Though they worked at different occupations (Cain as a farmer, Abel as a shepherd), the true difference between them is found in their relationship to God. In bringing offering to God (which both of them did), Cain brought the equivalent of a grain offering ("an offering of the fruit of the ground," Genesis 4:3), whereas Abel brought a sin offering ("of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat," Genesis 4:4). Abel acknowledged his sin, and pursued righteousness, Cain did not.

The Chinese word for RIGHTEOUSNESS (yì, 義) appropriately pictures a SHEEP (yáng, 羊) covering over ME (wǒ, 我). But wǒ can be broken down further – me is represented by a HAND (shǒu, 手) and a KNIFE (gē, 戈). Righteousness depends upon a sacrifice. Recall, we saw the beginning of atonement in our last article, as God clothed Adam and Eve with tunics of skin. He made sacrifice for them. Abel made sacrifice for himself, seeking atonement for sin, that he might be righteous.

yì

義

RIGHTEOUSNESS

Previously, we had seen 福 (fú), which pictured man's HAPPINESS, residing in the garden and having fellowship with God. Though the garden of Eden is no more, happiness is still possible. Consider another word for HAPPINESS (xiáng, 祥). The left side of the image remains the same, God (shì, 示). There is no true happiness apart from the Lord. But the right side of the image is no longer about a relationship shared in the garden, but pictures a sheep (yáng, 羊). Happiness, like righteousness, is found through a sacrifice. For Abel, and those who walked in his likeness, that sacrifice was the offering of the blood of bulls, goats and goats. For you and I today, that sacrifice is Jesus Christ, of whom John the Baptist said,

xiáng

祥

HAPPINESS

*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29, 36, NKJV)*

xiōng

兄

The Genesis account indicates that Cain was the firstborn son to Adam and Eve, Abel's ELDER BROTHER (xiōng, 兄). The etymology of 兄 reveals him to be the mouth (kǒu, 口) man (ér, 儿), or spokesperson for the family. This is the case in most cultures, both ancient and modern.

xiōng

兇

VIOLENT / CRUEL

Though Cain was the first elder brother, this word could be used of any elder brother. But, 兄 is the base of another word that identifies it even further with Cain, the Chinese word for VIOLENT (xiōng, 兇). He was the mouth man by birth, but became a murder (xiōng, 凶) man (ér, 儿) by his actions. We find that:

ELDER BROTHER

*...Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. (Genesis 4:8, NKJV)*

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This mark placed upon Cain, identifying him not just as an older brother, but now a violent murderous man is also mentioned in the Bible. After God pronounced Cain's punishment (Genesis 4:10-12), Cain responded,

*... 'My punishment is greater that I can bear! ... it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me.' And the LORD said to him, 'Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.' And the LORD set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him. (Genesis 4:13-15, NKJV)*

But what is the mark? The Genesis account does not tell us, but the Chinese language does. One night that stretched into the early hours of the mourning, I was trying to determine what the mark on Cain was. As I stretched my neck – I saw it! The mark which identifies the violent man is the number seven (qī, 七), rotated about 140°. This was a warning to any who might think to kill Cain, that vengeance would come upon them sevenfold.

One more world for us to consider with 兄 in it, the word for PRAY (zhù, 祝). In this Chinese character, we see the elder brother (xiōng, 兄) on the right side and God (shì, 示). Not only was the elder brother to be the spokesman for the family, but he was to exercise the role of spiritual leadership. Cain did not exercise the spiritual leadership he should have – his younger brother was the spiritual leader among the children of Adam and Eve.

zhù

祝

PRAY

Next time, we will look at Noah and the generation in which he lived, and see how he followed in the way of Abel, while the rest of the world followed the way of Cain.

## Other Resources

Nelson, Ethel R., and C.H. Kang. The Discovery of Genesis: How the Truths of Genesis Were Found Hidden in the Chinese Language. St. Louis, MO : Concordia Publishing House, 1979.

Nelson, Ethel R., Richard E. Broadberry, and Ginger Tong Chock. God's Promise to the Chinese. Dunlap, TN : Read Books Publishers, 1997.

MDBG Chinese-English Dictionary. [usa.mdbg.net/chindict/chindict.php](http://usa.mdbg.net/chindict/chindict.php)