

# **THE GHOST OF ABEL**

William Blake

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A REVELATION IN THE VISIONS OF JEHOVAH SEEN BY WILLIAM BLAKE

## To Lord Byron in the Wilderness:

What doest thou here, Elijah? Can a Poet doubt the Visions of Jehovah? Nature has no Outline, But Imagination has. Nature has no Tune, but Imagination has. Nature has no Supernatural, and dissolves: Imagination is eternity.

SCENE *A rocky Country. EVE, fainted, over the dead body of ABEL, which lays near a Grave. ADAM kneels by her. JEHOVAH stands above.*

*Jehovah.* Adam!

*Adam.* I will not hear Thee more, Thou Spiritual Voice Is this Death?

*Jehovah.* Adam!

*Adam.* It is in vain: I will not hear Thee Henceforth. Is this Thy Promise, that the Woman's seed Should bruise the Serpent's head? Is this the Serpent? Ah! Seven times, O Eve! thou hast fainted over the Dead. Ah! Ah!

*EVE revives.*

*Eve.* Is this the Promise of Jehovah? O! it is all a vain delusion, This Death, and this Life, and this Jehovah!

*Jehovah.* Woman, lift thine eyes!

*A Voice is heard coming on.*

*Voice.* O Earth, cover not thou my blood! cover not thou my blood!

*Enter the Ghost of ABEL.*

*Eve.* Thou visionary Phantasm, thou art not the real Abel.

*Abel.* Among the Elohim, a Human Victim I wander: I am their House.

Prince of the Air, and our dimensions compass Zenith and Nadir.

Vain is Thy Covenant, O Jehovah! I am the Accuser and Avenger

Of Blood. O Earth! cover not thou the blood of Abel.

## THE GHOST OF ABEL

*Jehovah.* What Vengeance dost thou require?

*Abel.* Life for Life! Life for Life!

*Jehovah.* He who shall take Cain's life must also die, O Abel! And who is he? Adam, wilt thou, or Eve, thou do this?

*Adam.* It is all a vain delusion of the all-creative Imagination. Eve, come away, and let us not believe these vain delusions. Abel is dead, and Cain slew him. We shall also die a death, And then what then? be, as poor Abel, a Thought; or as This? O! what shall I call Thee, Form Divine, Father of Mercies,

That appearest to my Spiritual Vision? Eve, seest thou also?

*Eve.* I see Him plainly with my Mind's Eye. I see also Abel living, Tho' terribly afflicted, as we also are; yet Jehovah sees him Alive and not dead. Were it not better to believe Vision With all our might and strength, tho' we are fallen and lost?

*Adam.* Eve, thou hast spoken truly; let us kneel before His feet.

*They kneel before JEHOVAH.*

*Abel.* Are these the sacrifices of Eternity, O Jehovah a broken spirit

And a contrite heart? O! I cannot forgive: the Accuser hath Enter'd into me as into his house, and I loathe Thy Tabernacles.

As Thou hast said, so is it come to pass. My desire is unto Cain,

And he doth rule over me; therefore my soul in fumes of blood

Cries for Vengeance, Sacrifice on Sacrifice, Blood on Blood!

*Jehovah.* Lo! I have given you a Lamb for an Atonement, instead Of the transgressor, or no Flesh or Spirit could ever live.

*Abel.* Compellèd I cry, O Earth! cover not the blood of Abel.

*ABEL.* *sinks down into the Grave, from which arises SATAN, armed in glittering scales, with a Crown and a Spear.*

*Satan.* I will have Human blood, and not the blood of bulls or goats,

And no Atonement, O Jehovah! The Elohim live on Sacrifice Of Men: hence I am God of Men! Thou human, O Jehovah!

By the rock and oak of the Druid, creeping mistletoe, and thorn,

Cain's city built with human blood, not blood of bulls and goats,

Thou shalt Thyself be sacrificed to Me, thy God! on Calvary.

*Jehovah.* Such is My Will (*Thunders*) that thou thyself go to Eternal Death.

## THE GHOST OF ABEL

In Self–Annihilation, even till Satan, self–subdu'd, put off Satan

Into the Bottomless Abyss, whose torment arises for ever and ever.

*On each side a chorus of Angels, entering, sing the following:–*

The Elohim of the Heathen swore Vengeance for Sin! Then Thou stood'st

Forth, O Elohim Jehovah! in the midst of the darkness of the Oath, all clothèd

In Thy Covenant of the Forgiveness of Sins. Death, O Holy! Is this Brotherhood?

The Elohim saw their Oath Eternal Fire: they rollèd apart, trembling, over the

Mercy–seat, each in his station fixt in the firmament by Peace Brotherhood, and Love.

*The Curtain falls.*