

Engine Room Bible Study – Genesis 4:1-16

1 Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, “With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.” 2 Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. 3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. 4 And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favour on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favour. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

6 Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 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.”

8 Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

9 Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

10 The Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground. 11 Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. 12 When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”

13 Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is more than I can bear. 14 Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

15 But the Lord said to him, “Not so; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. 16 So Cain went out from the Lord’s presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

The Seriousness of Sin

New Testament Reference

Do 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. (1 John 3:14)

Qn 1 Observe: How do we see the nature of sin and its effects in the story of Cain and Abel?

Qn 2 Apply: Sin is described as a predator. Discuss together why that is a helpful picture.

Qn 3 Apply: If sin is a deadly predator, in what ways can we seek to 'rule over it' (v7)?

The Sweetness of God

Qn 4 Observe: How do we see the mercy of God in the story of Cain and Abel?

Qn 5 Apply: What can we discover about the character of God as he deals with the first family (also Genesis 3)?

The Significance of Sacrifice

New Testament References

4 By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead. (Hebrews 11:4)

24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. (Hebrews 12:24)

Qn 6 Observe: What is the difference between the two offerings? And God's response to them?

Qn 7 Apply: What connections can we draw between Abel's story and that of Jesus?

Qn 8 Apply: How does the blood of Jesus 'speak a better word' than that of Abel? What message does the cross (and the Lord's Supper) communicate for our faith?

Praying together

Spend some time praying in light of your discussions on this text

Share any prayer points you have

Seek God's blessing as we think about worshipping together on Sunday