**Genesis 4: Cain and Abel**

Gen 4:1Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, ‘I have produced a man with the help of the Lord.’ 2Next she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground.

3In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, 4and Abel for his part brought of the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, 5but for Cain and his offering he had no regard.

So Cain was very angry; his face fell – he went into a sulk. 6The Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? Why have you gone into a sulk? 7If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it.’

8Cain said to his brother Abel, ‘Let us go out to the field.’ And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. 9Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Where is your brother Abel?’ He said, ‘I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?’

10And the Lord said,

 ‘What have you done?

 Listen; your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground!

11And now you are cursed from the ground,

 which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your

 hand.

12When you till the ground, it will no longer yield to you its strength;

 you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.’

13Cain said to the Lord, ‘My punishment is greater than I can bear! 14Today you have driven me away from the soil, and I shall be hidden from your face; I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and anyone who meets me may kill me.’ 15Then the Lord said to him, ‘Not so! Whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance.’ And the Lord put a mark on Cain, so that no one who came upon him would kill him.

16Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

 (*New Revised Standard Version*)

**Some questions to think about:**

* **What do you think the relationship between Cain and Abel was like before Cain offered his sacrifice to God?**
* **Why does God prefer Abel’s offering to Cain’s offering? Should God have had such a preference? And if so, should God have expressed it? Is all of this really God’s fault?**
* **Is Cain right to be angry?**
* **How could Cain’s anger and sulk turn into murder?**
* **Is God right to protect Cain in the end?**
* **How would you define ‘SIN’ according to this story?**

**Genesis 1:1-2:4**

1:1In the beginning when God ***created*** the heavens and the earth, 2the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while the Spirit of God ***hovered*** [or ‘a wind from God swept’] over the face of the waters. 3Then God ***said***, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. 4And God ***saw*** that the light was good; and God ***separated*** the light from the darkness. 5God ***called*** the light Day, and the darkness he ***called*** Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

6And God ***said***, ‘Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.’ 7So God ***made*** the dome and ***separated*** the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. 8God ***called*** the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

9And God ***said***, ‘Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.’ And it was so. 10God ***called*** the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he ***called*** Seas. And God ***saw*** that it was good. 11Then God ***said***, ‘Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.’ And it was so. 12The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God ***saw*** that it was good. 13And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

14And God ***said***, ‘Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, 15and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.’ And it was so. 16God ***made*** the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. 17God ***set*** them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, 18to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God ***saw*** that it was good. 19And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

20And God ***said***, ‘Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.’ 21So God ***created*** the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God ***saw*** that it was good. 22God ***blessed*** them, saying, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.’ 23And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

24And God ***said***, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.’ And it was so. 25God ***made*** the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God ***saw*** that it was good. 26Then God ***said***, ‘Let us ***make*** humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’
27 So God ***created*** humankind in his image,
   in the image of God he ***created*** them;
   male and female he ***created*** them.
28God ***blessed*** them, and God ***said*** to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.’ 29God ***said***, ‘See, I ***have given*** you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. 30And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I ***have given*** every green plant for food.’ And it was so. 31God ***saw*** everything that he had ***made***, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

2:1Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. 2And on the seventh day God ***finished*** the work that he had ***done***, and he ***rested*** on the seventh day from all the work that he had ***done***. 3So God ***blessed*** the seventh day and ***hallowed*** it, because on it God ***rested*** from all the work that he had ***done*** in creation.

4These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

 (New Revised Standard Version)

**Worksheet for Gen 1:1-24**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **A verb that GOD does:** | **How many times does God** **do this verb in Gen 1:1-2:4?** | **How do I do this behaviour in a positive way?** | **How should our church do this behaviour in a positive way?**  |
| Said | 10 |  |  |
| Saw | 7 |  |  |
| Called  | 5 |  |  |
| CreatedMadeSet | 541 |  |  |
| BlessedHallowed | 31 |  |  |
| Done workFinishedRested | 321 |  |  |
| Separated  | 2 |  |  |
| Gave (have given) | 2 |  |  |
| Hovered | 1 |  |  |

Genesis 32: Jacob, The Trickster and Wrestler

This is a story about Jacob, the trickster and the wrestler. Jacob tricks Esau; then he reconciles with him; but first there’s a moment of wrestling.

Jacob was the underdog, so he had to be clever. First he tricked Esau, his older brother, who was the firstborn of the two. Jacob got Esau to sell him the status of firstborn, for nothing more than a bowl of stew. Then he tricked Isaac, their father – when Isaac was old and blind, Jacob disguised himself to impersonate Esau, so that their father would give HIM Esau’s blessing. When Esau found out he was furious – so Jacob ran off to live with their uncle. There he got two wives, two maids, and lots of kids. But eventually it was time to go home.

Jacob sent a message to Esau, his brother: … ‘I have lived with our uncle all these years. I have many cattle, donkeys, flocks, and servants. Sir, I am sending you this message to ask you to accept us.’ The messengers came back to Jacob and said, ‘We delivered your message to your brother Esau. He is coming to meet you. He has 400 men with him.’ Jacob was very frightened and worried. So he took all his property and divided it up into several parts. Then he ordered his servants to take each part and bring it to Esau. He said, ‘You will say the same thing to Esau when you meet him. You will say, ‘This is a gift to you, and your servant Jacob is behind us.’’ Jacob thought, ‘If I send these men ahead with gifts, maybe Esau will forgive me and accept me.’ So Jacob sent the gifts to Esau, but he stayed that night in the camp.

During the night, Jacob got up and began moving his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven sons across the Jabbok River at the crossing. After he sent his family across the river, he sent across everything he had.

Jacob was left alone, and a man came and wrestled with him. The man fought with him until the sun came up. When the man saw that he could not defeat Jacob, he touched Jacob’s leg and put it out of joint.

Then the man said to Jacob, ‘Let me go. The sun is coming up.’

But Jacob said, ‘I will not let you go. You must bless me.’

And the man said to him, ‘What is your name?’ And Jacob said, ‘My name is Jacob.’

Then the man said, ‘Your name will not be Jacob. Your name will now be Israel. I give you this name because you have fought with God and with human beings, and you have won.’

Then Jacob asked him, ‘Please tell me your name.’

But the man said, ‘Why do you ask my name?’ Then the man blessed Jacob at that place.

So Jacob named that place Peniel. He said, ‘At this place, I saw God face to face, but my life was spared.’ The sun came up as Jacob left Peniel, and he was limping because of his leg.

Discuss: **(1) Who was Jacob really wrestling with? The story just says it was ‘a man.’ (2) Is it important that Jacob wrestles with this figure BEFORE reconciling with his brother? Why?**