



Adam and Eve mourn the death of Abel; oil on canvas 1888 painting by William Bouguereau

Cain and Abel

Cain and Abel (Hebrew: קַיִן, הֶבֶל *Qayin, Hevel*) were according to the Book of Genesis, two sons of Adam and Eve. Cain is described as a crop farmer and his younger brother Abel as a shepherd. Cain was the first human born and the first murderer, and Abel was the first human to die. Cain committed the first murder by killing his brother. Exegeses of Genesis 4 by ancient and modern commentators have typically assumed that the motive was jealousy. A millennia-old explanation for Cain being capable of murder is that he may have been the offspring of a fallen angel or Satan himself, rather than being from Adam. Allusions to Cain and Abel as an archetype of fratricide appear in numerous references and retellings, through medieval art and Shakespearean works up to present day fiction.

In Islamic tradition, the Quran mentions the Cain and Abel story, referring to them as *the two sons of Adam* (Arabic: ابني آدم). Although their story is cited in the Quran, neither of them is mentioned by name.

¹Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, “With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man.” ² Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. ³ In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. ⁴ And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, ⁵ but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

⁶ Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? ⁷ If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”

⁸ Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.



Cain, by Henri Vidal, Jardin des Tuileries, Paris

⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

¹⁰ The LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground. ¹¹ Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. ¹² When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”

¹³ Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is more than I can bear. ¹⁴ Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

¹⁵ But the LORD said to him, “Not so; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. ¹⁶ So Cain went out from the LORD’s presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cain_and_Abel