

**Introduction**

The outstanding truth that we see taught here is that of the necessity of a blood sacrifice for sin.

**1. The Births of Cain and Abel, vv. 1-2**

In view of 3:15, Adam and Eve were looking for a fulfillment of God's promised redeemer. They had two sons. It must have been quite an experience to have a child for the first time, with no previous generation to coach you, no prenatal care, no books, nothing!

**2. The Sacrifices of Cain and Abel, vv. 3-7**

The Bible records what the sacrifices of each man were—a grain or fruit offering and a blood offering. God did not respect Cain nor his offering, but he did Abel and his offering. As a result, Cain was angry and downcast.

Why was the sacrifice of Abel acceptable to God and that of Cain was not? First, the kind of sacrifice is specifically mentioned here in Genesis. It was an animal, firstborn in his flock. Second, Abel offered the sacrifice in faith according to **Heb. 11:4**. This sacrifice was evidence of his righteous standing with God (obtained by faith).

The earlier mention in **3:21** of the tunics of skin which the Lord made for Adam and Eve is the first suggestion of substitution and the shedding of blood for sin. Here in **4:3-5** we have an expansion on that. It seems that there must have been some more extensive revelation on this point that we have recorded for us in Genesis because it does not seem that the need for a substitute is intuitive to mankind (most men just want to gloss over sin or say they are sorry and move on). God made it clear to Adam and Eve that a substitute was necessary, and they passed this information on to their first two children. Cain and Abel both knew what was required of them. We know today that without the death of a substitutionary sacrifice there is no forgiveness of sins (**Heb. 9:22**).

Note that without substitution, we would be in a lot of trouble! The doctrine of the substitutionary atonement of Christ is one of the fundamentals of the faith which must be believed. Apart from belief in that teaching, one cannot be saved. **1 Cor. 15:3** teaches us that the gospel is, in part, that Christ died for our sins.

**3. The Murder of Abel, vv. 8-10**

Here is the first murder in history. Abel was going to die because of sin at some point (witness chapter 5) but he was killed early by Cain. Instead of shifting the blame to someone else for what happened (like his parents), Cain simply denied knowing anything about his brother's whereabouts, and denied even having any role in keeping track of his brother. In other words, he flat out lied to God.

God continues to appeal to him in verse 10 that he would admit his wrongdoing. Notice how God can "hear" the blood of Abel crying to him from the ground. He knows about every life that exists, for he sustains all of life (**Acts 17:28**).

**4. The Curse of Cain, vv. 11-15**

The curse on Cain is even worse than that on his parents (**3:16-19**). The ground would yield even less to Cain than to his father. He would also be a fugitive on the earth.

Cain then complains that his punishment is too great. Of course, sin always takes you farther than you want to go, and costs more than you want to pay. That is just it—you reap what you sow. He ends up by saying that he will be killed by others. Interesting that he killed a man, yet thinks that fate is too much to bear.

God mitigates his punishment somewhat by putting a mark on him that indicated God would severely avenge anyone that would harm Cain.

**5. The Lineage of Cain, vv. 16-18**

The text tells us that Cain migrated to a location east of Eden. He married one of his sisters and had a son named Enoch. He built a city of the same name.

The lineage here is Adam – Cain – Enoch – Irad – Mehujael – Methushael – Lamech and Adam – Abel.

**6. The Lineage of Lamech, vv. 19-24**

Lamech is the first recorded polygamist, and he also committed the second recorded murder. He sings a tune about this murder in **4:23-24**. He is not a savory character, obviously.

The lineage is Lamech – Jabal and Jubal by Adah and Lamech – Tubal-Cain and Naamah by Zillah. Biblical genealogies are tough due to this polygamy thing.

It is interesting that the Bible notes for the children their occupations (and in the final four cases their descendants followed in their footsteps):

Cain	Dirt farmer
Abel	Shepherd
Jabal	Nomadic herdsman
Jubal	Musician
Tubal-Cain	Metalworker

**7. The Birth and Lineage of Seth, vv. 25-26**

Adam named this son Seth as a reminder that God had given him another seed to replace Abel. Eve thought Cain was "a man from the Lord" but he turned out to be a wicked man. The second-born Abel fit this term better, yet not until Seth did the first couple have another man to put their hope in. Remember the **3:15** promise of the Seed. They knew that from among their descendants would come a redeemer. No, they did not know all the details, but they were watching for this prophecy to come true.

The lineage here is Adam – Seth – Enosh. We will see in chapter 5 a much longer genealogy which has some interesting math associated with it.

The phrase in **4:26** "then *men* began to call on the name of the LORD" is quite interesting. Seth was a godly man, apparently, and taught his children to call on the Lord. There seems to have been some gap of time in which the most of humanity did not call on the name of the Lord.

**Final Note**

Other verses in the Scripture (besides Genesis 4) which mention Cain and Abel are **Matt. 23:35**, **Luke 11:51**, **Heb. 11:4**, **12:24**, **1 John 3:12**, and **Jude 11**. Note that Jesus talks about "all the righteous blood shed on the earth" and starts with Abel. Hebrews tells us of Abel's offering of the sacrifice in faith—this principle that reigns in all Biblical sacrifices. John tells us that Cain was of the wicked one, and Jude adds that going his way is the way of destruction.