



## Crouching Sin, Stalking Lion

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By Kevin Phipps

Parashah B'reisheet

**Kayin:** *My idea! It was my idea! Hevel stole my idea, then stole my acceptance from Adonai. I can't believe he did that! After I spent months in my fields working the land, growing the crops, keeping the produce from being eaten by animals, working my fingers to the bone, from the crack of dawn to the setting of the sun, I get beat by a shepherd boy. How hard can that be to sit there and watch a bunch of stupid sheep all day? How did his offering get accepted, and not mine? I know he's my little brother, but why does he have to do everything I do? Then he does half the work and twice the glory. I tired of it! Something has to be done about that boy.*

**Adonai:** *Kayin. What reason do you have to be angry? Why are you so downcast? Do you not know that your anger shows that you are already on the path that leads to destruction? If you were doing what is right, you could hold your head high knowing that you are on the path that leads to life. Because you are on the way of the wicked, sin is crouching at the door of your heart. It is stalking you like a hungry lion, waiting to devour you. It wants you, and it will destroy you, but only if you let it. You have the power to rule over it. The choice is yours.*

**Kayin:** *It was my offering. It was my work. It was my produce, and it was the best. Nobody works that field better than me! If it wasn't for that brother of mine and his sheep, Adonai would have to accept me. If I'm already in sin, it doesn't matter what I do now. Maybe Adonai won't even notice. Either way, I've got to do what I've got to do. Hevel!*

This is the background behind the first murder in human history. It was not between two sworn enemies, but two brothers. The first sin, of Adam and Havah, separated man from God. The second sin separated man from man. The first sin was caused by doubt. What caused the second sin? I see Kayin as being a man full of pride. He was the firstborn of Adam. He had a unique place in the history of mankind. He knew of God, but I don't see him having much of a relationship with Him. His offering to God was more out of His own pride, to make himself look good before God and bring advantage to himself. His heart was not in the right place when he presented his offering to God, which most likely was the cause, or at least one of them, for God not accepting his offering.

Perhaps as younger brothers normally do, Hevel followed Kayin's lead in preparing and bringing an offering to God. However, unlike Kayin, I believe Hevel had a good relationship with God, and made his offering with his heart in the right place. He may have even understood the precedent set with his parents that a sin offering, if in fact that is what it was, required the shedding of blood. These two factors and perhaps others, led to God accepting Hevel's offering, and not Kayin's.

In all actuality, the reason for the rejection of Kayin's offering is not important. The fact is that it was not and Kayin had to decide how he was going to react to the situation. A bad situation does not have to lead to a bad reaction. In fact a bad reaction can make a bad situation worse. However, a good reaction can not only make a bad situation better, but at times, can bring good out of a bad situation. Look at what happened when Yosef, who had been despised by his brothers and sold as a slave in Egypt was able to do because he kept his faith in God and did what was right, despite his circumstances.

God's response to Kayin's anger was both a warning and a description of where Kayin already was because of the state of his heart. Not only did Kayin have to repent to keep from killing his brother, but he had to repent to get on the right path and restore his relationship with God.

Kayin's warning is also our warning. Where are we right now? We just got done with the high holy days. We searched our heart during Rosh Hashanah. We brought our sins to God and were cleansed on Yom Kippur. Our relationships with God and our fellow man have been restored. We are able to live in a state of shalom, which is represented by the Sukkah, which we have enjoyed during the Feast of Tabernacles.

Now that the holiday is over, the physical Sukkahs are gone. However, spiritually, as the Sukkah represents a right relationship with God and His ability to tabernacle with us as a result and the peace which results, it is important for us do keep our hearts clean and our feet from sin in order to maintain our shalom.

Guess who does not want us there? Guess who will do all he can to remove us from our shalom? As 1 Kefa 5:8 tells us, *"Your enemy, the Adversary, stalks about like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."* Do you think it is an accident that after Sukkot, the next holiday on the secular calendar is Halloween? There is no night that our Adversary stalks about more than Halloween. With or without this demonic holiday, as long as we are living at peace with God and Man, the first thing Ha Satan will try to do is remove you from it. What is the first thing the pagan nations desire to do when God's people inhabit Jerusalem, the city of shalom? Remove them from it. Perhaps in some ways he already has removed you from your Jerusalem.

*"Adonai, who can rest in your tent?*

*Who can live on your holy mountain?*

*Those who live a blameless life, who behave uprightly,*

*Who speak truth from their hearts and keep their tongues from slander; who never do harm to others or seek to discredit neighbors; who look with scorn on the vile, but honor those who fear Adonai; who hold to an oath, no matter the cost; who refuse usury when they lend money and refuse a bribe to damage the innocent. Those who do these things never will be moved.*

Imagine these things forming a circle around you. In this circle you have shalom. This is where you want to be. This is your spiritual sukkah, your Jerusalem. If you are in it, do all you can, along with the power of the Ruach HaKodesh to stay in it. If you fall and find yourself out of it, seek rescue from Yeshua, as Kefa did while learning to walk on water, and He will bring you back to your center, your Jerusalem. *“Two are better than one, in that their cooperative efforts yield this advantage: if one of them falls, the other will help his partner up – woe to him who is alone when he falls and has no one to help him up.”* (Ecc.4:9-10) There are no lone rangers in God’s Kingdom. Not only do we have each other, but we also have Yeshua, who is Emmanuel, “God with us”. Then there is also the spiritual armor described in Ephesians 6 to help us fight the Adversary and stand our ground. One way or another, the object is to maintain our spiritual Jerusalem.

What happened to Kayin? Was he in the circle? Not even close. I don’t know that he ever was. What he knew of God, he knew from outside the circle. Now consider his parents. They were inside the circle, represented by the garden itself. Ha Satan succeeded in removing them from the circle, which led to them being removed from the garden. How did he do it? He got them to focus on the one thing they could not have. It was the one thing outside the circle. Once their focus was on something outside the circle, they forgot what they had inside, and Ha Satan could easily get them to see that the forbidden fruit was better than the blessings of the entire garden.

What we have inside our spiritual Jerusalem is spiritual, from the hand of a spiritual God. However, because they are spiritual, they have value and meaning. What value does something have which is here today and gone tomorrow? None. Guess what God calls this. Hevel. Why was Kayin angry? His focus was on his brother, Hevel, and not on his relationship with God. The more he focused on Hevel, the further from his circle of shalom he got, and the further down the road of destruction he went. The prowling lion of the Adversary eventually caught him and destroyed his life.

We see the word hevel at the beginning of Kohelet (Ecclesiastes). *“Vanity of vanities, all is vanity”* As long as our focus is on the vanity of the world, we cannot see the eternal blessings that we have in our spiritual Jerusalem, our city of peace. The joys of vanity are temporary, but the effects of not having a right relationship with God are eternal. Living in God’s Kingdom is not easy either, but the hardships are temporary, the blessings are eternal.

*“If you don’t do what is good, sin is crouching at the door – it wants you, but you can rule over it.”* (Bereshit 4:7)

*(For another illustration of this point, read Proverbs 7)*

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