

LESSON OVERVIEW

Week #: 4 Date: January 25, 2026 Lesson Title: Cain & Abel – God Sees the Heart Primary Scripture Passage(s): Genesis 4:1–16 Bible Timeline Placement: Early Genesis, after the Fall

Big Idea (One Clear Sentence): God cares about our hearts, not just our actions, and He calls us to trust and obey Him.

MEMORY VERSE

“The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7

What it means: God sees what is happening inside us, not just what others can see.

SETTING THE SCENE (INTRODUCTION)

Let’s remember where we are in God’s Word. God created a perfect world. He created people to love Him and trust Him. But Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and sin entered the world. Even then, God promised that one day a Savior would come.

Today, we are going to hear what happened next in the very first family. Let’s listen carefully to what God tells us in His Word.

MAIN LESSON NARRATIVE (READ ALOUD)

The Bible tells us that Adam and Eve had two sons named Cain and Abel. Cain worked the ground, growing crops. Abel took care of sheep. Both of these jobs were important.

One day, Cain and Abel brought offerings to the Lord. An offering is a gift given to God to show love, worship, and trust. The Bible says, “Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock” (Genesis 4:3–4).

God looked at Abel and his offering with favor, but He did not look with favor on Cain and his offering. This does not mean God loved Abel more and did not care about Cain. God was looking at *why* each brother brought his offering.

Abel trusted God. He brought the first and best because he wanted to please God and show that he depended on Him. Cain brought an offering too, but his heart was not right. Cain wanted to give something he had done, without listening to God or trusting Him.

When Cain saw that God accepted Abel's offering, he became very angry. The Bible says his face fell. This means everyone could see his anger on the outside, because it was already growing on the inside. Instead of stopping, thinking, and turning back to God, Cain let his heart become hard and upset.

The Lord spoke kindly to Cain. God said, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted?" (Genesis 4:6–7). God warned Cain that sin was like a wild animal waiting to take control of him. God told Cain he must rule over it.

But Cain did not listen. Instead of turning his heart back to God, Cain let his anger grow. One day, while Cain and Abel were out in the field, Cain attacked his brother and killed him. This was the first time someone took another person's life.

The Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" Cain answered, "I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9). But God knew what Cain had done. God said that Abel's blood cried out from the ground.

Because Cain chose sin, there were consequences. Cain was separated from his land and his home. Yet even then, God showed mercy by protecting Cain so others would not kill him.

This true account shows us something very important. God was not choosing between fruits and animals. God was looking at the heart. Abel trusted God and wanted to please Him. Cain wanted to give something he had done, but he did not want to obey God with his heart.

WHY WE CAN TRUST THIS ACCOUNT

We can trust this account because it comes from God's Word, and God always tells the truth. The Bible teaches that God does not lie (Numbers 23:19), and that Scripture is "God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16). That means this is not a made-up story—this is God telling us what truly happened.

We can also trust it because it explains the world the way it really is. We still see jealousy, anger, unfairness, and violence in people today. Genesis 4 shows where those things come from: sin in the human heart. The Bible says sin starts inside us and grows if we let it (James 1:14–15). That matches what we know about real life.

In this passage, God warned Cain clearly before Cain did anything wrong. God told him that sin was "crouching" and that Cain must rule over it (Genesis 4:7). Then we see the warning come true when Cain chooses sin (Genesis 4:8). This helps children see that God's words are reliable and that God's warnings are loving.

Finally, the rest of the Bible agrees with this account and builds on it. Later Scripture remembers Abel as a real person who offered his gift "by faith" (Hebrews 11:4), and it compares Abel's blood to Jesus' blood

(Hebrews 12:24). The Bible is one united message from beginning to end, and Genesis fits perfectly with what God teaches later.

WHAT THIS SHOWS US ABOUT JESUS

Abel's blood cried out from the ground for justice (Genesis 4:10). Many years later, Jesus gave His own blood so we could be forgiven (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:14). Jesus trusted the Father completely and obeyed perfectly, always doing what pleased Him (John 8:29; Hebrews 4:15). Where Cain failed by giving in to sin, Jesus succeeded by obeying God fully (Romans 5:19). Jesus is the better and perfect sacrifice whose blood speaks forgiveness and peace (Hebrews 10:10; Hebrews 12:24).

GOD REVEALED AS TRINITY

In this passage, we learn about God's character and actions, and these fit within what the whole Bible teaches us about who God is. The Bible teaches that God is one God who exists as three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

God the Father: God the Father is the One who speaks, sets what is right, and lovingly warns Cain. He calls Cain to do what is right and holds him responsible for his choices (Genesis 4:6–7). This shows God's holiness and justice, as well as His patience and care (Psalm 145:8).

God the Son (Jesus): Jesus is not named in Genesis 4, but the Bible later helps us understand how this passage points to Him. Abel's blood cried out from the ground for justice (Genesis 4:10), but Jesus' blood speaks a better word—forgiveness and peace (Hebrews 12:24). Jesus is the perfectly obedient Son who always pleased the Father (John 8:29) and gave Himself as the final, perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 10:10).

God the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit works in hearts to warn, convict, and guide people toward what is right. God's warning to Cain shows this heart-level work—calling Cain to stop, think, and choose obedience (Genesis 4:7). Scripture teaches that the Holy Spirit convicts people of sin and leads them toward truth (John 16:8).

Together, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not three gods, but one God working together. God is one God in three Persons.

LIFE APPLICATION

God cares about your heart. When you feel angry, jealous, or upset, God wants you to talk to Him and choose what is right. We cannot fight sin by ourselves, but Jesus helps us obey God.

DEFENDING THE TRUTH

Question a child might ask: Why didn't God accept Cain's offering?

Simple biblical answer: God wanted Cain's heart, not just a gift. Abel trusted God, but Cain did not listen or obey.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (WITH TEACHER ANSWERS)

1. What kind of offerings did Cain and Abel bring? Teacher Answer: Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil. Abel brought the firstborn from his flock—the best he had. This is described directly in Scripture (Genesis 4:3–4).
2. What warning did God give Cain? Teacher Answer: God warned Cain that sin was crouching at his door and that Cain must rule over it. God lovingly told Cain that if he did what was right, he would be accepted (Genesis 4:6–7).
3. What happened when Cain did not listen to God? Teacher Answer: Cain allowed his anger to grow, and he killed his brother Abel. This led to separation, consequences, and sorrow, just as God had warned (Genesis 4:8–12).
4. What does this lesson teach us about our hearts? Teacher Answer: This lesson teaches that God looks at our hearts, not just our actions. Abel trusted God and wanted to please Him, but Cain wanted to give something without obeying God from his heart (Genesis 4:4–5; 1 Samuel 16:7).

Optional deeper question: How can we ask Jesus to help us choose what is right?

Teacher Answer: We can pray and ask Jesus for help, trusting that He forgives us and helps us change when we turn to Him. God promises forgiveness and cleansing when we confess our sins (1 John 1:9).

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY

Activity: Heart Check Purpose: To help children understand that God cares about our hearts.

Supplies: Paper hearts Crayons or markers

Instructions: 1. Give each child a paper heart. 2. Ask them to draw or write ways they can please God. 3. Pray together, asking Jesus to help us have hearts that love God.

TEACHER CLOSING PROMPT

Close by reminding children that Jesus loves them, sees their hearts, and helps them obey. Read 1 John 1:9 aloud and reassure them that God forgives when we turn back to Him.

Gospel Reminder (Short & Child-Friendly):

Explain gently: We all have hearts that sometimes choose wrong, just like Cain did. The Bible tells us that everyone sins (Romans 3:23), but God did not leave us stuck in our sin.

God sent His Son Jesus to save us. Jesus never sinned. He obeyed God perfectly and gave His life on the cross so our sins could be forgiven (John 3:16; 1 Peter 2:24). Jesus rose again, showing that sin and death were defeated (1 Corinthians 15:3–4).

Invite response: Tell children that they can talk to Jesus anytime, ask Him to forgive them, and trust Him to help them obey God. Remind them that Jesus welcomes those who come to Him (John 6:37).