



## LESSON 4

*Cain rebels against God*

GENESIS 4:1-24



**Sin is rebellion against God.**



*“The LORD said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door’” (Gen 4:6–7).*

## Supporting Truths

1. Refusing to worship God the right way is sin.
2. Sin separates us from God.
3. God promises a Savior to save sinners.
4. Sin enslaves the sinner and leads to more sin.
5. Sin separates us from God and destroys joy.

## Objectives

1. Explain what was wrong with Cain’s offering.
2. Describe how God offered Cain an opportunity to repent.
3. Describe how God punished Cain.
4. Describe how Cain’s sin grew and was even multiplied by his descendants.
5. Compare Cain’s anger and exile with what God promised him if he would repent.

# STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

Cain rebels against God • Genesis 4:1-24



## Lesson Summary

Cain and Abel brought offerings to God, but only Abel's offering was accepted. An **offering** is something given to God as an act of worship. God rejected Cain's offering because he didn't obey God's instructions concerning the kind of offering he was to bring. Cain was angry with God for rejecting his offering and killed his brother. As a result, God punished Cain by cursing the ground so that it would no longer produce crops for Cain and by sending him away to wander the earth with no permanent home.

## Spotlight on the Gospel

Cain's sin was rebellion against God. He intentionally resisted God by disobeying His instructions about offerings, murdering his brother Abel, and lying. Every sin is a direct challenge to God's authority. Through Cain's father, Adam, sin has spread to all men (Rom 5:12). But God is merciful. He gave Cain a chance to repent, and He gave Adam another son, Seth, through whom would come the promised seed (Gen 3:15), Jesus, who would give His life for the forgiveness of sin.

LAST WEEK



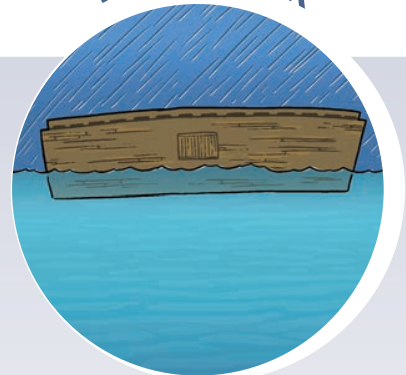
Man rebels against God  
Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-24

THIS WEEK



Cain rebels against God  
Genesis 4:1-24

NEXT WEEK



God floods the earth  
Genesis 6:5-7:24

FALL

## Lesson Commentary

### *Sin is rebellion against God.*

All sin, however harmless it may appear, is a direct challenge to God's authority. This is the essence of sin. Sin is a revolt against God and what God has said to be true. This is what Adam and Eve attempted in the Garden of Eden. Biting into the forbidden fruit was an attack on the truthfulness of God's word. Adam's sin—his disobedience to God—spread to all men (Rom 5:12), and this sin immediately grew in Genesis 4. Adam and Eve's son, Cain, continued in his parents' sin, rebelling against the authority of God.

### Cain rejected God's requirement for an animal sacrifice (4:2–5a)

Cain's rebellion began when he rejected God's instruction about sacrifices. **Rebellion** is intentional resistance against God. Cain and Abel both brought an offering to God, but God only honored Abel's offering (Gen 4:4–5).

What was wrong with Cain's offering? Since Israel was later commanded to bring both blood offerings like Abel's (Lev 1:3–5) and bloodless offerings like Cain's (2:1–2), some identify Cain's attitude as the central reason for God's rejection of his offering. It's true that Cain made no special effort to bring God the best of his crops. He was simply going through the motions of worship, and his heart was not in it. He did not bring the first and best of the flock like his brother, Abel (Gen 4:4).

However, even though Israel later brought both kinds of offerings, a blood offering had to precede a first fruits offering. This was because only a blood sacrifice could atone for sin (Lev 17:11). By bringing an offering of the fruit of the

ground, Cain effectively denied his personal need for cleansing from sin. This is the primary reason why Cain's offering was rejected by God. Abel's

offering was accepted by God because he offered the sacrifice prescribed by God—a blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins.

Abel gave what God wanted, whereas Cain gave what he wanted. Abel came to God and said, in effect, "Lord, here is what You said You wanted. You told me that if I brought a blood sacrifice, You would forgive my sin, and I believe You, God. I confess that I'm a sinner, and I will follow your instructions for my offering." Cain had the same knowledge of what God required, but chose to worship God in his own way. Just like his parents, Adam and Eve, he did what he wanted and offered a sacrifice of his own choosing. By not bringing a blood sacrifice He was, in effect, denying his personal need to have his sin forgiven.

Somehow both Cain and Abel knew that God wanted an animal sacrifice. It's clear they both knew that God wanted them to worship Him. **Worship** recognizes the supreme value of God and attributes this value to Him through words, thoughts, and actions. It's also clear that their worship of God was to include an offering. God must have revealed this to them or to their parents. They knew they were to come to God to worship Him with an offering. God must have also given specific instruction regarding the type of sacrifice they were to offer.

Abel's obedience—bringing the correct offering and bringing the best of what he had—was evidence of his faith in God. It was because of his faith that Abel's offering was accepted by God (Heb 11:4). God desires true worship motivated by faith, not just the appearance of religion.

That is why Genesis 2:4–5 mentions God's reaction not just to the offerings, but to the men themselves. God looked into the heart, saw Cain's faithless attitude, and rejected him. God will reject even the most perfect sacrifice if that sacrifice is offered by an apostate heart (Isa 1:11–13; Hos 6:6; Mic 6:6–8). The prophet Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams" (1 Sam 15:22).



#### THINK ABOUT IT

Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin (Heb 9:22).

# STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

Cain rebels against God • Genesis 4:1–24



## Cain rejected God's call for repentance (4:5b–8)

Cain's faithless offering led to further rebellion against God. Instead of admitting his sin and returning to God with a humble heart, Cain got angry, and his face showed it (Gen 4:5). His sin robbed him of joy. But God questioned Cain to show him his sin and his need for repentance (4:6). **Repentance** is sorrow over sin that causes someone to turn away from sin and turn to God. God reminded Cain that he could be accepted just like Abel if he would do what is right.



**THINK ABOUT IT**  
Anger takes control of a person and produces more sin (Prov 29:22).

God warned Cain about the power of sin if he chose not to repent (4:7). He warned Cain that sin is like a lion ready to pounce on the sinner who does not flee from his sin. Those who reject God feel like

God's laws limit their freedom, but obedience to God is the only way to be truly free, free from the tyranny of sin. Those who do not repent often regret their sin (2 Cor 7:10), but they are trapped; slaves to their sinful passions, because they will not submit to God (Rom 6:16).

Cain refused to listen to God's gracious reminder and rejected His call for repentance. As a result, Cain's anger drove him to murder his own brother (Gen 4:8). Cain's anger was against God, but since he couldn't do anything to harm God, he killed his brother who was made in God's image. When Cain murdered Abel, he was yet again rebelling against God. He tried to lash out at God by killing Abel. Just as God had warned him, Cain's sin grew worse and in the end it led to death (Jas 1:15). No one should think they can enjoy some sin and keep it under control. The only right response to sin is to reject it entirely (Rom 8:13).

## God punished Cain for his rebellion (4:9–16)

Before punishing Cain, God again gave him a chance to repent, but Cain lied and refused to take responsibility (Gen 4:9). He tried to ignore his crime, but God knew the murder he had committed because Abel's blood was crying out to God from the ground (4:10).

God punished Cain in a way that fit his crime. Since the ground had been covered in Abel's blood, the ground would no longer grow food for Cain (4:11–12). Cain was blind to God's justice—instead of repenting, he pitied himself (4:13). He was selfish from beginning to end. Remarkably, God continued to extend mercy. He still punished, but He protected Cain's life by placing a mark on him so that no one would kill him (4:15).

It appears that Cain never repented, and his sin encouraged sin in his children after him. In fact, sin grew worse. When one of Cain's descendants, Lamech, killed a young man, he boasted that his life would be protected in an even greater way than Cain's (4:23–24). It is good to remember that our sin spreads and harms people we might never even know of. But God is merciful. He gave Adam and Eve another son, Seth. Through Seth would come the promised seed (Gen 3:15), Jesus, who would give His life for the forgiveness of sin.

# Lesson Outline

*Sin is rebellion against God.*

## AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Cain offered the wrong offering (4:2–5a).
2. Cain got angry and did not repent (4:5b–8).
3. God punished Cain (4:9–16).

## AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. **Cain rejected God’s requirement for an animal sacrifice (4:2–5a).**
  - Cain was a farmer and Abel was a shepherd (4:2).
  - Cain offered to God the wrong sacrifice in the wrong way (4:3).
  - Abel offered to God the right sacrifice in the right way (4:4a).
  - God valued Abel and Abel’s offering but not Cain or Cain’s offering (4:4b–5a).
2. **Cain rejected God’s call for repentance (4:5b–8).**
  - Cain got very angry and his face showed it (4:5).
  - God encouraged Cain that if he did what is right, he would be joyful (4:6–7a).
  - God warned Cain not to let sin control him and lead to more sin (4:7b).
  - Instead of listening to God, Cain killed his brother Abel (4:8).
3. **God punished Cain for his rebellion (4:9–16, 23–24).**
  - God gave Cain a chance to repent, but Cain lied instead of confessing his sin (4:9).
  - Cain’s punishment was to be a restless wanderer instead of a fruitful farmer (4:10–12).
  - Instead of repenting, Cain complained that his punishment was too hard (4:13–14).
  - God graciously protected Cain, but Cain still chose to leave God’s presence (4:15–16).
  - Cain’s sin led his descendants to commit even worse sin (4:23–24).



# TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

*Cain rebels against God • Genesis 4:1-24*



## Lesson Questions

*Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.*



### Ages 3-5 Lesson Questions

- 1. What work did Cain and Abel do?**  
Cain was a farmer and Abel was a shepherd.
- 2. Was God pleased with Cain's and Abel's offerings?**  
He was pleased with Abel's and not with Cain's.
- 3. How did Cain respond?**  
He got angrier and killed his brother.
- 4. What did God do?**  
He punished Cain.



### Ages 6-11 Lesson Questions

- 1. What offering did Cain bring to the Lord?**  
Cain brought fruit of the ground.
- 2. What offering did Abel bring to the Lord?**  
Abel brought the firstlings of his flock and their fat portions.
- 3. Why did God have regard for Abel and his offering?**  
He had regard for Abel and his offering because Abel offered to God the right sacrifice in the right way.
- 4. What was Cain's reaction when he found out that the Lord did not respect his offering?**  
Cain became very angry, and his countenance fell (that is, the look on his face changed to show that he was very displeased).
- 5. What were the two parts of God's instruction to Cain?**  
God told Cain that if he did well, he would be accepted. God also told Cain that if he did not do well, he would not be accepted. God was warning Cain to be careful because he was being tempted to sin.
- 6. Did Cain listen to God's warning and repent of his sin?**  
No. Cain refused to listen to God's gracious reminder and rejected His call for repentance.
- 7. How did Cain respond to God's call to repentance?**  
Cain's anger was against God, but since he couldn't do anything to harm God, he killed his brother who was made in God's image.
- 8. How did Cain respond to God's punishment and protection after killing Abel?**  
Cain was blind to God's justice—instead of repenting, he pitied himself (Gen 4:13) and his sin encouraged sin in his children after him. In fact, sin grew worse.

## Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



### PLAY-DOH TABLES

As the children arrive to class, direct them to a table with Play-Doh utensils and cookie cutters shaped like gingerbread men in assorted sizes. Have the children make a Play-Doh family, some sheep, and fruits and vegetables. In today's lesson, we will see what kinds of jobs God gave to Cain and Abel.

### HAPPY/MAD FACES MASKS

Give each child a paper plate with eye-holes cut out, colored yarn for hair, crayons, and a wooden craft stick. To demonstrate Cain's fallen countenance, have the children draw and decorate a happy face on one side of the plate and a mad face on the other side. Glue a craft stick onto the plate for a handle. Tell the class that today they will learn how Cain's attitude was wrong and his countenance fell.



### VEGGIES AND STUFFED ANIMAL PROPS

Bring a large basket of fresh vegetables to illustrate Cain's offering, and bring in stuffed lambs to illustrate Abel's.

### A HEART OF SIN HAND MOTIONS

Cain was the world's first baby boy,  
(Hold up one finger; rock folded arms back and forth.)  
But his heart did not have joy.  
(Point to heart and shake head back and forth.)  
Instead, his heart was full of sin.  
(Hold arms open wide.)  
So God did not respect him.  
(Shake head back and forth.)  
Cain let sin come through the door.  
(Pretend to open door with hand.)  
And so his garden grew no more.  
(Place wrists together; then fold hands in like the petals of a flower.)



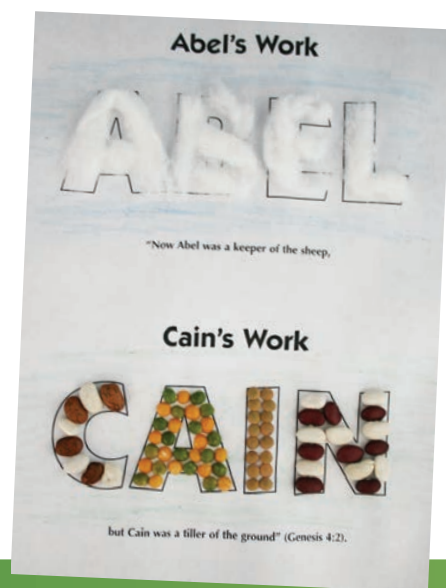
### ABEL'S AND CAIN'S WORK

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

**Materials:** Copies of the "Abel's Work, Cain's Work" craft page, cotton balls, dried beans and corn, glue.

**Directions:** Give each child a copy of the craft page and some glue. Tell each one to fill in the letters of Abel's name using cotton balls and Cain's name using the dried beans and corn.

*Abel's and Cain's Work*  
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1



# TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

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AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

## TELEPHONE

Have the children sit in a row. Whisper a message to the child next to you. In turn, he or she should whisper it to the next person, and so on. Messages could be tongue twisters, statements such as, “After church we go home, eat some lunch, take a nap, and play with toys,” or Bible passages such as, “Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.” Although the results often are humorous, this game demonstrates how one mistake—one sin—builds and compounds. At the end of the game, remind the children that the best way to know what God wants is to look in the Bible.

## SKIT: CAIN AND ABEL

This story lends itself very well to a skit. Choose one person to be Cain, one to be Abel, and one to be the Lord. Bring in appropriate props for today’s passage. Act out the lesson and then go through the lesson with the children.



ILLUSTRATE

## MY BROTHER’S KEEPER

Have the children demonstrate how we can care for others by leading a blindfolded person around the room, taking care to protect him from tripping or injury. This will show the children how to show love to others and how they can “keep” their brother.

## LOVE YOUR SIBLINGS

During the lesson ask the children how they get along with their brothers and sisters. Ask them whether they have been jealous of one of their family members or have done something wrong to one of them. Ask them what God thinks of that. Ask them what they can do to show their brothers and sisters that they love them. Encourage them to find practical and tangible ways to care for their brothers and sisters.



APPLY

## TWO-SIDED FACE MASK

**Materials:** Paper plates with eye-holes precut, wooden craft sticks, yarn, markers or crayons, glue.

**Directions:** Give each child a paper plate, a craft stick, and some yarn. Have children tape or glue the stick to the back side of the plate. On one side, have children draw a smiley face, representing Abel. On the reverse side, have children draw a frown, representing Cain. Glue yarn on each side of the plate as hair. Use markers or crayons to draw a nose and eyebrows.



AGES 9–11



### THE CURSE

On the children's arrival to class and continuing throughout the lesson, mark a helper or parent volunteer as "cursed." (This curse could be represented by a large piece of poster board with Cain's curse from Genesis 4:11–12 written on it.) Inform the children that the cursed person cannot sit (representing Cain's curse to be a vagrant), cannot play with toys, and must carry weeds or dried grass (to represent poor crops). This will give an example of a curse and could lead into a discussion of God's instructions, how Cain chose to disobey, and how he was punished. God's mercy could also be discussed. In today's lesson, we will learn about a man who had a severe curse.

### SIX WAYS I CAN PLEASE THE LORD THIS WEEK

Give each child a blank piece of paper. Tell the children to write down six ways they can please the Lord this week. In today's lesson they will learn about two brothers. One brother pleased the Lord and the other did not.



### CAIN'S REBELLION

Use this acrostic to help children remember the lesson.

- R refused to repent (4:5)
- E expressed anger at God (4:5–6)
- B blamed Abel (jealousy; 4:8)
- E executed his brother (4:8)
- L lied to God (4:9)
- L lost his livelihood (4:10–12)
- I ignored God (4:9)
- O opened the door to sin (4:7)
- N no fellowship with God (4:14, 16)

### WARNING!

Bring in a variety of objects with warning labels (cleaning supplies, electrical appliances, and car seat). Read the warning labels to the children and ask why these warnings are given.

Then lead the class in a discussion of God's warning to Cain in Genesis 4:7.

- Bring an acceptable offering to God.
- Disobedience is displeasing to the Lord.
- Anger and hostility lead to sin.
- Sin can overpower you, if you let it.
- Sin leads to death.
- Humble yourself and obey God



### VENN DIAGRAM

*See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.*

Make a copy of the Venn diagram for each child. Direct the children to fill in the Venn diagram, listing things that Cain and Abel had in common in the space where the two circles overlap, and listing Cain and Abel's differences in the sections labeled with their names. Samples of things children may come up with are listed below.

#### **SIMILARITIES**

Brothers (4:2)  
Brought offerings to the LORD (4:3–4)

#### **CAIN**

Firstborn son of Adam and Eve (4:1)  
Farmer (4:2)  
Brought fruit of the ground as an offering (4:3)  
His offering displeased God and was rejected (4:5)  
Responded in anger (4:5)

#### **ABEL**

Second son of Adam and Eve (4:2)  
Shepherd (4:2)  
Brought firstborn of his flock as an offering (4:4)  
His offering pleased God and was accepted (4:4)  
Obedient (implied in 4:4)