

Discovery Adventure #3
Murder in the Family!
Genesis 4

This is pretty tough. We're talking about your whole life here. Deciding to surrender it to God and to live with Him as your boss isn't an easy thing. Isn't there anything else that will satisfy God? Doing good things, maybe? Not being as bad as other people? Let's look back to our Book with all the answers and see what it says.

Life wasn't perfect anymore for Adam and Eve. We can imagine Adam wiping the sweat from his forehead with his blistered hand as he leaned against his hoe. Life had been so easy back in the Garden of Eden. No pesky weeds to pull. No bugs eating the vegetables he tried so hard to raise. Now everything was hard. It was going to get a lot worse!

God gave Adam and Eve a little son – the first baby born into the world. They must have been happy with their baby. They named him Cain. Soon afterwards God sent another little boy to join their family. They named him Abel.

The boys were probably a lot like boys are today. They squabbled and fought, but probably had fun together climbing trees and fishing. They were the only kids around, so they had to be best friends.

And just like boys today, they had different likes and dislikes. Cain like working in the garden the best and was probably proud of the fruits and vegetables he raised to help feed his family.

Abel liked animals. He took over the job of looking after the sheep and protecting them from the wild animals that would like to have sheep for dinner.

From the time they were small, they saw Adam and Eve offering lambs to God on the altar. Their parents told them over and over the stories of the beautiful garden where they walked and talked with God. The boys heard that God promised to send a Savior to pay for their sins. As Adam and Eve killed the lamb who had never done anything wrong, they were showing they believed Jesus would come, would live a perfect life, and would die for them.

The lamb didn't make them right with God. Believing in the Savior who was coming saved them.

Cain and Abel grew up. It was time to make their own offering. Abel caught his best lamb, the most beautiful, perfect one in his whole flock. He killed that lamb and burned it on the altar as God said. God saw his heart of faith and obedience. He accepted Abel's sacrifice.

We don't know how He showed His acceptance. Maybe fire fell from Heaven and burned the sacrifice. Maybe God sent an angel with a message. It doesn't matter. If we needed to know how God showed His approval, the Bible would have told us. But we know that God accepted Abel's sacrifice.

Cain was a different story. Cain knew that only a lamb would do as an offering. Surely, he understood what it represented. But he didn't want to offer a lamb. He figured something else would work just as well. He brought God the fruits and vegetables he had raised.

Did God say to bring fruits and vegetables? Could they represent Jesus coming to die for sins? No. They represented Cain's hard work. But no amount of hard work can pay for sins. The Bible says that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23) Only death can pay for sins. Either we pay for them ourselves with our own death, or we trust Jesus to pay for them.

Cain was boiling mad! God accepted Abel's sacrifice, but not his own. It was pretty silly to get mad at the Almighty God, the maker of the universe, but that's what Cain did.

God spoke to Cain.

"What's the matter with you?" He said. "What are you so mad about? Do what I say, and you will be accepted, just as your brother was."

But Cain wouldn't listen and wouldn't let go of his anger. That's a dangerous thing to do. Anger is like a fire. If you keep feeding wood to a fire, the blaze will grow bigger and bigger. There will come a point where the fire gets away from you and burns everything in

sight. Cain kept feeding his fury with angry thoughts until one dreadful day the fire of his anger got away from him.

He met Abel in a field. Maybe Abel tried to reason with him. Maybe Abel told him to grow up and quit pouting. We don't know. But we know the fiery fury leaped up in Cain and he killed his brother.

Can you imagine the grief and horror that filled Adam and Eve? One son dead – the other a murderer. They were probably beginning to understand how much sorrow and misery their sin had brought into the world.

Of course, God saw what happened. He punished Cain by sending him away to be a fugitive. He would always be traveling, always running away. He could never come back to his home.

God is so kind. He gave Adam and Eve another son to take the place of those they had lost. They named their third little boy, Seth. I'm sure Seth and Adam and Eve's other children were a comfort to them, but those children were sinners, too. The curse Adam and Eve had brought on themselves was carried on in their children. The sin and sorrow went on and on.

God's Secret for You

Let's go back to the question we asked at the beginning of the story. Is there anything that will satisfy God other than believing in Jesus' sacrifice and surrendering to Him?

Cain found out that his hard work wouldn't be enough. Your hard work doing good things isn't enough, either. You can't buy your way into Heaven by giving money to the church. There is no way to earn forgiveness for the wrong things you have done.

There is only one way to be friends with God. You must believe that Jesus paid for your sins for you. That doesn't mean just saying, "Okay – I believe that." It means believing to the point of surrender.

Here's a little made-up story to help you understand the difference.

Once there was a famous tight-rope walker who stretched a rope across Niagara Falls – the biggest waterfall in North America.

"How many of you believe I can push this wheelbarrow across the falls, balancing on this rope?" he asked the crowd gathered to watch him.

"Yes," they yelled. "We believe you can do it."

He picked up the handles of the wheelbarrow and pushed it out onto the rope. Far below the water pounded down on the sharp rocks. If he slipped and fell, it would mean instant death. But he pushed it across as easily as if he was crossing a street.

"Do you believe I can push this wheelbarrow across with a 200 lb. sack of cement in it?" he asked the crowd.

"Yes," they yelled. "We believe you can do it."

And he did.

"Now, for my final trick," he said. "I will push a person across the falls in my wheelbarrow. Who believes I can do it?"

"Yes," the crowd shouted. "We believe."

"Okay," he said. "Who will volunteer to ride in the wheelbarrow?"

Silence.

Everyone believed – but not enough to get in the wheelbarrow and risk his life.

When you truly believe Jesus paid for your sins, you will get in His wheelbarrow. You will trust your life to Him.

The good news is that He is a good God! He made you, came and suffered for you, and made a way for you to be His friend. You can trust Him to take care of you and to always be there for you. The Bible says that everything that happens, even sad and bad things, work together to good for those who are His children. His wheelbarrow is the safest place you can ever be!

Brain Glue

Who was Adam and Eve's first son?

Cain

What job did Cain have?

He grew fruits and vegetables.

What was the name of Adam and Eve's second son?

Abel

What job did Abel have?

He was a shepherd.

What sacrifice did God tell them to bring?

He said to bring a lamb.

Which brother obeyed God?

Abel

What did Cain bring for a sacrifice?

Fruit and vegetables

Whose sacrifice did God accept?

God accepted Abel's sacrifice.

What did Cain do because he was angry with God?

He killed his brother, Abel.

What was the name of Adam and Eve's next son?

Seth

Think About It

What sacrifice does God want from you?

Is there anything else you can do that will pay for your sins?

Do you really believe Jesus died to pay for your sins? Have you trusted your life to Him?