

Cain And Abel

Genesis 4:1-17

MEMORY VERSE

GENESIS 4:7

"If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Two puzzles, one with two pieces missing.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Simon Says?

Lead the children in a game of "Simon Says." Give the children commands to perform—like touch your nose, jump up and down, turn around—preceded by the command "Simon Says." They must perform the task in order to stay in the game. Also include commands without the preceding "Simon Says." If you do not say "Simon Says," they must not perform the task or they can no longer stay in the game.

Explain to your class that following commands is very important to God. When He tells us what to do, we must do just as He says. All of His commands are good, and they are all given to us for very good reasons, whether or not we know what those reasons are. **God desires obedience.**

LESSON TIME!

We are supposed to obey our mom and our dad. We should obey our teachers and others who have authority over us (coaches, policemen, etc.). We especially need to obey the Lord. Why is it important to obey? God has a perfect plan for us. He wants to bless our lives; and when we obey, we will be blessed. When we disobey, we will bring upon ourselves all kinds of problems. This truth will be seen as we continue to study the Old Testament Bible stories.

Maybe you have wondered why bad things happen in the world. The answer is sin. Sin has now entered the world, and its effect has not been good. We will see what the sins of jealousy and anger cause in our story of Cain and Able. We will also learn that **God desires obedience.**

GENESIS 4:1-2

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have gotten a man from the LORD."

Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

Here in chapter four, we see the first husband and wife becoming the first parents. Cain is the first son mentioned; his name means "acquisition or possession." Eve, rejoicing at his birth said, "I have begotten a man from the LORD".

Later we see the birth of Abel, which means "exhalation or that which ascends, vanity." Cain and Abel are very significant in that we see a type of the carnal or sinful man on the earth and a type of

the spiritual man. We see that both men had a calling on their lives. Abel was a keeper of the sheep, and Cain was a tiller of the ground.

Both Cain and Abel had a job to do. One was not better than the other. Sometimes brothers or sisters can get jealous of one another; but in God's eyes, we are all the same.

GENESIS 4:3-5

And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD.

Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering,

but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

We see that over a period of time, both Cain and Abel bring an offering to the Lord. Cain brings an offering of fruit. It represents all of his hard work and effort. He was no doubt very proud of the fruit that he was able to raise, and he now brought it to the Lord. Abel also brought an offering, but his was different. Abel brought some lambs from his flock. We see that God respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. Why do you suppose that happened? Let's look a little bit closer.

Do you remember when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden? Remember how that the Lord provided clothes for them from animal skins? That was the first indication that there would have to be the death of an innocent one for the sins of man. God began the sacrificial system with a picture that would last throughout the Old Testament--only the innocent could die for the sins of another. It would be a picture of Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross.

The most important thing to the Lord is not “what” is brought as an offering, but rather the heart of the person bringing it. We must remember that whatever we do for the Lord must be done with faith and obedience. In fact according to the Lord, obedience is better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22). **God desires obedience.**

So, why was Abel's offering accepted and not Cain's? Let us compare the two offerings. First, let's look at Cain's. Commentators have suggested that although he was prepared to worship the Lord and bring him sacrifice, he chose to do so in his own way, rather than God's way. He brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. His offering was not the sacrifice of an animal. Remember, “Without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sins” (Hebrews 9:22).

Also, his offering consisted of the fruit of his own toil; it was the product of his own labors, the work of his own hands. This is very important because a lot of people feel like they can come to God on the basis of doing good things. It is all based on the good things they produce, like Cain's fruit. We can never be good enough to please God with the good things we do. Even at our best, we are still sinners and can only be accepted by God through one way. That one-way is through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ who bore our sins. The only offering acceptable to God was the one that God had established. **God desires obedience.**

Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof; and to do this, a sacrifice had to be made, a life had to be taken, blood had to be shed. Hebrews 11:4 tells us that by faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. He did not say that Abel was more excellent, but that the offering that he gave was pleasing and acceptable to the Lord. **God desires obedience.**

Cain represents the natural man and those who reject the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, those who think they can gain their salvation by the works of righteousness they have done.

Abel represents a type of the spiritual man, showing that his offering was an attitude of obedience. He confessed that he was a fallen man, guilty of sin and worthy of death. By offering a lamb, he was saying that his only hope before God was in a substitute taking his place and taking his penalty. His offering "by faith" showed he believed that God would accept his slain lamb and that it's blood would satisfy God's demand for justice. Abel represents the spiritual man who cries out, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He represents those who realize their only hope is the atoning sacrifice of Calvary, which brings God's gift of salvation by faith.

Cain became very angry at God, because God looked with favor upon Abel's sacrifice and not upon Cain's. Cain was angry at the thought that all his labors should stand for nothing. He was angry at the thought that he could not approach and worship God according to the way he wanted to worship. The natural man in his pride and self-righteousness hates the truth that Jesus took man's punishment on the cross and now offers sinful man unmerited grace.

Very Puzzling

Divide your class into two teams. Give each team a puzzle to put together; but leave two pieces out of one of the puzzles. Tell each team that you are going to time them to see who can put the puzzle together the fastest. When the team with the pieces missing discovers that they are not finished, but have no more pieces, they will let you know.

After everyone is done, explain that a puzzle with missing pieces is frustrating and imperfect. No matter how much time you spend on it, it will never be right. Cain's sacrifice was like that. He spent a great deal of thought and effort in presenting it, but it was missing pieces; it was not done the way God said it should be. **God desires obedience.**

GENESIS 4:6-7

So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"

If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

Now, God warned Cain to turn away from his anger. God told him that sin, crouching like an animal at the door, is ever ready to spring upon a man and possess his soul entirely unless he is able to control it. God asks him why he is angry and tells him there is no just cause for his displeasure; if he would bring the required offering, it would be accepted. God was making a last appeal to Cain to bring the required offering. God also warned him of the consequences that would happen if he refused to bring the specified sacrifice. If sin was not removed by an offering, it will spring upon him and devour him. **God desires obedience.**

GENESIS 4:8-15

Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose against Abel his brother and killed him.

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground.

So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth."

And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear!

Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me."

And the LORD said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him.

Here we see the result of Cain's refusal to obey God. He rejected the divine counsel and let jealousy and hatred completely over power him. He killed his brother. This clearly reveals the condition of Cain's heart. James 1:5 tells us, "When lust (desire, passion) has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin when it is finished (consummated), brings forth death." This was what happened with Cain: 1) lust, anger, 2) sin; lying at the door, 3) death, Abel's murder.

God confronted Cain about the cry of his brother's blood from the ground. Sin can never be hidden. Yet Cain did not confess his sin, but tried to argue with God and cover it up, just as Adam and Eve did in the Garden.

God gave Cain a chance to admit his guilt and receive forgiveness. By the answers that Cain gave, it appears that sin had a firmer grip on him than it had on his father, Adam. Instead of evading the answer by making excuses, Cain lied to God, "I do not know" and then he added defiantly, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

I Remember When...

Tell the children in your class about a time you tried to hide something from someone. When and how did they find out? Were you defensive or repentant? Allow some of your class to share about when they have had similar situation. How did God fix the situation? (Be sure that the experiences you share are appropriate for the age you are teaching; it's most effective if you share about something that happened when you were their age.)

God cursed Cain, banning him from the ground he, as a farmer, had cultivated. The ground would no longer yield its fruit for Cain, and he was forever driven from before it to wander like a Bedouin in the desert wastelands. Cain acknowledged that his punishment was too heavy for him to bear. We see the mercy of God in sparing his life, but Cain was afraid that as a wandering nomad, he would lose his life at a stranger's hand.

Away from home, and therefore, presumably away from God, he felt unprotected in the desert. Once again God showed his love for a man in sin by placing a sign on Cain, indicating that he belonged to God and that he was under His protection. God became the "kinsman redeemer" for the murderer as well as for the murdered. Interestingly, Cain was more concerned with his punishment than with his sin.

GENESIS 4:16-17

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, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son--Enoch.

Now Cain went out from the presence of the Lord into the land of Nod. Nod means "wandering," and there is no peace or rest for the wicked. After Cain went out from the presence of God, he never rested. **God desires obedience.**

More Than Sacrifice

If you know this chorus, sing it:

“More Than Sacrifice”:

More than sacrifice, more than praise,
More than bended knee and outstretched arms upraised,
Bring a humble heart ready to obey,
More than sacrifice, more than praise.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to do things God’s way. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them an opportunity.