

Cain and Abel

The first brothers bring offerings to God. When Abel's is accepted and Cain's rejected, jealousy leads to the first murder.

Genesis 4:1-16

CHARACTERS: Cain, Abel, God, Adam, Eve

THEMES: Worship, Jealousy, Murder, God's justice and mercy

ADAM AND EVE had two sons. Cain, the firstborn, became a farmer. Abel, his younger brother, kept flocks. In time, both brought offerings to the Lord.

Abel brought the firstborn of his flock—the best, the fattest portions. Cain brought some fruit of the ground. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but He did not look with favor on Cain's.

Cain burned with anger. His face was downcast.

'Why are you angry?' the Lord asked him. 'If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door. It desires to have you, but you must rule over it.'

But Cain did not rule over it. He said to his brother, 'Let's go out to the field.' And there, Cain attacked Abel and killed him—the first murder, brother against brother.

'Where is your brother Abel?' the Lord asked Cain.

'I don't know,' Cain lied. 'Am I my brother's keeper?'

'What have you done?' God said. 'Your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground,

which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.'

'My punishment is more than I can bear!' Cain cried. 'Whoever finds me will kill me.'

But even to the murderer, God showed mercy. He put a mark on Cain so that no one would kill him. Cain went out from the Lord's presence and settled east of Eden, in the land of Nod.

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