

Genesis: The Story of God & His People

Genesis 4: Cain & Abel

→ *Survey: Let's understand the background and context of the passage.*

The first two chapters of Genesis revealed God's power, creativity, intentionality, and love as He created all things simply by speaking them into existence. He made mankind in His image and commanded them to be fruitful & multiply, to work the ground and care for every living creature. Everything that God made was good and full of life; man and woman were together and had everything they needed. Yet, last week in Chapter 3 we saw how quickly God's perfect world was fractured by sin. Adam and Eve questioned God's authority and His goodness, and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They did what seemed right in their own eyes, but disobeyed God in the process. They missed the mark and were banished from the Garden of Eden.

Tonight we will see how sin runs rampant in God's good world, as we learn about Adam & Eve's two sons: Cain and Abel. 1 John 3 gives us a glimpse into this story: ¹¹"We should love one another. ¹²Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous." Sin always leads to death.

We don't have to look far to see the effects of sin in our own world. But there is good news, and his name is Jesus, who is redeeming and restoring all things. He invites us to do the same as we follow him. Let's continue to wrestle with God's goodness and man's brokenness as we read Genesis 4 together.

Read: Genesis 4 (NIV)

→ *Observe: Let's take a close look at what the text is saying.*

1. (v. 1-2) Who are Adam & Eve's 2 sons at this point? What jobs did they have?
2. What offering did Cain bring to the LORD (v. 3)? What about Abel (v. 4)?
3. What made Cain very angry (v. 5)? What is the LORD's response to Cain (v. 6-7)?
4. In your own words, summarize what happens next (v. 8-9).
5. How does the LORD respond to what Cain has done (v. 11-12)?
6. How is Cain feeling about this punishment (v. 13)? What is he afraid will happen to him (v. 14)? What is God's response to this (v. 15)?
7. Now banished, what two things does Cain do (v. 17)?
8. In Enoch, what 3 skills/jobs did some of the people have (v. 20-22)?
9. How many wives does Lamech have (v. 19)? What does he boast about (v. 23-24)?
10. What notable things happen as this chapter ends (v. 25-26)?

→ *Interpret: Let's seek to understand the meaning of this text in its original context.*

1. Why do you think God accepted Abel's offering, but not Cain's? (v. 3-5) Why do you think Cain was feeling angry? Did he have fair reasons to be angry? Why or why not?
2. What do you notice about how the LORD responds to Cain (v. 6-7)? What does this teach us about sin? What else do we learn about sin and its consequences in this chapter? *Specifically look at Cain & Lamech.*
3. In what ways do we see God's mercy displayed to Cain (v. 15)?
 - Are there other places where we see God's mercy in this story?
4. *Think back to God's perfect world in Genesis 1 & 2:* What are some qualities & characteristics that stand out about God, humanity, and creation? Let's split into small groups to discuss the similarities & differences we now see in this post-sin world:
 - Humanity with God | Humanity with one other | Humanity with creation
5. Lamech demonstrates to us how rampant sin is at this point in God's story. Yet, in what way(s) do we see the hope of Jesus woven into this story (v. 25-26)?

→ *Apply: Let's explore where the text intersects with our lives and our world.*

1. Whether from God, a parent, a teacher, etc. - In what ways have you experienced mercy in your own life? Are there people in your life that God has put on your heart that you should be merciful with?
2. Like Cain, where are the places in your life where your heart might not be in the right place? Are there places of jealousy & resentment - or any sinful heart posture? How is this impacting how you treat those around you? What might need to change?
3. In verse 9, Cain asks - "Am I my brother's keeper?" Where in your life do you too deflect responsibility for those around you? In what ways as Christians should we be living as our 'brother's keeper?' What's one change you can make this week?