

# CAIN AND ABEL

Genesis 4:1-16

## STRUCTURE

**Key-persons:** Cain and Abel

**Key-locations:** Altars, field, and Land of Nod (No-Man's-Land)

**Key-repetitions:**

- Anger (Gen 4:5, 6, 8, 9, 13, 15).
- Offering (Gen 4:3, 4, 5, 6).
- Birth: Eve (3X in Gen 4:1-2); firstborn of flock (Gen 4:4).
- Blood/murder (Gen 4:8, 10, 11, 14).
- Fugitive (Gen 4:12, 14).
- Cain's face was dark with rage (Gen 4:5, 6).
- Murder: Cain killed Abel (Gen 4:8); someone might kill Cain (Gen 4:14); God protects Cain so no one would kill him (Gen 4:15).
- Punishment: Cain's punishment (Gen 4:11-12); Cain complained about his punishment (Gen 4:13); God protected Cain from people's punishment (Gen 4:15).

**Key-attitudes:**

- Eve's thankfulness toward God when Cain was born.
- Abel's respect for God.
- Cain's disrespect for God.
- Cain's resentment toward his brother and toward God.
- Cain's deceit (lying to brother and God).
- Cain's self-pity.
- Cain's self-justification.
- Cain's fear.

**Initial-situation:**

After disobeying God's instruction, Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden.

**Initial-problem:**

The Lord accepted Abel and his offering, but rejected Cain and his offering.

**Final-situation:**

Cain went out from God's presence.

## BIBLE STORY

Adam slept with his wife Eve. Eve became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. Eve said, "The Lord helped me give birth to a man." Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Now Abel became a herdsman and kept flocks, while Cain became a farmer and worked the soil (Gen 4:1-2).

Time passed. Cain brought some produce from his farm as an offering to the Lord. But Abel brought choice cuts of meat from the firstborn of his flock. The Lord accepted Abel and his offering, but rejected Cain and his offering (Gen 4:3-4).

Cain became very angry; his face was dark with rage. The Lord asked Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face so dark with rage? If you do what is right, I will accept you. But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door waiting to pounce; it is out to get you, but you must tame it" (Gen 4:5-7).

One day Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out into the field." While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him (Gen 4:8). Cain murdered his brother because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous (1 Jn 3:12).

The Lord asked Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

Cain replied, "I don't know. Is it my job to take care of my brother?"

The Lord asked, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. From now on you will receive nothing but curses from the ground. The ground received your brother's blood whom you murdered. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield good crops for you. You will be a restless tramp upon the earth, a wanderer from place to place."

Cain complained to the Lord, "My punishment is too much. I can't take it! Today you are driving me from the land. I have to hide from you; I can never again face you. I will be a homeless fugitive and a tramp wandering on the earth. Whoever finds me will kill me."

The Lord answered Cain, "Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times greater than your punishment." Then the Lord put a mark on Cain. It was a warning to anyone who met him not to kill him (Gen 4:8-15).

Cain went out from God's presence and lived in No-Man's-Land, east of Eden (Gen 4:16).

### **GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS**

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story?                  | 5. How did the characters face their problems?                                       |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems?  |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story?                  | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face?                     | 8. What does the story tell about God?   |

### **SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How was Cain's offering different from Abel's?
2. How did God react to each one's offering?
3. What warning did God give to Cain after he became angry?
4. After Cain murdered Abel, what happened when God confronted Cain?

5. What does this story teach us about the danger of our having untamed anger?
6. Why do some people who participate in religious activities imitate Cain by being cruel?

### LIFE-LESSONS

7. **The worshiper who offers God less than his best, opens the door for temptation to assault him.** Cain offered God “some” of his produce while Abel’s offering was the choice cuts of the first born of his flock (Gen 4:3-7).
8. **God seeks to communicate to the person who is making wrong choices.** Cain made wrong choices, but God alerted him that his anger resulted in sin crouching at his door (Gen 4:6-7).
9. **Religion that doesn't obey God leads a person to commit evil.** Cain had a religion, and he brought offerings to God. Cain's religion led him to reject God’s word, murder his brother and despise God’s invitation to repent and receive forgiveness (Gen 4:8-16).
10. **Anger wants to dominate the person who is experiencing it; however, the tempted person should dominate his anger.** God warned Cain: "...sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must tame it" (Gen 4:6-7). This is figurative language that refers to a wild animal being tamed or domesticated. Anger, desirous of attacking its victim, should be dominated.
11. **One’s relationship with God does not depend on someone else’s relationship to God.** Abel correctly worshiped God while his brother Cain rebelled against God (Gen 4:3-7).
12. **A person’s countenance reflects his heart’s condition.** Cain’s face reflected his anger (Gen 4:6).

### LEARNING ACTIVITY

#### **Pantomime Retelling of the Story:**

The storyteller tells the story one time. Then the storyteller:

- Chooses a listener to pantomime the story as the storyteller tells it a second time.
- Invites a listener to retell the story.
- Asks listeners if the one who retold the story left out or added to the story.