

the privileges of the first born, a fact which possibly distorted his sense of his own importance. Helmut Thielicke describes Cain's ego trip in How the World Began:

...from the beginning, Cain grew up with the suggestion that first rights in everything were his due. The will to power and the egotistical self-assertion which were in his blood and ours too--for we are all the children of Cain--appear to him to be perfectly legitimate. For him, Abel is by no means his neighbor, who has his own rights in life. For him, Abel is neither a partner nor even a brother, but simply exists to be used. 'I, Cain, am the star, the privileged one; but Abel is simply an extra on the stage. Abel is of interest to me only in so far and as long as he serves my career, as long as I can make a profit out of him. Apart from this--that is, as a man--he is non-existent, he is a negligible quantity.'¹⁶

Cain played his advantage over Abel for all it was worth. The desires that burned within him were directed toward retaining his advantages and furthering his own satisfaction. When his offering was rejected, it was a shattering experience for proud Cain. The Scripture says that Cain's "anger grew hot and his face fell" (vs. 5, Berkley Version).

While it appears obvious why Cain became angry it may be useful to analyze the process involved further.

As has been mentioned, "desires" are an important factor in the human heart. Anger is related to desire in that anger very often is triggered by blocked or frustrated desire, e.g.

¹⁶ Helmut Thielicke, How the World Began, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961), p. 191.