

# Genesis

## Cain and His Legacy

Lesson #3 for April 16, 2022

Scriptures: Genesis 4; 5; 6:1-5; Hebrews 11:4; Micah 6:7; Isaiah 1:11; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1John 3:12.

- Genesis 3&4 contain many **common themes and words** in the original Hebrew: (1) *Sin* is described in Genesis 3:6-8; (2) A description of Cain killing Abel in Genesis 4:8; (3) Curses on the ground; (Genesis 3:17 and Genesis 4:11) and (4) Expulsions or being driven out: (a) Adam and Eve from the garden, (Genesis 3:24) and then, (b) Cain driven away from the presence of God. (Genesis 4:12,16)
- There is even a **chiastic pattern** in this chapter.

The events give an idea of what human life will be like after the Fall; namely, a mingling of life and death. Birth and crime are intertwined. The structure of chapter 4 renders this tension through the form of its chiastic structure, alternating between birth and crime:

  - A. Birth** from Adam and Eve: Cain and Abel
  - B. Crime:** Cain
  - C. Birth: Legacy of Cain and Lamech**
  - B<sub>1</sub>. Crime:** Lamech
  - A<sub>1</sub>. Birth** from Adam and Eve: Seth.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 39.† [Bold type is added except the bold type related to “C” which is in the Bible study guide.]‡
- What we are seeing in these verses is that almost immediately, there is a fulfillment of the curses that resulted from Adam and Eve’s sin, but also the promise of the Messiah.

**Genesis 4:1-2:** Then Adam had intercourse with his wife, and she became pregnant. She bore a son and said, “By the LORD’s help I have acquired a son.” So she named him Cain. <sup>2</sup>Later she gave birth to another son, Abel. Abel became a shepherd, but Cain was a farmer.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation*\* (2nd ed., Genesis 4:1-2). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].‡
- Notice that the first event recorded after talking about Adam and Eve being expelled from the Garden of Eden is a birth.
- It is not obvious in English; but, Adam and Eve believed that this son might be the promised Messiah.

The Saviour’s coming was foretold in Eden. When Adam and Eve first heard the promise, they looked for its speedy fulfillment. **They joyfully welcomed their first-born son, hoping that he might be the Deliverer.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*\* 31.2.†
- Try to imagine how Adam and Eve felt at the time of the birth of Cain. They had never seen a birth before, and they may have wondered what was happening. Had they witnessed animal birthings? We do not know. We do not know if God or some angel was sent to them to explain what was happening as Eve’s stomach began to swell, and then, as she noted the kicking. Did Adam deliver the baby? Was he the first “midwife”?
- A literal translation of Genesis 4:1 states:

“ ‘I have acquired a man, indeed, the LORD Himself.’ ” It is rendered by the International Standard Version [*sic*] as “ ‘I have given birth to a male child—

the LORD.’ ”—[as quoted in *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sunday, April 10].‡

8. The story of Cain occupies most of the chapter. He is the only brother who speaks. At first, he was almost worshiped by his parents. It is interesting to notice the difference in names. We recognize that the records we have were written in Hebrew by Moses, and we have no idea what language Adam and Eve were speaking. Nevertheless, the name Cain comes from *qanah*, which means “to acquire,” suggesting that Adam and Eve had acquired something powerful and precious.
9. By contrast, the name Abel or *Hebel* in Hebrew means “vapor,” (Psalm 62:9, *NKJV*) or “breath.” (Psalm 144:4, *NKJV*) This name means elusiveness, emptiness, or lack of substance; in Ecclesiastes it is used, to mean “vanity.” It seems that Adam and Eve’s hope rested in their first-born son, Cain, and not in Abel, his younger brother.
10. Cain was a farmer, “a tiller of the ground.” (Genesis 4:2) That work involved physical labor. On the other hand, by profession, Abel was a keeper of sheep, implying not that he had worked hard to acquire as Cain did, but rather that he kept the sheep he had received.

**Hebrews 11:4:** It was faith that made Abel offer to God a better sacrifice than Cain’s. Through his faith he won God’s approval as a righteous man, because God himself approved of his gifts. By means of his faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.—*Good News Bible.\**

Without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin; and they [Cain and Abel] were to show their faith in the blood of Christ as the promised atonement by offering the firstlings of the flock in sacrifice. Besides this, the first fruits of the earth were to be presented before the Lord as a thank offering.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets\** 71.2.‡

11. We know that their diet consisted of fruits, nuts and grains. We do not know if God had given Adam, Eve, and their children specific instructions about offering the first fruits of their land. If they were given such instructions, Abel, no doubt, complied with them. The Hebrew implies that Abel complied with all of God’s instructions, offering not only the fruit of the land, but also the animal sacrifice. Cain refused or neglected to do so.
12. What is our relationship to God as we worship Him? Do we feel that we are somehow earning our salvation? Is there anything that we could give God that could pay for our salvation? How many people think they must earn their salvation?

**Micah 6:7:** Will the LORD be pleased if I bring him thousands of sheep or endless streams of olive oil? Shall I offer him my firstborn child to pay for my sins?—*Good News Bible.\**

**Isaiah 1:11:** He [the LORD] says, “**Do you think I want all these sacrifices you keep offering to me? I have had more than enough of the sheep you burn as sacrifices and of the fat of your fine animals. I am tired of the blood of bulls and sheep and goats.**”—*Good News Bible.\*†‡*

**Genesis 4:3-8:** <sup>3</sup>After some time, Cain brought some of his harvest and gave it as an offering to the LORD. <sup>4</sup>Then Abel brought the first lamb born to one of his sheep, killed it, and gave the best parts of it as an offering. The LORD was pleased with Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup>but he rejected Cain and his offering. **Cain became furious, and he scowled in anger.** <sup>6</sup>Then the LORD said to Cain, “**Why are you angry? Why that scowl on your face?** <sup>7</sup>If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling; but because you have done evil, sin is crouching at your door. It wants to rule you, but you must overcome it.”

<sup>8</sup> Then Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out in the fields.” When they were out in the fields, Cain turned on his brother and killed him.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup> [What do you think Cain said to his parents when he arrived back at home?]<sup>‡</sup>

**1 John 3:12:** We must not be like Cain; he belonged to the Evil One and murdered his own brother Abel. Why did Cain murder him? Because the things he himself did were wrong, but the things his brother did were right.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*</sup> [We will consider 1 John 3:12 more later in this lesson.]<sup>‡</sup>

13. We, of course, do not know all that was behind Cain’s anger against Abel. Certainly, there was more involved than the fact that one sacrifice was not accepted. Was this perhaps a repeated offense? Cain responded in two ways: (1) He “was very angry,” and (2) “His countenance fell.” (Genesis 4:5, *NKJV*<sup>\*</sup>) He was angry against God because he felt he was being treated unfairly, and he was jealous of his brother Abel whose sacrifice had been accepted.

14. Why do you think Cain killed his brother? Whatever we suggest would probably only be hypothetical; but, here is one comment from Eli Weisel.

“Why did he do it? Perhaps he wanted to remain alone: an only child and, after his parents’ death, the only man. Alone like God and perhaps alone in place of God. . . . Cain killed to become God. . . . Any man who takes himself for God ends up assassinating men.”—*Messengers of God: Biblical Portraits and Legends* (New York: Random House, 1976), p. 58.—[as quoted in *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*<sup>\*</sup> for Friday, April 15].<sup>‡§</sup>

15. Look at Cain’s discussion with God. God did not directly accuse Cain but rather, raised a question, giving Cain an opportunity to admit his guilt and to repent.

16. God urged Cain to do what was right. But, reconciliation with God must be done on God’s terms, not on our terms. Cain’s second response implied that Cain was more in line with his sin than being in line with God. God’s plan for each of us is not just to be forgiven but also to attain victory over sin.

**1 Corinthians 10:13:** Every test that you have experienced is the kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps his promise, and **he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm**; at the time you are put to the test, **he will give you the strength to endure it, and so provide you with a way out.**—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

17. God could have forced Cain to do what he ought to have done. However, God does not use force.

[At the time of Christ’s first coming to this earth:] The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, **Satan’s deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God’s government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened.** To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world’s dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, “with healing in His wings.” Malachi 4:2.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*<sup>\*</sup> 22.1.<sup>†‡</sup>

**Genesis 4:9-16:** <sup>9</sup>The LORD asked Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

He answered, “I don’t know. Am I supposed to take care of my brother?”

<sup>10</sup> Then the LORD said, “Why have you done this terrible thing? Your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground, like a voice calling for revenge. <sup>11</sup>**You are placed under a curse and can no longer farm the soil.** It has soaked up your brother’s blood as if it had opened its mouth to receive it when you killed him. <sup>12</sup>**If you try to grow crops, the soil will not produce anything; you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth.**”

<sup>13</sup> And Cain said to the LORD, “This punishment is too hard for me to bear. <sup>14</sup>**You are driving me off the land and away from your presence.** I will be a homeless wanderer on the earth, and anyone who finds me will kill me.”

<sup>15</sup> But the LORD answered, “No. If anyone kills you, seven lives will be taken in revenge.” **So the LORD put a mark on Cain** to warn anyone who met him not to kill him. <sup>16</sup>And **Cain went away from the LORD’s presence** and lived in a land called “Wandering”, [sic] which is east of Eden.—*Good News Bible*.\*†‡

18. How was God speaking to Cain? Did He appear in human form? Or, did Cain just hear a voice? Had God ever spoken to Cain before that? Or, had Cain ever heard God speaking to Adam or Eve? If not, how did Cain identify who was talking? Was Cain able to farm again? Or, not? Or, did the soil just produce much less prolific crops?
19. God’s question to Cain is similar to His earlier question to Adam and Eve, “Where are you?” Adam and Eve recognized their guilt; Cain refused to do so. Then, God proceeded to make it very clear to Cain that He knew exactly what Cain had done, killing his brother.
20. And what is the result of sin? Adam and Eve’s sin resulted in:  
**Genesis 3:19:** “You will have to work hard and sweat to make the soil produce anything, until you go back to the soil from which you were formed. You were made from soil, and you will become soil again.”—*Good News Bible*.\*
21. Read Genesis 4:14. **What is the significance of Cain’s words: “ ‘I shall be hidden from Your face’ ”?** (NKJV\*)†  
**Genesis 4:14,16:** “You [God] are driving me off the land and **away from your presence.** I will be a homeless wanderer on the earth, and anyone who finds me will kill me.” ... <sup>16</sup>And **Cain went away from the LORD’s presence.**—*Good News Bible*.\*†‡
22. What does it mean to go “away from your [God’s] presence” or “went away from the LORD’s presence”? (Genesis 4:14,16, GNB\*)‡
23. If God is omnipresent, is it even possible to go away from God’s presence? That would only be possible if one chooses to shut himself away from God.
24. Ellen White wrote about a **threefold curse**. The first curse on the ground came because of Adam and Eve’s sin and their expulsion from the garden. The second curse came because of Abel’s blood shed on the ground. The third curse came because of the rejection of God by the antediluvians which resulted in the flood.

When the faithful dead shall be resurrected, and the king of glory shall open before them the gates of the city of God, and the nations who have kept the truth enter in, what beauty and glory will meet the astonished sight of those who have seen no greater beauties in the earth than that which they beheld in decaying nature after the **threefold curse** was upon the earth.—Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*,\* vol. 3, 88.2.†

25. How did Cain and his family survive and multiply after God's curse which drove them away from the soil?
26. So, what was the result of Cain's sin?

**Genesis 4:17-24:** <sup>17</sup>Cain and his wife had a son and named him Enoch. Then Cain built a city and named it after his son. <sup>18</sup>Enoch had a son named Irad, who was the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael had a son named Methushael, who was the father of Lamech. <sup>19</sup>**Lamech had two wives, Adah and Zillah.** <sup>20</sup>Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the ancestor of those who raise livestock and live in tents. <sup>21</sup>His brother was Jubal, the ancestor of all musicians who play the harp and the flute. <sup>22</sup>Zillah gave birth to Tubal Cain, who made all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal Cain was Naamah.

<sup>23</sup>**Lamech said to his wives,**

**“Adah and Zillah, listen to me: I have killed a young man because he struck me.**

<sup>24</sup> If seven lives are taken to pay for killing Cain,

77 will be taken if anyone kills me.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

27. Where did Cain's wife come from? She had to be a daughter of Adam and Eve. Did she rebel against God as well? Or, did she marry Cain just because he was the eldest son and considered to be the most important? Where did Enoch's wives, Adah and Zillah, come from? Were they all descendants of Cain? Was Lamech bragging about killing that young man?

28. It is important to notice that Cain did not try to comment about his sin despite the fact that God had pointed it out very specifically. Lamech, Cain's great-great-great grandson:

... Refers to Cain's crime in the context of his own. While Cain keeps silent about his only recorded crime, Lamech seems to be boasting about his, expressing it in a song (*Gen. 4:23, 24*). While Cain asks for God's mercy, Lamech is not recorded as asking for it. While Cain is avenged seven times by God, Lamech believes that he will be avenged seventy-seven times (*see Gen. 4:24*), a hint that he's very much aware of his guilt.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Thursday, April 14.†§

29. Cain, as far as we know, only married one wife. (Genesis 4:17) Lamech multiplied his evils by marrying at least two wives. (Genesis 4:19) Thus, in a brief history, there was the beginning of the multiplication of evil. Cain's great sin led finally to: (1) The antediluvians being eliminated in the flood, and (2) Noah and his family being preserved in the ark.

30. But, that is not the end of the story. Adam “knew” his wife again, and she gave birth to a son called Seth whose name means *another seed* in the place of Abel.

**Genesis 4:25:** Adam and his wife had another son. She said, **“God has given me a son to replace Abel,** whom Cain killed.” So she named him **Seth.**

[Footnote: *Seth*: This name sounds like the Hebrew for “has given”.] [*sic*]

<sup>26</sup>Seth had a son whom he named Enosh. It was then that people began using the LORD's holy name in worship.—*Good News Bible*.\*†‡§

31. It is interesting to notice that the name Seth is derived from the Hebrew verb *‘ashit*, “I will put” (Genesis 3:15) which introduced the messianic promise in Genesis 3:15. As we now know, the messianic seed would be passed through Seth to his descendants. (See Genesis 5:21; Matthew 1:1-17; and Luke 3:23-38.)

32. Why don't we have records of any of the other children of Adam and Eve? Why are no daughters mentioned? Did they all follow the downward course of Cain?

33. **Who were the “sons of God”? Who were the “daughters of men”?** (Genesis 6:2)

**Genesis 6:2:** That the **sons of God** saw the **daughters of men** that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.—*King James Version*.<sup>\*</sup> (2009). (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Genesis 6:2) [abbreviated as *King James Version*].<sup>†‡</sup>

**Genesis 6:2:** Some of the **heavenly beings** [sons of God] saw that these young women [daughters of men] were beautiful, so they took the ones they liked.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†‡</sup> [In Greek and Roman mythology, there are many legends of male “gods” and female “gods” or human women having children after mating with male “gods.”]<sup>‡</sup>

34. There were no “heavenly beings” who came down to this earth and co-habited with human women. First of all, humans were a new and distinct order of beings, able to reproduce after their own kind. This tells us that angels or the beings inhabiting other worlds do not have that ability.

All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. **Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made “in the image of God,” and it was the Creator’s design that they should populate the earth.** They were to live in close communion with heaven, receiving power from the Source of all power. Upheld by God, they were to live sinless lives.—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*,<sup>\*</sup> February 11, 1902, par. 1.<sup>†</sup> Compare *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, 1081.3.

35. **If Satan, as a fallen angel, had the ability to reproduce, he would have filled this world full of little satans!**

**Luke 3:38:** [In describing the ancestry of Jesus, Luke concluded with these significant words:] The son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*‡</sup> [Human beings were created to be children of God.]<sup>‡</sup>

36. The implication of these words is that those who followed God’s will for their lives would always be considered to be “sons of God.”

**The descendants of Seth were called the sons of God—the descendants of Cain, the sons of men.** As the sons of God mingled with the sons of men, they became corrupt, and by intermarriage with them, lost, through the influence of their wives, their peculiar, holy character, and united with the sons of Cain in their idolatry. Many cast aside the fear of God, and trampled upon his commandments. But there were a few that did righteousness, who feared and honored their Creator. Noah and his family were among the righteous few.—Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*,<sup>\*</sup> vol. 1, 66.1.<sup>†</sup>

37. What about the giants mentioned in Genesis 6?

**Genesis 6:4:** There were **giants** in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the **sons of God came in unto the daughters of men**, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.—*King James Version*.<sup>\*†</sup>

Those who honored and feared to offend God, at first felt the curse but lightly; while those who turned from God and trampled upon his authority,

felt the effects of the curse more heavily, **especially in stature and nobleness of form.**—Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*,\* vol. 1, 66.1.†

38. Thus, we can see that the “giants” that were in the land were descendants of Seth rather than descendants of Cain. This very likely resulted from their following God’s diet and lifestyle.

39. Following down the line of Seth, we come to Noah.

**Genesis 6:1-8:** <sup>1</sup> When the human race had spread all over the world, and daughters were being born, <sup>2</sup>some of the heavenly beings [sons of God in the line of Seth] saw that these young women [daughters of men in the line of Cain] were beautiful, so they took the ones they liked. <sup>3</sup>Then the LORD said, “I will not allow people to live for ever; [sic] they are mortal. **From now on they will live no longer than a hundred and twenty years.**” <sup>4</sup>**In those days, and even later, there were giants on the earth who were descendants of human women and the heavenly beings [sons of God in the line of Seth]. They were the great heroes and famous men of long ago.**

<sup>5</sup> When the LORD saw how wicked everyone on earth was and how evil their thoughts were all the time, <sup>6</sup>he was sorry that he had ever made them and put them on the earth. He was so filled with regret <sup>7</sup>that he said, “I will wipe out these people I have created, and also the animals and the birds, because I am sorry that I made any of them.” <sup>8</sup>But the LORD was pleased with Noah.—*Good News Bible*.\*††

40. Just before the days of Noah, we have the story of Enoch.

Enoch became a preacher of righteousness, making known to the people what God had revealed to him. Those who feared the Lord sought out this holy man, to share his instruction and his prayers. He labored publicly also, bearing God’s messages to all who would hear the words of warning. **His labors were not restricted to the Sethites. In the land where Cain had sought to flee from the divine Presence, the prophet of God made known the wonderful scenes that had passed before his vision. “Behold,” he declared, “the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds.” Jude 14, 15.**—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*\* 86.1.†

**Genesis 5:22-24:** <sup>22</sup>After that, Enoch lived in fellowship with God for 300 years and had other children. <sup>23</sup>He lived to be 365 years old. <sup>24</sup>He spent his life in fellowship with God, and then he disappeared, because God took him away.—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Genesis 5:22-24:** <sup>22</sup>And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: <sup>23</sup> And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: <sup>24</sup> And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.—*King James Version*.\* [What do you think happened to Enoch’s other children? Why weren’t there other faithful children who were ready to get on the boat?]†

He [Enoch] was a fearless reprover of sin. While he preached the love of God in Christ to the people of his time, and pleaded with them to forsake their evil ways, he rebuked the prevailing iniquity and warned the men of his generation that judgment would surely be visited upon the transgressor. It

was the Spirit of Christ that spoke through Enoch; that Spirit is manifested, not alone in utterances of love, compassion, and entreaty; it is not smooth things only that are spoken by holy men. God puts into the heart and lips of His messengers truths to utter that are keen and cutting as a two-edged sword.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*\* 86.2.†

41. Why do you suppose the lifespans of those who lived before the flood (the antediluvians) decreased in length so dramatically? There are a lot of questions about those early numbers.

**Genesis 5:1-32:** <sup>1</sup> This is the list of the descendants of Adam. (When God created human beings, he made them like himself. <sup>2</sup>He created them male and female, blessed them, and named them “Humanity”.) [*sic*] <sup>3</sup>When Adam was 130 years old, he had a son who was like him, and he named him Seth. <sup>4</sup>After that, Adam lived another 800 years. He had other children <sup>5</sup>and died at the age of 930.

<sup>6</sup> When Seth was 105, he had a son, Enosh, <sup>7</sup>and then lived another 807 years. He had other children <sup>8</sup>and died at the age of 912.

<sup>9</sup> When Enosh was ninety, he had a son, Kenan, <sup>10</sup>and then lived another 815 years. He had other children <sup>11</sup>and died at the age of 905.

<sup>12</sup> When Kenan was seventy, he had a son, Mahalalel, <sup>13</sup>and then lived another 840 years. He had other children <sup>14</sup>and died at the age of 910.

<sup>15</sup> When Mahalalel was 65, he had a son, Jared, <sup>16</sup>and then lived another 830 years. He had other children <sup>17</sup>and died at the age of 895.

<sup>18</sup> When Jared was 162, he had a son, Enoch, <sup>19</sup>and then lived another 800 years. He had other children <sup>20</sup>and died at the age of 962.

<sup>21</sup> When Enoch was 65, he had a son, Methuselah. <sup>22</sup>After that, **Enoch lived in fellowship with God** for 300 years and had other children. <sup>23</sup>He lived to be 365 years old. <sup>24</sup>**He spent his life in fellowship with God, and then he disappeared, because God took him away.**

<sup>25</sup> When Methuselah was 187, he had a son, Lamech, <sup>26</sup>and then lived another 782 years. He had other children <sup>27</sup>and died at the age of 969.

<sup>28</sup> When Lamech was 182, he had a son, <sup>29</sup>and said, “From the very ground on which the LORD put a curse, this child will bring us relief from all our hard work”; so he named him Noah. <sup>30</sup>Lamech lived another 595 years. He had other children <sup>31</sup>and died at the age of 777.

<sup>32</sup> After Noah was 500 years old, he had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.—*Good News Bible*.\*††

42. Do you think these numbers are accurate according to years as we understand them? You may be aware that there are two ancient translations of the books of Moses which give quite different numbers for these ages. Why might that be? Is it possible that we do not even understand the numbering system that they used? Or, even the numbering system that Moses used? Who gave Moses this information? Was it given to him by God? Or, were these numbers passed down from parent to child all the way until the days of Moses?
43. As we have seen, Genesis 4 is filled with the crimes of Cain and of Lamech. But, it begins with the birth of Cain whom Adam and Eve thought would be the Messiah. It ends with the birth of Seth who ended up being the father of the line of the faithful.

### **The Sacrifice of Cain (Genesis 4:3, 4)**

While Cain chose to take his offering only from “the fruit of the ground” (*Gen. 4:3*), Abel “also brought” his offering (*Gen. 4:4, NKJV*). Thus, in contrast to Cain’s offering, Abel’s offering included a sacrificial animal as God commanded. Yet, while Abel complied with the divine instructions, Cain chose to ignore them. Also, a comparison of the two acts of offering reveals a slight nuance between them. While Cain offers “to God,” Abel just offers. The mention “to God” is absent from the description of Abel’s sacrifice.

**This little difference is of profound significance, as it reflects two fundamentally different views of worship. While Cain thinks of his offering as his gift to God, Abel understands his sacrifice as a reminder of God’s gift to him.** While Cain views his religion as an upward movement to God, Abel experiences it as a downward movement *from* God. This contrasting mentality also may explain another difference regarding how the offerings have been chosen. Abel’s offering was not, per se, [*sic*] a better offering than Cain’s. In fact, Cain’s fruit may even have been a better product than the sheep provided by Abel. The difference, however, was that Abel chose from the *bekorot*, the “first fruits,” the most precious product of the season, something that would be justified later by the Mosaic legislation (*Exod. 23:19*), whereas Cain took any fruit from the land. Against the background of the preceding chapters, each of the two offerings evokes something different. The fruit offering from the ground (*‘adamah*) points to Genesis 3:19, which is associated with human effort and the perspective of death. The animal offering, on the other hand, points to Genesis 3:21 and gives the promise of the divine protection and the perspective of life. **Cain’s offering was the expression of human work to reach God; Abel’s offering was the expression of humanity’s need for God’s salvation.** Furthermore, Abel’s offering was related to the promise of the Messianic Lamb of Genesis 3:15, who would be sacrificed to save the world, whereas Cain’s offering was an empty ritual. Note the same contrast between the human clothing (*Gen. 3:7*), which uses the vegetal fig leaf, and the divine clothing, which uses the animal skin and implies the sacrifice of blood (*Gen. 3:21*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 40-41.†‡§

44. What can we learn from a careful look at the Hebrew regarding the crime of Cain?

The use of the phrase *wayyo’mer qayin*, “And Cain said,” echoing the phrase *wayyo’mer YHWH ‘el qayin*, “the Lord said to Cain” (*Gen. 4:6, NKJV*), indicates that Cain was supposed to respond to God. Yet, instead of responding to God by faith, Cain turns to his brother and kills him (*Gen. 4:8*). It is significant that Cain’s crime immediately follows this shift in dialogue from the failed vertical to the horizontal. The mechanism of the first religious crime is thus suggested. The crimes of the zealous ones are not committed because they feel they are right; the crimes of fanaticism and religious intolerance derive, on the contrary, from the failure to respond to God’s Word. When faith is replaced by human work and control, crime will follow. Cain killed his brother, not because Cain felt he was right and his brother was wrong but, on the contrary, because Cain was evil and his brother was righteous (*see 1 John 3:12*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 41.§

**1 John 3:12:** We must not be like Cain; he belonged to the Evil One and murdered his own brother Abel. **Why did Cain murder him? Because the things he**

**himself did were wrong, but the things his brother did were right.**—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

There also is a contrast between the crime of Cain and the crime of Lamech. Unlike Cain, Lamech took murder one step further. Lamech presented his killing as a positive and valuable act and literally boasted about it. While Cain chose to remain silent, Lamech, in contrast, wrote a song. Whereas Cain asks God for mercy (*Gen. 4:13, 14*), Lamech ignores God and instead subjects his wives to a litany of his prowess and his homicidal feat as a feat worthy of approbation [praise].—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*<sup>\* 40-41.†§</sup>

45. What lessons should we learn from this study?
46. What is the relationship between human anger and murder? What lessons of self-control do we need to learn? Compare Matthew 5:21-26.
47. Why do you think the behavior of Cain was so different from the behavior of Abel and Seth? We do not know how long a period of time there was between the birth of Cain and the birth of Seth. Obviously, God knew in advance what was going to happen with each of those brothers. Why do you think Seth was so different from his older brother Cain?

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[Info@theox.org](mailto:Info@theox.org)

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