



11

Cain and Abel

Key Themes

- God demands obedience and trust.
- God is merciful toward sinners.

Key Passages

- Genesis 4:1–11; Hebrews 11:4; 1 John 3:12

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Compare the offering of Cain to the offering of Abel.
- Describe God's mercy and justice shown to Cain.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

page 5

Students will put the Books of the Old Testament cards in order. (There are many songs online that could make this easier and more fun for your students.)



Activity 1: Books of the Old Testament Review

page 5

Students will review saying the books of the Old Testament in order.



Studying God's Word

page 5

The sacrifices of Cain and Abel reveal God's demand for a pure heart of worship toward Him. The first human death occurred when Cain murdered Abel out of jealousy. In this account, God reveals that He is just to punish sin yet shows mercy to sinners as well.



Activity 2: Different Offerings

page 8

Students will sort cards to illustrate the differences between Cain's offering and Abel's offering to the Lord.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- If you haven't already done this, print and cut out sets of the Books of the Old Testament cards from the Resource DVD-ROM, Lesson 1 (on cardstock). Make one set for every 4 or 5 students.

- Books of the Old Testament cards, one set for every 4 or 5 students



BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT REVIEW

- Use one set of the Books of the Old Testament Cards (see above) to do a more in-depth review of the memory work.

- Books of the Old Testament cards
- Optional: Small reward for children who know all or most of the books by heart



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print the Lesson Board Work outline from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- Student Take Home Sheets
- Lesson Board Work outline



DIFFERENT OFFERINGS

- Gather baskets, stuffed lamb, crop-like props
- Print and cut apart one set of the Different Offerings cards from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- Two baskets
- Stuffed lamb
- Crop-like props
- Different Offerings cards



Memory Verse

Genesis 2:15–17 Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

► **Pace your lesson!** You can use the provided clocks to indicate the time each section should be completed to keep the lesson on schedule. While teaching, you can compare your anticipated times with the actual time and shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

To prepare your heart and mind for this week's lesson, read Genesis 4:1–17; Hebrews 11:4; 1 John 3:11–12.

The sin committed at the Fall of man through the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the garden (Genesis 3:6–7) brought corruption on the human race. Adam and Eve were cursed by God (Genesis 3:16–17) and sent out of the garden (Genesis 3:24). Eve had two sons—Cain and Abel. As they grew, Abel was a keeper of the sheep, but Cain tilled the ground (Genesis 4:1–2). After some time, they each brought an offering to the Lord—Cain some of the “fruit of the ground,” and Abel “the firstborn of his flock” (Genesis 4:3–4). In Genesis we are simply told that “the Lord respected Abel and his offering, He did not respect Cain and his offering” (4:4–5). But why?

Various Scriptures from the New Testament help to solve this puzzle. The book of Hebrews records that Abel made his offering “by faith” and that “he was righteous” (Hebrews 11:4). Cain, however, was of the wicked one and murdered his brother because his works were evil (1 John 3:11–12).

Cain's actions spoke loudly of the desires of his heart. Because of his jealousy, he killed his brother—who walked by faith in righteousness toward God.

And God used this unlikely scenario to display His gracious mercy. God is a holy God and, because of His holiness, had to judge Cain's sin. But instead of requiring a life for a life as the law demanded (Exodus 21:23–24), God spared Cain, making him a fugitive and vagabond on the earth—a fugitive specially marked by God and protected from those seeking revenge for his offense (Genesis 4:14–15).

The effects of the Fall came fast and furious. It doesn't take long for sin to corrupt and this first murder illustrates that. In the first generation after Adam and Eve, we see jealousy, selfishness, and hatred. And yet, God was already revealing the depths of the mercy in His character—a mercy that has repeatedly been demonstrated as man continues to disobey God in his sinfulness.

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

“Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife” (Genesis 4:16–17).

One of the most-asked questions about the book of Genesis is, “Where did Cain get his wife?” This question is often used by skeptics to discredit the historical truth of the book of Genesis because most Christians don't know how to answer it. If Adam and Eve were the first humans, and if their first two sons were Cain and Abel, then where did Mrs. Cain come from? Some have answered this by saying that God must have created other people or races on earth who did not descend from Adam and Eve. However, Scripture is very clear that ALL people are descendants of Eve (Genesis 3:20). And since only descendants of Adam and Eve can be saved, believers need to be able to show that Cain's wife—like all other humans—was a descendant of Adam and Eve.

The answer to this question is, in fact, quite simple: Cain married his sister, or perhaps another close relative like a niece. Genesis 5:3–4 states:

And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. After he begot Seth, the days of Adam were eight hundred years; and he had sons and daughters.

Notice that the Bible tells us that Adam had “sons and daughters.” Exactly how many, we aren't told, but given that Adam lived more than 900 years, it could have been a lot! One Jewish tradition states that Adam had 33 sons and 23 daughters.

Many people reject this very clear answer, citing the law against brother-sister marriages. But keep in mind that way back then (about 6,000 years ago) close relatives could marry—they had to in order to start their own families. Even Abraham married his half-sister (Genesis 20:12). It was not until much later—2,500 years after Cain married his wife—that God commanded Moses that people were not to marry close relatives (Leviticus 18:6). We know now that this command, directed by the providence of God, protects us from many genetic deformities that could result from the marrying of close relatives. These deformities are one of the results of sin and its consequences, which brought disease and death to God's perfect creation. Cain and Mrs. Cain, living near the beginning of creation, wouldn't have had as many genetic mutations as we do today, so marrying a close relative was no problem.

God's Word gives us answers. We need to approach all questions with biblical glasses, standing on the authority of the Scripture—knowing that the Bible is our starting point.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the account of Cain and Abel, we see that God respected the offering of Abel (Genesis 4:4). Abel's offering was the firstborn of his flock—an animal offering presented with a pure heart. As we look at animal offerings throughout biblical history, we can see the amazing foreshadowing and significance of them.

The very first animal sacrifice was made by God Himself to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve after they had disobeyed and introduced sin to the human race (Genesis 3:20–21). Adam and Eve deserved instant death because of their sin, yet we see God displaying His glorious mercy as He killed the animal(s) to make garments as coverings for the sinners. In hindsight we can see how this is a foreshadowing of the substitutionary death of an animal to pay for sin. The foundational elements of God's plan of redemption are shown here on the occasion of the first sin in the Garden of Eden.

Scripture tells us of more customary animal sacrifices ordained by God. Noah sacrificed animals after the Flood (Genesis 8:20), Job sacrificed animals for the sins of his family (Job 1:5), and Abraham sacrificed the ram that God provided as a substitute for Isaac (Genesis 22:13). Clearly, God had revealed the concept of substitutionary sacrifice long before the time of Moses and the Law.

However, it was at the time of Moses, when the Israelites left Egypt, that God specifically appointed a sacrificial system to cover the sins of His people. Leviticus 17:11 states "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul." In this system, the life of the animal atoned for—or covered—the offenses of the sinner; the animal died as a substitute for the sinner.

We know, of course, that animal sacrifices can never cleanse us from our sin. Scripture states, ". . . in

those [Old Testament] sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins" (Hebrews 10:3–4). The ultimate purpose of the sacrificial system was to demonstrate that the penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23). It was God's way of preparing us to receive and believe in the perfect Lamb of God whose blood would finally take away the sins of all who would turn to Him in repentance and faith (John 1:29).

This we know, that before the universe was created, before time existed, before man was formed, God knew that we (in Adam) would sin. He also had a predetermined plan by which salvation for our sins could be received through the free gift of grace by the death of the perfect sacrifice—Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God and only Savior.

What an amazing God we serve! "For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations" (Psalm 100:5).

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Holy, sovereign God, thank you for your Word. Please seal it to my heart and give me total faith and trust that every word is true. Instill in me, dear Lord, a heart that is obedient, faithful, and righteous like the heart of Abel. Please accept my life as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to you. And please work in the hearts of the students this week. Give them the desire to please you with all their hearts—not just in appearances—but with all their soul. Thank you, Lord, for your faithfulness, justice, and mercy.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will work together in groups of 4–5 to put the Books of the Old Testament cards in order. They can use the Books of the Bible poster and their own Bibles.
- They will read (or sing) aloud all the names of the books of the Old Testament.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme posters from previous weeks, quickly review the lessons with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you review the Lesson Theme posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Books of the Old Testament Review

MATERIALS

- Books of the Old Testament cards, one set for every 4–5 students
- Optional: Small rewards or treats for children who can recite all or most of the books in order

INSTRUCTIONS

Pass out one set of the Books of the Old Testament cards. If you have a small class, pass out more than one card to the students. Have them work together and lay the cards down in order on the table. When they are finished, read the books of the Bible from the cards.

Now give the children a chance to recite the books on their own without looking. You may want to offer a small

reward or treat for children who can recite all or most of the books on their own.

If you have been singing the books to a tune, practice singing or have the students sing the song on their own. Again, offer small treats for effort.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

We have been working on putting the books of the Old Testament in order this quarter. Are you learning the names of the books? When we know all the books of the Old Testament we can find a verse anytime we are asked to look one up. Let's keep practicing until we know them perfectly!



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

When sin entered the world, everything changed. Adam and Eve lost the privilege of living in the Garden of Eden. Remember, the Bible says God

Genesis 4:1-7

➤ Print the Lesson Board Work outline from the Resource DVD-ROM for easier planning.

➤ Reread the verses or have the children look in their Bibles so they can answer the questions directly from the text.

drove them out and then blocked the entrance, so no one would ever be able to enter the Garden of Eden again.

Let's see what happened after Adam and Eve left the garden. This account is about two brothers who were very different. Turn to Genesis 4:1-7.

Listen carefully as I read. *Read Genesis 4:1-7. Write "two brothers" on the board.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Let's see if we can find out some things about these very different brothers.

Observe the Text

- ? **Who were the parents of these two boys?** *Reread Genesis 4:1. Adam and Eve.*
- ? **Who was Eve's first baby?** *Reread Genesis 4:1, if necessary. Cain. Start two columns on the board. Write "Cain" on the board in the first column and underline it.*
- ? **Who was Eve's second son?** *Reread Genesis 4:2, if necessary. Abel. Write "Abel" on the board in the second column and underline it.*
- ? **What did Abel do for a living?** *Genesis 4:2. He was a keeper of sheep.*
- ? **What does that mean?** *Allow discussion.*
- ? **Abel was a shepherd. He kept sheep.** *Write "Shepherd" on the board under Abel.*
- ? **Now. What did Cain do for a living?** *Genesis 4:2. He was a tiller of the ground.*
- ? **What does that mean?** *Allow discussion.*

It means he was a farmer. *Write "Farmer" on the board under Cain.*

One day Cain and Abel brought offerings to the Lord.

- ? **What offering did Cain bring to the Lord?** *Reread Genesis 4:3. He brought some fruit that he grew from the ground. Write "Fruit" on the board under Cain.*
- ? **What offering did Abel bring?** *Reread Genesis 4:4. He brought a sheep. Write "Sheep" on the board under Abel.*
- ? **What did God think of Abel's offering of the sheep?** *Genesis 4:4. God was pleased with his offering. Write "God—pleased" on the board under Abel.*
- ? **What did God think of Cain's offering of the fruit?** *Genesis 4:5. God was not pleased with Cain's offering. Write "God—not pleased" on the board under Cain.*

So God liked Abel's offering of the animal but did not accept Cain's offering of the fruit. Let's see if we can figure out why.

I am going to read from the New Testament, the book of Hebrews 11:4.

Read verse, "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." Emphasize "by faith."

- ? **How did Abel offer his sacrifice? What did he have?** *Faith.*

Hebrews 11:4

That's right. Abel offered his sacrifice by faith. His sacrifice showed that he was righteous before the Lord. He gave his sacrifice out of love and respect to the Lord. Write "Had faith," "Was righteous," "Loved and respected God" on the board under Abel.

But what about Cain? Turn to 1 John 3:12 in your Bibles. That is towards the end of the Bible. Listen as I read this to you. We'll make a list of what this says about Cain when I'm finished. Read the verse emphasizing the things about Cain.

1 John 3:12

? What does the Bible say about Cain? Anyone remember? Help the children come up with the answers. Under Cain, write on the board, "Of the wicked one," "Murdered his brother," "Works were evil."

The wicked one is the devil. So Cain was 1) of the devil, 2) he murdered his brother, and 3) his works were evil.

Discover the Truth

Adam and Eve must have been so excited when they had their two sons! The family of two was now a family of four, with two boys to help take care of the animals and raise food to eat. The two brothers grew quickly, as children do, and both had different jobs. Cain was a farmer and Abel was a shepherd. Refer to the board work.

When the time came for them to offer sacrifices to the Lord, Abel's sacrifice from his flock was accepted by God. Cain's offering of the fruit of the land was not.

? Can you tell me why God accepted Abel's sacrifice? Look at the board for a clue. Abel had faith, was righteous, and loved and respected God.

? Why was God angry with Cain's sacrifice? Look at the board again. Cain was of the wicked one, murdered his brother, his works were evil.

Now Cain had not murdered his brother yet. But God knew the wickedness in his heart. God knew Cain's works were evil. God knew that Cain loved the devil more than he loved God. Cain's heart was not pure before the Lord. Far from it! Cain's offering was not given out of the goodness of his heart. He did not really want to honor God.

God knew Cain's heart and He knows our hearts. He is omniscient. He knows everything. Refer to the Attributes of God poster.

OMNISCIENT
(Refer to Attributes poster)

God demands our obedience on the outside and requires a humble attitude and total trust in Him on the inside. Cain did not desire to obey God with a humble attitude. He did not have the faith, righteousness, love, and respect for God that his brother Abel had. God was not happy with Cain's offering. Refer to the board work.





Different Offerings

MATERIALS

- A basket with a stuffed lamb or white felt—Abel
- A basket with crop items, such as fruit/potatoes/wheat/corn—Cain
- One set of Different Offerings cards cut apart

INSTRUCTIONS

Place the cards face down on the table. Place the two baskets showing the offerings of Cain and Abel somewhere in the room. Students will pick a card and read it. If they get a Cain card, the card should be placed in the basket with the crops. If they get an Abel card, it should be placed in the basket with the lamb.

Cain and Abel's offerings were very different. Look at the baskets. Cain brought the Lord fruit from his crops. Abel brought a firstborn animal from his flock. Not only were their offerings different, but the Bible says their hearts were different as well. Abel was righteous—obedient to God. Cain was wicked and his works were evil.

These cards tell about Cain or his sacrifice and Abel or his sacrifice. Your job is to pick one card, read it, and put it into the right basket. Does the card tell us about Cain or

Abel? You can use the list on the board if you get stuck. If the card describes Cain, it goes in the "Cain" basket with the fruit and vegetables. If the card describes Abel, put it in the "Abel" basket with the lamb.

Allow children to take turns. Allow the class to help out as necessary.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Although both of these offerings were made to God from the work of these two men, God accepted one and did not accept the other. God accepted Abel's offering. Abel was obedient to God and God knew he was righteous. God did not accept Cain's offering. God knew Cain's heart—that it was wicked and his works were really evil.

God knows your hearts, too. He knows exactly why you do what you do. Although you might fool me, or your parents, or your teachers at school—you can't fool God anytime. He always demands obedience and trust. If you don't offer Him that first, your offering will not be acceptable to Him.



READ THE WORD

Now we are going to take a look at the very first murder! We will see how God had to judge that sin but also showed His mercy in it.

Now, let's study these verses a bit. Listen while I read Genesis 4:8–11.

Genesis 4:8–11

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? What did Cain do to Abel? *Genesis 4:8. Cain killed Abel.*
- ? Why did Cain kill Abel? *Allow for answers.*

Cain was angry that Abel's sacrifice was accepted by God and his was not. He was jealous of his brother.

- ? What did God ask Cain in Genesis 4:9? *Reread the verse. Where is Abel your brother?*
- ? Right. Now after Cain killed his brother, do you think God was really wondering where Abel was? *No.*
- ? Why not? *God knows everything. He already knew Cain had killed Abel.*
- ? What was Cain's answer to God in Genesis 4:9? *Reread verse. He said he didn't know where his brother was.*
- ? So, Cain lied to God! That's not too smart, is it? A lie is a direct sin against God. How does God feel about all sin? Does He like sin? *NO! God hates sin. He must judge sin.*
- ? Which attributes on our poster explain why God must judge sin? *He is holy and just. Refer to the Attributes of God poster. Review the meanings of these words.*

HOLY
JUST

(Refer to Attributes poster).

That's right. God must judge all sin and it is clear that Cain was a sinner against God. The punishment for sin is death.

But God did not strike Cain down and kill him right then. Listen as I read Genesis 4:10–11 again. See if you can tell me what God did. *Read Genesis 4:10–11.*

- ? What did God do? Let's make a new list on the board. We'll call it "God punished Cain." *Write "God punished Cain" on the board and underline it. Reread Genesis 4:10–11.*

The Bible says God cursed the earth. Cain could no longer farm. *Under "God punished Cain," write on the board, "No more farming."*

God also made Cain a fugitive or a vagabond.

- ? Do you know what that means? *Allow discussion.*

It means that Cain had to leave his home and couldn't go back. He had nowhere to go. *Under "God punished Cain," write on the board, "Nowhere to go."*

Cain was really afraid. He had to leave his home. Since he had killed his brother, he knew that people would be coming after him to kill him. But God showed mercy to Cain. Even though Cain did deserve to die because of what he did to his brother, God agreed to protect him by putting a special mark on him. Whatever the mark was, it meant that no one could kill him.

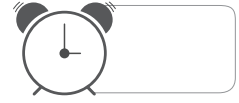
Discover the Truth

This is the very first murder in the history of the world—one brother killing another brother. It didn't take long for people to get very hateful once sin entered the world, did it? This was a terrible sin against God and Cain deserved to die! *Refer to the Seven C's Timeline to show how quickly sin took root.*

God revealed two of His attributes in this account. He showed that He must be just—and punish the sin of Cain. He did this by cursing the ground so Cain could no longer farm. And he made Cain a fugitive with nowhere to go. *Refer to the board work.*

MERCIFUL
(Refer to Attributes poster.)

But God also showed mercy. He put a mark on Cain. We don't know what the mark was, but we do know that the mark protected Cain so he wouldn't be killed.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Two brothers—Cain and Abel—made offerings to God. One offering was an animal, the other the fruit of the ground. One sacrifice was accepted. One was not. One brother loved the Lord, was obedient to Him, and wanted to honor God with his sacrifice. The other brother was wicked. Even though he made the sacrifice, it was not acceptable to God.

Abel's sacrifice was accepted because his heart was right with God. Cain's sacrifice was not accepted because God knew his heart—that it was not set on true worship of the holy God.

After killing his brother, Cain was punished. This revealed God's justice. But God also showed Cain mercy by sparing his life and protecting him from being killed himself.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

This historical account of Cain and Abel often brings up a very interesting question. God sent Cain out to wander. He left his homeland and went out with his wife.

? The question often asked is where did Cain get his wife? People often wonder about it—because Cain was from the very first family of Adam and Eve. So where would he have gotten his wife? Can anyone tell me?

Allow for answers.

Most people believe that Cain married his sister or his niece. Back then, about 6,000 years ago, it was OK for close relatives to marry. They had to so they could start their own families.

Today it seems strange because we don't do it anymore. In fact, the Bible tells us that God later commanded that we not marry our close relatives. But back then it was OK. And there wasn't anyone else to marry!

Adam and Eve's family was the only family on earth at the time. They had to marry their relatives so that they could obey God's command to populate the earth.



➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

Genesis 2:15–17 Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Praise God for His mercy. He provides forgiveness and life through Jesus Christ to all who will repent of their sins and trust in Him for salvation.
- Ask God to help us all to obey and honor God in our actions but especially in our hearts so our lives will be acceptable to God.

