

Genesis 4 — CAIN AND ABEL (AND SETH)

1. Sort out some of the details in this dense chapter by indicating whether they apply to Abel (A), Cain (C) or Seth (S).

_____ Adam & Eve's eldest son	_____ farmer
_____ Adam & Eve's middle son	_____ marked by the Lord
_____ Adam & Eve's youngest son	_____ murder victim
_____ ancestor of musicians	_____ murderer
_____ ancestor of nomadic herdsmen	_____ offering accepted
_____ ancestor of tool-makers	_____ offering not accepted
_____ ancestor of Yahweh-worshippers	_____ settled in Land of Nod
_____ cursed by the Lord	_____ shepherd

The murder of one's brother is an unspeakable offense; yet this story of crime and punishment is but the first of many homicides in the Bible. Note that the story focuses on the dialogues between Cain and the Lord.

2. **Genesis 4:3-7** does not explain why one offering was acceptable and the other not. Cain reacts naturally to his rejection with envy, anger and sullenness. The Lord says that "sin is lurking at your door." Have you ever felt that way? What was it like?
3. **Genesis 4:9-12** does not tell how Cain killed his brother. When he is confronted by the Lord, he claims he is not his "brother's keeper." Is this a valid excuse? If not, why not?
4. The Lord is an avenger of blood! How threatening is that idea?

5. Note the double punishment inflicted on Cain: He can no longer farm successfully, and he will be a fugitive. Which do you think is worse?

6. **Genesis 4:13-16** offers a word of hope. The Lord's tattoo on Cain's forehead will make him taboo, to protect him from becoming prey for others. Have you ever needed protection? What was that like?

7. In some Bibles, **Genesis 4:17-26** is entitled "Beginnings of Civilization." Animal husbandry, music, tools, worship—are these the key indicators of ancient civilizations? Are they important for present-day civilization? Would you like to add other indicators to the list?