

Cain and Abel

Lesson Introduction

- If you have a sibling, describe a situation in which you and your sibling disagreed.
- How was the matter resolved?

Lesson Objectives

By the end of the lesson, learners will:

- Identify differences between Cain and Abel
- Describe the consequences of Cain's sin
- Describe ways in which God protected Cain
- Discuss the implications of being one's "brother's keeper"
- Express understanding of who God is

Background for the Scripture

After Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden, they had two sons, Cain and Abel. Genesis chapter 4 gives the account of the first murder, as Cain slew his brother Abel because of God's rejection of Cain's sacrifice. Although the Bible is silent on why Cain's sacrifice was not pleasing to God, at least one source has noted, "It seems reasonable to infer from subsequent developments that God had made known what kind of sacrifice was required, and that Cain acted contrary to those instructions" (Schultz, 2006, p. 10).

Several important points emerge as this story unfolds. First, Abel values his personal sense of revenge more than he values life (Tulloch, 1997, p. 39). Second, a division takes place between the godly and the ungodly (Benware, 1993, p. 34). And, finally, themes of sibling rivalry appear along with dissention between farmer and shepherd (Collins, 2004, p. 8). These themes can be found throughout the Old Testament; they are initiated in Genesis.

Reading the Scripture

[Genesis 4:1-16](#)

Examining the Scripture

1. Typically pairs of brothers found in Genesis feature siblings with opposing characteristics. Identify ways in which Cain and Abel are different from one another.
2. What were the consequences of Cain's sin?
3. In what ways did God protect Cain?

Applying the Scripture

1. In what ways are shepherds and farmers in opposition to each other? How, if at all, is this opposition apparent in the present day?
2. What does the job of being “my brother’s keeper” involve in the present day?