

Cain and Abel (Genesis 4)

Not many years had passed since sin had come into the world. Although the world was no longer so wonderful a place as God had created it, Adam and Eve still had many reasons to be happy. One of their happiest days must have been when their first child was born. It was a boy, and they named him Cain. Later they had a second son named Abel.

Cain became a farmer, growing food for his family to eat and Abel became a shepherd, taking care of flocks of sheep.

One time the two brothers brought gifts to God from their hard work. Cain brought food he had grown and Abel brought meat from his sheep. God was happy with Abel's gift but not with Cain's. Abel brought good meat from his very best sheep, but Cain brought fruits and vegetables that were not what God wanted so his offering was rejected. Cain was angry and jealous when God did not accept his gift!

God said to Cain, "Why are you wearing that sad face? Don't you know I will accept your gift if you do right?" God knew what was in Cain's heart so he added a warning, "Sin is right outside your door. Don't let it come in and take over your life!"

But Cain did not listen to God. Instead he planned a terrible thing. He got his brother to come out into his field alone with him. There Cain killed Abel! Now murder had come into God's beautiful world.

Cain didn't know yet that God can see everything we do. When God asked him, "Where is your brother Abel?" Cain pretended not to know.

"Am I supposed to take care of my brother?" exclaimed the angry Cain. How sad God must have felt when Cain said this.

God told Cain he must punish him. He would send Cain away from his home and make it even harder than before to grow food from the earth. Cain saw at once how hard this would be on him. He would have to travel from place to place. He would not be a close friend of God's anymore. And other people would try to kill *him*. "I won't be able to stand it!" Cain cried.

God had pity on Cain even though he had done such a terrible thing. God promised to protect him from being killed. Still he would have a very hard life. Worst of all was that he would no longer be a close friend of the Lord.

Cain paid a big, big price for not keeping sin out of his life.

Memory Verse:

“A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.” Proverbs 29:11 (NIV)

Understanding Questions:

1. Who was Adam and Eve’s first son? What kind of work did he do?
2. Who was Adam and Eve’s second son? What kind of work did he do?
3. Why did Cain become angry?
4. What did Cain say when God asked him where Abel was?
5. What was Cain’s punishment?

Discussion Questions:

1. Can you remember a time when you became jealous of your brother or sister or a friend? Tell about it.
2. Everyone gets angry sometime. Why is it important to control our anger?
3. How was Cain’s punishment similar to Adam and Eve’s for their first sin?