

Genesis: The Book of Beginnings
Cain & Abel
Genesis 4:1-26

We've seen the creation of the world in chapter one, the forming Adam and Eve in chapter two, and their fall from grace in chapter three. Adam and Eve have been exiled from the Garden of Eden, but hope remains. The seed of the woman will crush the head of the seed of the serpent, and Eve is the mother of all the living (3:15, 20). But what will happen east of Eden? What will the enmity between the woman and serpent look like? The violence that erupts is **not something we've learned from but multiplied. In the 20th century**, 262 million people were murdered just by government genocides, massacres and terror. We need to master this story and cry out for the grace of God.

I. The Two Brothers

The pain of sin and alienation has come to Adam and Eve, and yet their union is not destroyed. Adam knew Eve, and she bears the pain of childbirth to “get” (CNH) a man, Cain, with the help of Yahweh (v1). Perhaps she thought this was the seed that would crush the serpent. Second, she has Abel who is a shepherd while Cain is a farmer (v2). In the course of time they each “bring an offering” **to God in the Bible's first worship service (v3). Abel's offering is accepted and Cain's rejected. Why? God doesn't say, and there is nothing wrong with a grain offering (Lev. 2), but** Moses tells us that Abel brought the firstborn of his flock and their fat portions (v4). We see first that Cain brought something to God. If we were watching a video, it would be hard to see anything wrong with the offering, but God sees the heart and rejects it. **Then we get to see what's inside Cain's heart: anger (v5). God wants to keep Cain from** sin, leading him to see the injustice of his anger and fallen countenance (v6). All he does well, “there is uplift” (v7). In other words, the problem is *not* Abel. The problem is **Cain's sin, which can be mastered but not ignored (v7)**. Here we come to the center of our conflict with others (Jms. 4:1-2). They have what we want and the closer we get to them the more we want it.

II. The Way of Cain

Cain refuses to turn to the Lord and murders Abel (v8). He flippantly overstates his duty to the Lord to cover-up his enormous sin (v9). Sin is always temporary insanity—**denying that God exists and knows what we're doing. He hears Abel's blood crying out from the ground (v10). That ground won't produce for him, and he will be a wanderer on the earth (vv11-12). Cain has murdered and lied, but he doesn't acknowledge the justice, even mercy, of the consequences. Instead, it's “greater than I can bear” (v13).** Even here, God is patient and long-suffering. **We don't know what the mark of Cain is, but it's a sign of mercy that would fend off anyone who would attack him (v15).** God gives Cain a wife, a son, a city and industrious descendants (vv17-22). Jabal ranches, Jubal makes music, and Tubal-cain works with metal. These are all good things that like anything can be used for evil. **But God's people** would use them for good. Lamech introduces the disaster of polygamy into the world, and he sounds like the kind of fool who would (vv23-24). He too thinks of himself as the victim and so he perpetrates great injustice and boasts about it. We should remember the *Lex Talionis*, that punishment should equal the injury, was given to end this cycle of revenge which Cain passed on to his descendants. **Twisting God's law, rejecting authority, complaining and following sinful desires is the way of Cain (Jude 4, 8, 11, 16).**

III. Better Than the Blood of Abel

Even after Abel's death and Cain's flight, Adam and Eve don't give up. Eve declares her hope in God: “God has appointed me another offspring” (v25). Seth has a child named Enosh and men begin calling on the name of the Lord (v26). No doubt some of these men were descendants of Cain, who abandoned the unbelief and bitterness of their ancestors as so many in the line of the Messiah would. **The blood of Abel called out for justice, but Jesus' blood is better and calls out for mercy (Heb. 12:24).** He puts destroys vengeance with the seventy-times-seven of forgiveness. This allows us to come to him with hearts and hands full of grace and gratitude.

NOTES FOR LITTLE SAINTS

Today's Passage: Genesis 4:1-7, 26

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord." 2 And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. 3 In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, 4 and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, 5 but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. 6 The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."

26 To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the Lord.

1. Cain and Abel both brought offerings to the Lord. What was different about Abel's (verse 4)?
2. How did Cain react when God didn't receive his offering (verse 5)? How should he have responded?
3. God tells Cain how to get rid of his anger: "If you _____, will you not be accepted?" Cain is supposed to lift up his face to the Lord, confess his sin, and rejoice in his brother Abel. Instead he kills him. How is sin described in verse 7?
4. Even though Adam and Eve lose their son Abel, they have another son Seth who trusts God, and so does his son Enosh. Draw a picture of Seth, Enosh and Adam laughing and enjoying each other.

Memory Verse to Recite Next Week:

7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it." —Genesis 4:7