

# **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

## THE GHOST OF ABEL

Of Blood. O Earth! cover not thou the blood 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,

## THE GHOST OF ABEL

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

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

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.*