

The first human family struggled because of original sin.

WE GATHER

✝ Jesus, Savior, guide and protect all families.

🙏 What positive things can people do to handle the anger they might feel in certain situations?

WE BELIEVE

The story in the Book of Genesis continues by telling us about Adam and Eve's family. In the fourth chapter of Genesis we find out that Adam and Eve had two sons. The older son Cain was a farmer. His younger brother, Abel, was a shepherd.

By all appearances this family was loving and happy. Then something happened to set brother against brother. Both brothers made an offering of their goods to the Lord, but "the LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not" (Genesis 4:4-5).

The story does not explain why one offering was acceptable and the other was not. That was the biblical writer's way of indicating that we cannot always understand the ways of God and should not try to judge his ways. Yet Cain judged everything only from his own point of view. He felt that he had been treated unfairly, and he became very angry about it. Perhaps he was also envious of Abel's success.

In the story God saw what Cain was going through and offered him some good advice. God told Cain that he could do the right thing in this situation and feel good about it, or he could do the wrong thing and sin. God told Cain that he had the ability to overcome evil. But Cain could not rise above his anger. He took his resentment out on his innocent brother—Cain killed Abel. Murder, one of the worst effects of original sin, came into existence.

In the Genesis account, God asked Cain where Abel was. Cain replied, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9). God was deeply offended and said to Cain, "What have you done! Listen: Your brother's blood cries out to me from the soil! Therefore you shall be banned from the soil that opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand" (Genesis 4:10-11).

Suddenly, Cain realized that he was being sent away and would lose God's protection. He feared that he himself would now be killed. Yet God came to Cain's aid. He put a mark on Cain. This showed that though he murdered Abel, Cain was protected by God. So even in this terrible circumstance God showed his great love for Cain.

The story of Cain and Abel can be understood on several levels. On one level it declares the sacredness of human life and prohibits murder of any kind. On another level it symbolizes the separation of human beings from one another. On a third level it is about accepting life as one finds it and respecting one another. And on a fourth level it is about the healing power of God's love.

🙏 Write a prayer for all families everywhere. Ask God to be with all families. Ask him to help families solve their problems in a loving and caring way.

WE RESPOND

How can you show love for your family this week?

