

CAIN AND ABEL

by Mike Bennett

The first brothers didn't get along. Cain got jealous of his brother Abel. He let himself get so mad, he did something terrible and tried to hide it from God!

After Adam and Eve ate the fruit that God told them not to eat, they had to move out of the beautiful Garden of Eden. Their lives were harder now because they had chosen to disobey God.

Adam and Eve had a baby, and they called him Cain. His mother said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." Perhaps she thought he would be the one who God promised would defeat Satan. Even if she didn't, she certainly had high hopes for her firstborn son.

Then Adam and Eve had another baby boy. He was named Abel.

THE BROTHERS GROW UP

Cain and Abel were different in many ways. Cain grew up to be a farmer. Abel raised sheep.

More important, their attitude toward God was different. Abel gave an offering to God, and it was the best he had. Abel believed and trusted God (Hebrews 11:4).

Cain also gave an offering to God, but the Bible says God was not happy with it.

Cain got very angry. Perhaps he felt it was unfair. Maybe he was jealous that God was happy with Abel.

But God cared about Cain too. He asked Cain, "Why are you angry?" God told Cain that if he did the right things, God would be happy with him. But if not, he was in danger of sin. Just as when Satan talked Cain's parents into sinning, sin was waiting to pounce on Cain. God told him to rule over these bad attitudes.

But Cain didn't listen. He got angrier and convinced himself he was right.

QUIZ TIME

Which brother offered a sacrifice that pleased God?

KILLING AND LYING

Sin can lead us to do things we did not plan to do. The results of sinful thinking and acting may be far worse than we intended.

Cain was so mad he murdered his brother! Cain killed Abel because Cain's "works were evil and his brother's righteous" (1 John 3:12). He didn't like being shown up by his younger brother. Satan is a hater, and Cain chose to hate too. So when they were alone in the field, Cain killed Abel.

Cain thought no one had seen him do it. But Cain should have known that he couldn't hide from God. God knew what happened, but he gave Cain the chance to admit it. God asked Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?"

Cain said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

But Cain lied. He knew exactly where Abel's body was.

And he knew that we all should do our best to take care of our brothers. We can't control our brothers and sisters, but we shouldn't do anything to hurt them. We should help and care for them. In that way we are our brother's keeper.

CAIN'S PUNISHMENT

God knew exactly what Cain had done. He knew Cain was lying. It was as if Abel's shed blood was crying out to God that a terrible murder occurred.

Cain's final punishment would be to die. But before that, God told Cain about the curses he would face. The ground wouldn't grow as much food for him, and he would have to work harder. He would have to move around and worry that others would try to kill him.

Cain complained that the punishment was too much. He did not say he was sorry. He did not admit that he had done a terrible thing.

But God did not want other people to take revenge on Cain. He put a mark on Cain to remind people not to kill him.

QUIZ TIME

What did God do to remind others not to take revenge on Cain?

QUIZ TIME

What is hating others similar to?

THE WAY OF CAIN

Cain picked the road that leads to death. He chose to be selfish. He chose to trust in himself instead of God. He chose to think about his hurt pride. The Bible calls this the way of Cain (Jude 1:11).

We must remember that when we get mad, sin is waiting to pounce on us too. We must remember that hating others is like murder (1 John 3:15). We must ask God to help us rule over ourselves and sin. We must try to care for our brothers and sisters.

We must not follow the way of Cain.

QUESTIONS

Here are some questions to think about or talk about as a family:

1. Why was God happy with Abel's gift?
2. Why was Cain mad?
3. What should Cain have done?
4. How can we make sure we don't follow the way of Cain?

RELATED READING

For more background information about Cain and Abel, see the following Daily Bible Verse Blog posts:

- Cain Brings an Offering
- Abel Brings an Offering
- Why Cain's Offering Was Rejected, Part 1
- Why Cain's Offering Was Rejected, Part 2
- God's Warning to Cain—and Us
- The First Murder
- Am I My Brother's Keeper?
- Abel's Blood Cries Out
- Cain Cursed



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