

Cain and Abel

Key Verse: “*And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.*”
—Genesis 4:8

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 4:1-15

shall rule over thee.” The sorrow related to bringing forth children has, in particular, extended throughout all generations to mothers’ pains and anxieties concerning their offspring.

In her perfection, Eve surely looked forward to the time when she would see in her own children a manifestation of love toward God like she had experienced in her own heart. Yet before her first child was born, she was cut off from her Creator’s favor and the life-sustaining fruits of Eden. She, along with Adam, began to toil with sweat of face battling the thorns and thistles of the earth. Her pregnancy with Cain was likely one of great mental distress, as she recalled her Eden home and perhaps coveted it. Doubtless this could have marked her yet unborn child with tendencies toward discontent and selfishness.

THE FIRST TRAGEDY UPON

the earth was the result of disobedience to Jehovah through the eating of the forbidden fruit by our first parents. (Gen. 2:16,17; 3:6) Details of Eve’s punishment for her part in the disobedience to God’s command is described in Genesis 3:16. He said to her, “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he

The second tragedy of earth is found in the incident described in today's Key Verse. Our lesson tells us that "Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground." (Gen. 4:2) In time both brought offerings from their bounty as a sacrifice to God. Verses 4 and 5 say, "The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect." The Apostle Paul says, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." (Heb. 11:4) This suggests Abel first sought the mind of the Lord regarding what and how to offer a sacrifice. Here is a lesson for those who would be followers of Christ. Jesus taught this same principle when he said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness."—Matt. 6:33

Cain should have rejoiced with Abel and brought a similar offering which would have gained divine acceptance. Had he sought to know why only Abel's offering was acceptable, he might have learned that the death of an animal had great symbolic significance in God's arrangements and plans. Rejecting this course of action led to a spirit of selfishness, jealousy and anger in Cain. God immediately warned him of this. "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."—Gen. 4:6,7, *New American Standard Bible*

How much we all need to learn this lesson! Through the fall we all have baser sentiments which war against the nobler ones. As a lion in search of prey, they would seek to devour us. (I Pet. 5:8) Divine aid is needed in order to overcome these fallen propensities. Cain had direct access to such help but chose to ignore it. The Apostle John teaches us, saying, "If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world."—I John 2:1,2, *NASB* ■