



3/8/2020  
Genesis 4:1-26

## BIG IDEA

God accepts the worship of the righteous.

## LOOKING BACK

*As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.*

*Invite members to share any questions or points that came up in their family discussions regarding last week's study. Invite them to share ways God continued to speak to them as they sought to apply those truths throughout the week.*

- In this week's message, we were asked, "Do you: see your work as worship, view work and worship as two separate things that cannot and will not merge, or see another's work and worship as more or less significant and acceptable to God than your own?" Which of the three choices resonate with you the most? Why?

## LOOKING IN

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

| *Ask a volunteer to read Genesis 4:1-26.*

- What was the objectionable difference between the two brothers' offerings? How does this speak to you about your own offerings and worship to the Lord?
- What does Cain's response to God reveal about his attitude (v. 5)?
- What would a Cain-like approach to worship look like in your life today? An Abel-like approach to worship?

Cain and Abel recognized the need to worship God, and each brought an offering to Him. Each man gave according to his own profession. Cain's offering, however, came from a sense of obligation. He felt he had to obey to check it off of his list. His religious spirit lacked a true appreciation for God. Abel gave the best that he had—the firstborn. Abel was commended for his offering while Cain was rejected, because Cain's heart was not in his offering. According to 1 John 3:12, Cain hated Abel because Abel's actions were righteous and his were evil.

- God gave Cain a chance to confess his sin and repent, but his wrath boiled over instead. How do you typically react when someone holds you accountable for your sin? Why does it matter?
- God told Cain to "do what is right" (v. 7). What does this tell you about worship when you have sinned?
- After the murder of Abel, why do you think God approaches Cain as He does? Why delay punishment?

- Why does someone else's righteousness often stir up envy and hatred in us? What should it stir up in us, instead?

## LOOKING FORWARD

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.*

- Cain's sinful heart impacted his work and his worship. He became a restless wanderer on the earth. How does his story speak to you about your own work and worship?
- This week's message wrapped up with the following points: 1. Because of our fallen state, God requires redemption for acceptable worship to God. 2. God's acceptance of your worship is not based on your work. 3. Sin is unacceptable and it will not be ignored. 4. God is just. 5. God alone commends righteousness to his people. 6. Our worship is acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Which one of these points stands out to you the most personally? Why? How will that truth impact your life moving forward?

## FAMILIES

*Use the following questions and truths to disciple your children throughout the week.*

- Does it seem fair to you that God was displeased with Cain even though he brought an offering, too?
- Read Isaiah 30:18. What do we know about God? Since God is gracious, merciful, and just, what can we know about His response to Cain? Why do you think Cain never asked God to forgive him?
- Is there anyone in your life you tend to think is a better person than you? Do you ever get jealous or angry toward that person when you see them doing things that seem to be more acceptable than you? What does Cain and Abel's story teach you about that?

## PRAYER

Thank God for sending Christ on your behalf. Thank Him for the work He has given to you and the privilege of worshiping Him in that work. Ask Him to show you any attitudes or actions that fall short of His righteousness so that you might continually give Him the worship He deserves.

## COMMENTARY

### | Genesis 4:1-16

4:1 Adam and Eve now begin to fulfill God's original command to them, to "be fruitful" and "multiply" (Gen. 1:28). A wordplay in the Hebrew suggests that the name Cain came from the verb "had" in Eve's comment, I have had a male child.

4:2 The name Abel means "breath." The term is used elsewhere in the Old Testament to refer to that which passes away quickly and is unsubstantial (Ps. 62:10; Eccl. 1:2).

4:3-5 Cain's sacrifice marks the first mention of an offering to the Lord in the Bible. The Hebrew term used here suggests a freewill gift given to an authority. Ironically, the first recorded offering given to God was also the first one rejected by Him. Since cereal offerings were authorized in the law of Moses, the fact that Cain's offering was of vegetation rather than an animal is not why God did not have regard for it. Cain's furious reaction suggests that the offering was rejected because of sin in his heart, not the nature of his offering (see note at verse 7).

4:7 The Bible makes it clear that God rejected Cain's offering because of Cain's wicked lifestyle (1 John 3:12). The animal-like description of sin as crouching is reused in Gen. 49:9 to describe a lion. The parallel use of desire in this verse and Gen. 3:16 suggests that sin wishes to be as intimate with humanity as a woman is with her husband. The only way to avoid this is to be its master, not its companion.

4:8 In a move that demonstrates premeditation, Cain led Abel to a field and attacked him in a place where there were no human witnesses. Though the blood of animals had been shed prior to this (v. 4), Cain's killing of his brother brought about the first death of a human being. The curse of human death pronounced against Adam (2:17; 3:19) had now been realized.

4:9 God's use of questions with guilty sinners continues here (v. 6; cp. 3:9-13). By claiming he did not know where his brother was, Cain added lying to his sin of murder. God once made Adam a guardian of the garden (2:15). Cain now asked if he was to be his brother's guardian. The Bible's answer to Cain's question is yes (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:39; Gal. 5:14).

4:10 Unlike his father Adam (3:12), Cain never confessed his guilt, even though God directly confronted Cain with his sin. Although Abel never spoke in the preceding narrative, his blood now cried out from the ground.

4:11-12 God's judgment began with a curse that in the Hebrew parallels the curse placed on the snake. This is particularly fitting since both Cain and the snake were liars and murderers (John 8:44). It is possible to translate God's statement here as, "You are more cursed than the ground." The curse against a murderer is repeated in the law of Moses (Deut. 27:24). Cain's punishment destroyed his livelihood as a farmer and turned him into a restless wanderer.

4:14 Just as his father Adam had been driven out of the garden, Cain noted that God was banishing him from the soil. Since he would hide himself (or possibly, "be hidden") from God's protective presence, he feared that other descendants of Adam and Eve (5:4) would kill him to avenge Abel's murder.

4:16 Cain's departure from the Lord's presence was both physical and spiritual (Jonah 1:3,10). "Nod" means "Wandering." The land of Nod is never again mentioned in the Bible. Perhaps the phrase simply referred to any location in which Cain resided. The notation that Cain departed to live east of Eden identifies him with other sinners who also moved east.