

Genesis 4:1-7

1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, I have acquired a man from the LORD. 2 Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. 4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, 5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. 6 So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

Commentary

1. "Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, I have acquired a man from the LORD." We need to take notice of several things here: First, is that Eve thinks this is a "seed" of woman promised or in other words she thinks this is the savior God promised in the third chapter. Early Jewish writings (Targums) here support this idea and write this as "I have gotten a man, an angel of the Lord." The name Cain also supports this idea of what Eve was thinking at this time. Cain means possession or spear or in this case the combination of these two. Second, This is the first child of Adam and Eve since if they had completed the command to be fruitful and multiply before the fall the children would have been born innocent as Adam and Eve were before the fall. Third, Eve set the example in understanding that while the parents were earthly or human the child was a gift from God and all life is from God.

Eve could come to this conclusion because she had no revelation concerning how the Savior would come, the necessity of the virgin birth being an example. The important part is this is what she thought and shows us that from the beginning of the story of salvation man has known how it must come to be through another person and not of self.

2 Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

Abel means "vanity." Perhaps Eve has seen the vanity of trusting in human resources for their salvation and is beginning to see God has another plan in mind. This is a guess as such which I do not normally recommend we do but names mean something in the Bible and often were prophetic. This being true perhaps the name is by revelation since Abel will not live and placing hope on him, as with any man is total vanity. It is not written here but it is rather common in the Bible to see God tell a parent what they will name their child when it is born.

The occupation of the two brothers is also interesting. Adam was a tiller of the ground and Cain his first-born was then trained up in the way of his father because as the first-born one day he would become the head of the household.

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We see in Cain and Abel one of the things that indicate there is indeed a God in heaven. They have a natural inclination to worship and bring their sacrifices to God. More than this however in this passage we see God has apparently been in communication with the created since God indicates Cain knew how to make a proper sacrifice and had deliberately not done so. They could not have learned this from their parents since there was no need of a sacrifice before the fall.

There are people who admit God created but say afterwards God left man to his own ends and went back to heaven and pays no attention to His creation. This passage says this is not true and these people (deists) are wrong. It is also a good place to show how there is a God and that this God is involved with His creation to those who say there is no God (atheists).

Application: This is a good passage to answer those who say there is no God and those who admit God created but left man alone after the creation. To the one it is clear there is a God that these first sons worshiped because this God speaks with them. To the other God being in communication with and directing His creation shows God has not left it alone to the whims of mankind or another. This is a place of great comfort for the believer when they realize that as yet a Savior has not been provided but that God has chosen and communicates with His people though they are in sin. If God could be so patient and communicate the evil in His life to Cain how much more so is that for one who has claimed the blood of Christ for their sin covering?

Questions:

Why did Adam and Eve not have children before the fall?

What was Eve thinking when she said "I have gotten a man from God?"

What is an atheist?

What is a deist?

What trait do we see in Cain and Abel that is common to all mankind and can be used to show there is a God?