

## **Dr. Kenneth Mathews, Genesis, Session 5, Life Outside the Garden: Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1-26) Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of Mathews, Genesis, Session 5, Life Outside the Garden: Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1-26), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

**Dr. Kenneth Mathews' lecture** on Genesis 4:1-26 analyzes the story of Cain and Abel, focusing on the **increasing severity of sin** following the expulsion from Eden. He contrasts Cain's inadequate offering with Abel's genuine devotion, highlighting the significance of motivation in worship. The lecture further explores the consequences of Cain's murder, including God's act of grace in sparing his life, and the subsequent **generational perpetuation of sin and violence** within Cain's lineage. Finally, it examines the birth of Seth as a sign of God's continued blessing and the beginning of a righteous line.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Mathews, Genesis, Session 5 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Pentateuch → Genesis).**



**Mathews\_Genesis\_  
Session05.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Mathews, Genesis, Session 5, Life Outside the Garden: Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1-26)

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from Dr. Kenneth Mathews' lecture on Genesis 4:1-26, focusing on the story of Cain and Abel.

#### Briefing Document: Genesis 4 - Cain and Abel

**Overall Theme:** This lecture explores the consequences of the Fall as manifested in the first family outside the Garden of Eden, specifically focusing on the story of Cain and Abel and how it illustrates the progression of sin, God's grace, and the development of worship. It sets the stage for the flood narrative and the lineage of Seth.

#### Key Ideas & Facts:

1. **The Trajectory of Sin:** The lecture establishes that sin is not static, but rather intensifies and grows in severity over time. This progression is evident in the shift from disobedience in the Garden to the murder of Abel by Cain. *"As time passes, the intensity of sin grows. There are not only more occasions that sin occurs and disobedience, but also that it becomes more severe in its nature and eventually leads to the need for God to bring about a cataclysmic flood."*
2. **Cain and Abel's Offerings:**
  - Both Cain and Abel bring offerings to the Lord, but only Abel's is accepted. *"And after some time, Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel, notice the contrast in verse four, but Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering, he did not look with favor."*
  - Mathews argues that the difference isn't simply about blood sacrifice vs. grain offering. The word "offering" (Hebrew: *mincha*) is used for both types in the sacrificial system, according to Leviticus. *"The word for offering here in my New International Version is the same word that's used repeatedly in the sacrificial system as it's described in the Pentateuch. The Hebrew word is mincha, m-i-n-c-h-a. This is the language used in verse four and verse five."*
  - Instead, the key distinction lies in their **motivation and inner life**. Abel offers his best (*"the fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock"*) out of faith and renewed trust in God, while Cain offers the minimum with a lack of a heart of devotion.

## 1. Cain's Anger and Sin:

- Cain's rejection leads to anger and a downcast face. Mathews clarifies this as a sign of turning away from God, driven by jealousy and bitterness. *"So, the language that's used here about the face that is downcast in verse five, and then again in verse six, this is a figure of speech. It just simply means a looking down or away from God or a superior or somebody in your presence because of disappointment, maybe rage."*
- God warns Cain that sin is "mastering him", emphasizing the need to master his passions and desires according to God's will. *"...sin, we're told in verse seven, masters him. And in this explanation, there's an admonition here that repent, Cain, and then you become the master of your passions as opposed to your passions becoming your master."*
- Mathews draws a parallel to Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, that anger can lead to sinful actions even if not physically acted out. *"In the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, he brings us out in the Sermon on the Mount. He brings to the that one can have an anger that is so deeply bitter that that anger is tantamount to committing murder. You do not, Jesus says, have to act out to be guilty of the sin of murder, but rather, it can be something that is birthed in your own heart and grows and becomes obsessive and, very unfortunately, becomes a murderous act."*
- He explains the difference between using God's gifts of desire within his will, vs turning those desires into selfish and self-serving motivations. *"But these desires have to be within the context of God's will and purpose for those desires... Whereas when you move outside of his will and purpose for these desires, and they become selfish and self-serving, and you try to use your desires to serve your own selfish interests, you will discover that your desires then do not match God's will..."*

## 1. Cain's Murder and God's Response:

- Cain's murder of Abel is premeditated. *"So, Cain does in verse 8 in some way convince his brother to set him aside outside of the eyes of his parents, and he murders him. It's a premeditated murder."* Mathews ties this back to the idea that taking the life of another made in God's image is a direct affront to God.
- God confronts Cain, highlighting his responsibility as his brother's keeper, which is rooted in kinship mentality, covenant, and the image of God in each person.

*"...especially in the context of community in the ancient world, you had a responsibility toward your family, toward your clan, toward your tribe, a responsibility toward your neighbor because you were seen as both created in the image of God and also as we progress through Genesis there is a covenant connection that those who have entered into covenant with the Lord are co-covenanters and there's a responsibility toward one who also has a covenant, an agreement relationship with God and that means you have a relationship with one another."*

- God shows grace by not taking Cain's life, but instead, curses him to be a "wanderer" and banished from the land. This is the first time a human is cursed by God. *"First of all, this is the first time a human has been cursed by God, and the curse is connected, as it was in chapter 3, with the ground."*
- The curse is tied to the land, emphasizing that human sin affects all of creation. *"When human beings commit sin and fall under the judgment of God, over which they are responsible, namely the terrestrial sphere of the land and animals, all of that breaks down as well."* This is also echoed in Romans 8.

#### **1. Cain's Lineage and Lamech:**

- Mathews addresses the question of who would kill Cain by mentioning the long lifespans of early patriarchs and the numerous offspring that would be present.
- God places a mark on Cain, not for harm, but for protection, perhaps to encourage population growth. *"Exactly what that mark is, we don't know, but it marks him out with the purpose, with the view of preservation. With a view of not taking out personal vengeance against Cain."*
- The lecture transitions to discussing the lineage of Cain, which is marked by polygamy (Lamech) and violence. *"Notice it says that he married two women, and this would have been understood by the readers of Genesis in Moses' community as an act that produced problems within the family because they knew this so well from Jacob, who married the sisters of Laban."*
- Lamech's boastful poem about killing a young man demonstrates the escalating nature of sin and vengeance. *"If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech 77 times. So, there is a boasting on the part of Lamech, a very sad commentary on the lineage of the Cainites."*

## 1. Seth and the Beginning of Worship:

- God grants a son to Eve as a replacement for Abel: Seth. *"And that's why she named him. It's a play on the Hebrew word that means to give, or in the New International Version it says, God has granted me another child in place of Abel since Cain killed him."*
- The birth of Seth is followed by a turning to the Lord in formal worship. *"And so, after speaking of Seth introduced in verse 25, right on the heels of that, we read that there is a sort of a mass or group turning to the Lord in worship. And I think that would have been the Sethites..."*
- This is the first time a formal act of worship on the part of Adam's family is noted, indicating that men began to call on the name of the Lord.

1. **Theology of Geography:** Mathews connects the east, which was the direction the Garden faced, with expulsion and distancing from God's presence. *"Many commentators, I think rightly, have shown that the garden description reflects what is described of the tabernacle in terms of its adornment... And interestingly, then expulsion toward the east would be seen as geographically pushing people away from the presence of God because of their wicked attitude toward God and human life."*
2. **The Pattern of Sin, Judgment, and Grace:** The lecture highlights a recurring pattern: sin, judgment, and then God's intervention and grace, preserving a remnant. *"So, the pattern is sin and judgment and then grace."* This pattern will be continued in the flood narrative.
3. **The Lineage of Seth:** The lineage of Seth, unlike the Cainites, is described as the righteous line, through which God will work out his plan of redemption, including the birth of Noah (and later, Abraham). *"Seth and his descendants will be depicted as the righteous lineage through which God will bring about the deliverer, the deliverer of the flood, that is, Noah. Then the descendants of Noah will include his son Shem, who is the father of Abraham, the deliverer of all people groups through the creation of a new people group, that is, Abraham, the father of the Hebrew people."*
4. **Transition to Genesis 5 & 6:** The lecture concludes by previewing the next section on Genesis chapters 5 and 6. It sets up the transition from the genealogy of Seth in chapter 5 to the lead-up to the flood in chapter 6, which will further highlight the contrast between the righteous and wicked lineages. It also introduces how

chapter 5 can be a helpful interpretative tool for understanding the sons of God in chapter 6.

**Implications:**

- This lecture emphasizes that sin is progressive and destructive.
- It provides a theological understanding of how human sin impacts all of creation.
- It highlights God's grace even in the midst of judgment.
- It emphasizes the importance of a sincere and devoted heart in worship.
- It sets up the theological framework for the lineage of the righteous, leading to Noah and eventually Abraham, through whom God will bring salvation to all people.

This detailed briefing document should provide a thorough overview of the key themes and concepts discussed in Dr. Mathews' lecture on Genesis 4.

## 4. Study Guide: Mathews, Genesis, Session 5, Life Outside the Garden: Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1-26)

**Genesis Study Guide: Life Outside the Garden (Genesis 4:1-26 & Excerpts from Genesis 5 & 6)**

### Quiz: Short Answer Questions

1. How does Dr. Mathews describe the progression of sin outside the Garden of Eden, and what event marks its growing intensity?
2. According to Dr. Mathews, what is the key difference between Cain and Abel's offerings, and why did God favor one over the other?
3. What does Dr. Mathews suggest about the meaning behind Cain's "downcast face" after his offering was rejected?
4. Explain Dr. Mathews' pizza cutter analogy. What does this analogy illustrate about desires and God's will?
5. How does Dr. Mathews explain the connection between the murder of Abel and the "creation ordinance" regarding the value of human life?
6. What is the significance of God's question to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" according to Dr. Mathews?
7. How does Dr. Mathews describe God's grace towards Cain despite his murder of Abel?
8. According to Dr. Mathews, what does the term "mark on Cain" likely signify, and what purpose did it serve?
9. What does Dr. Mathews suggest about the symbolic meaning of expulsion towards the east, and how is it linked to the tabernacle and the presence of God?
10. How does Dr. Mathews interpret the birth of Seth in relation to God's plan of blessing and continuity?

### Quiz Answer Key

1. Dr. Mathews suggests that as time passes, sin grows in intensity and frequency, beginning with disobedience and culminating in murder, which ultimately leads to the need for the cataclysmic flood.

2. Dr. Mathews suggests that the difference between the offerings was not about the type of sacrifice (blood vs. grain) but rather the motivation. Abel offered his best, while Cain offered the minimum.
3. Dr. Mathews explains that Cain's downcast face was a figure of speech, indicating a turning away from God due to disappointment and rage, stemming from jealousy and bitterness.
4. The analogy of using a pizza cutter to cut pizza or a towel illustrates how our desires given by God can be good when used according to God's will; otherwise, they can become self-serving and ultimately unsatisfying.
5. Dr. Mathews explains that murder, as demonstrated in the case of Abel, is a grave offense because it is a direct attack on the image of God in humanity, which is why it carries the harshest penalty, including the consequence of capital punishment.
6. According to Dr. Mathews, God's question to Cain was meant to elicit repentance, similar to his eliciting a response from Adam after the fall, emphasizing a communal responsibility or kinship mentality that includes covenant responsibility.
7. Dr. Mathews describes God's grace towards Cain in preserving his life despite his crime and the curse, and by marking him for protection and blessing his progeny through procreation.
8. The mark on Cain, according to Dr. Mathews, was not a physical mark but a sign for his preservation, to prevent others from killing him out of vengeance, in order to ensure God's plan for procreation would continue.
9. Dr. Mathews explains that expulsion towards the east is a symbolic representation of being driven away from God's presence due to wickedness, with the tabernacle being an eastward-facing reflection of God's presence.
10. Dr. Mathews interprets the birth of Seth as a sign of God's continued blessing, providing a replacement for Abel, and it is through the Sethites that God will work out his plan of blessing, conjoined with a rise of a deliverer.



## Essay Questions

1. Analyze the role of motivation in worship as demonstrated by Cain and Abel, drawing on Dr. Mathews' interpretation, and discuss how this theme is relevant to contemporary expressions of faith.
2. Discuss the concept of "sin mastering" an individual, as it relates to Cain's actions and Lamech's boastful poetry, and explore how this is illustrated in a modern context, with possible connections to addiction or other patterns of self-destructive behavior.
3. Compare and contrast the descendants of Cain and Seth as presented in Genesis 4 and 5. How do their genealogies reflect their divergent relationship with God? How do their lineages reflect themes of sin and blessing?
4. Dr. Mathews highlights a pattern of "sin, judgment, and grace" in the early chapters of Genesis. How is this pattern manifested in the narrative of Cain and Abel, and how does this pattern shape our understanding of God's character?
5. Examine the theological significance of the phrase "in the image of God" as Dr. Mathews presents it in relation to both the creation of Adam and Eve, and the subsequent generations born to them. How does this concept relate to both the dignity and sinfulness of humankind?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Mincha:** The Hebrew word for "offering," specifically a meal or grain offering, which is used in the Old Testament sacrificial system.
- **First Fruits:** The best portion or first produce of a harvest, often given as an offering, representing gratitude and a recognition of God's provision.
- **Lex Talionis:** The principle of law, meaning "law of retaliation," where the punishment is equal to the crime, e.g. an eye for an eye.
- **Creation Ordinance:** A command or principle established at the time of creation, reflecting God's design for humanity and the world.
- **Kinship Mentality:** A worldview where family and community ties are extremely important, and there is a deep sense of responsibility toward one another, especially among those related by blood or covenant.
- **Name Theology:** The belief that a person's name is more than just a label but also an indication of their presence, character, and identity, particularly in relation to God.
- **East:** A geographical direction, in the context of early Genesis, that symbolizes separation from God's presence, resulting from sin and expulsion.
- **Polygamy:** The practice or custom of having more than one spouse at the same time.
- **Sethites:** The descendants of Seth, who are distinguished as the righteous lineage through whom God would work out his plan of blessing and redemption.
- **Original Sin:** The doctrine that human nature has been corrupted due to the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, causing a condition of separation from God.

## 5. FAQs on Mathews, Genesis, Session 5, Life Outside the Garden: Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1-26), [Biblicalelearning.org](http://Biblicalelearning.org) (BeL)

### FAQ on Genesis 4:1-26

1. **Why did God favor Abel's offering over Cain's?** It's commonly suggested that the difference was a blood offering versus a grain offering; however, the text doesn't explicitly state that the type of offering was the determining factor. Both offerings, animal sacrifice and grain offerings, were legitimate forms of worship in the sacrificial system, so the text indicates that the key difference was in the attitude of each person. Abel gave his best, the fat portions and firstborn of his flock, indicating a heart of sincere devotion, while Cain seems to have offered the bare minimum.
2. **What is the significance of Cain's anger and the downcast face?** Cain's anger and downcast face are indicators of his disappointment and resentment towards God. Instead of repenting, Cain allowed his anger to grow and control him, leading to his murderous act against his brother. The language used is a figure of speech suggesting that Cain turned away from God and His favor. This serves as an example of how unchecked desires can lead to destructive actions when not aligned with God's will.
3. **How is Cain's sin a continuation of Adam and Eve's disobedience?** Cain's actions demonstrate the growing intensity of sin outside the Garden. His murder of Abel shows a progression in wickedness, stemming from a lack of faith and obedience similar to his parents, Adam and Eve. This highlights a trajectory where sin becomes more prevalent and severe, emphasizing the need for God's intervention.
4. **What is the meaning of God's question to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"** God's question is not due to a lack of knowledge, but is an attempt to elicit repentance from Cain. Similar to His encounter with Adam in the garden, God provides an opportunity for Cain to confess and seek forgiveness. Cain's denial and response, "Am I my brother's keeper?", reveals his lack of responsibility and further shows his sinful attitude.

5. **What is the significance of the mark on Cain?** The mark on Cain is a sign of God's grace and preservation, not a sign of punishment. Instead of taking Cain's life, God marks him to protect him from vengeance by others. It could also be a way to ensure continued procreation early in the development of human society.
6. **How does the lineage of Cain contrast with the lineage of Seth?** The lineage of Cain is characterized by growing wickedness, including murder and polygamy. In contrast, the lineage of Seth is associated with the beginning of people calling upon the name of the Lord, suggesting a turn toward worship. This contrast is meant to show a path toward God's plan of blessing and the other toward a sinful and destructive path.
7. **What is the importance of the concept of "brother's keeper" in this passage?** The concept of being a "brother's keeper" underscores the communal responsibility within the human family, especially in the ancient world. As people created in God's image, they are interconnected and accountable to one another, especially those within a covenant relationship with God. Cain's denial of this responsibility showcases the brokenness of their relationship with God and each other.
8. **How does Genesis 4:1-26 fit into the larger narrative of the Bible?** This passage reveals the pattern of sin, judgment, and grace that runs through the entire Bible. The sin of Cain leads to judgment from God, but God also shows grace by preserving Cain's life and later establishing a righteous lineage through Seth. This pattern foreshadows the need for a deliverer and the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ for humanity's sin. It demonstrates God's faithfulness to His promise of a future deliverer in the midst of human failure and wickedness.