

The Case of Cain and Abel

Basis of legal proceeding (Biblical Law, H. B. Clark)

The scriptures reveal: “And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door: and unto thee shall be its desire, but do thou rule over it. And Cain told Abel his brother. And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And Jehovah said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now cursed art thou from the ground, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth. And Cain said unto Jehovah, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the ground; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth; and it will come to pass, that whosoever findeth me will slay me. And Jehovah said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And Jehovah appointed a sign for Cain, lest any finding him should smite him” (Genesis 4:6-15).

Legal Proceedings:

1. Accusation (Thou hast killed thy brother Abel)—“Where is Abel thy brother?”
2. Plea (Not guilty)—“I know not. Am I my brother’s keeper?”
3. Evidence—“the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.”
4. Judgment—Thou shalt be “a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth.”
5. Petition for clemency—“My punishment is greater than I can bear,” for “everyone that findeth me shall slay me.”
6. Judgment modified—“the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him,” and decreed that “whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.”