

# BEGINNING OF SIN

Genesis 3:1 - 4:16

## STRUCTURE

**Key-persons:** God, Adam, Eve, Cain

**Key-locations:** Garden of Eden, outside the Garden

**Key-repetitions:**

- Eat the fruit (3:1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 17, 22).
- Accusations: God accused Adam (3:11); Adam accused God and Eve (3:12); Eve accused the snake (3:13); God accused Cain (4:9-13); Cain accused God (4:13).
- Punishment: the snake's (3:14-15); the woman's (3:16); the man's (3:17-19); Cain's (4:11-12); whoever kills Cain (4:15); God's plan to punish the world with the flood (6:5-13).
- Pain: for the woman (3:16); for the man (3:17-19); for Cain (4:13).
- Conflict: between snake and woman (3:15); the snake's descendants and the woman's (3:15); Cain and Abel (4:8-9); God and Cain (4:10-16).
- God asked questions to those who did wrong: Adam (3:9, 11); Eve (3:13); Cain (4:6, 9, 10).
- Evil in the world: Adam and Eve disobeyed God (3:1-6); Cain killed Abel and left God's presence (4:8-16); Lamech celebrated killing two people (4:19-24); mankind was wicked and everyone's thoughts were always evil (6:5); the earth was corrupt (6:11, 12); the earth was full of violence (6:11, 13).
- Some were faithful to God: Seth's descendants who called on the Lord (4:26); Enoch (5:24); Noah (6:8).

**Key-attitudes:**

- The snake's deception.
- Eve's lack of confidence in what God said.
- Adam and Eve's shame after eating the forbidden fruit.
- God's sadness when he declared punishment.
- God's pleasure with Abel and his displeasure with Cain.
- Cain's anger.
- Cain's resentment because of his punishment.
- Negative attitude toward Cain's descendants.
- God's pleasure with Enoch and Noah.
- God's frustration with the human race, with the exception of Enoch and Noah.

**Initial-Situation:**

In the beginning, only God existed. He created with spoken words. Everything God made was good.

God made man and woman similar to himself. God gave them responsibilities to take care of his creation and to rule over the animals. God made the Garden of Eden for Adam and Eve. He gave them freedom to enjoy fruit from all the trees in the garden except from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam and Eve were naked, but felt no shame.

**Initial-problem:**

The snake asked the woman: "Did God really say: 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"

**Final-situation:**

Because of corruption and violence in the world, God planned to destroy it, with the exception of Noah.

## BIBLE STORY

### Adam and Eve Disobey God

The snake was the cleverest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. The snake asked the woman, "Did God really say: 'You must not eat fruit from any tree in the garden?'"

The woman answered the snake, "No, that is wrong. We may eat fruit from any tree, except the one that is in the middle of the garden. God said: 'You must never eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden; you must not even touch it, or you will die.'"

The snake replied, "You will not die. God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened to see what's really going on. You will be just like God, knowing good and evil."

The woman saw that the tree was beautiful; its fruit looked tasty. She realized what she would get out of it: she'd know everything. So she took and ate some of its fruit. She also gave some of the fruit to her husband, and he ate it. Then the man and woman had their eyes opened; they saw themselves naked! They sewed fig leaves together to make a covering around their hips (3:1-7).

## **Results of Disobedience**

That evening, the man and his wife heard the Lord God strolling in the garden in the cool part of the day. They hid from the Lord God among the trees in the garden.

But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

The man answered, "I heard you in the garden. I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

God asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat fruit from the tree that I forbade you to eat from?"

The man replied, "The woman you put here with me gave me fruit from the tree; so I ate it."

The Lord God asked the woman, "What have you done?"

The woman replied, "The snake deceived me, and I ate the fruit."

The Lord God said to the snake, "Because you did this, you're cursed more than all livestock and wild animals! You are cursed to crawl on your belly and eat dust all your life. You and the woman will be enemies. Your descendants and her descendants will be enemies. The woman's descendant will strike you on your head, and you will strike his heel."

The Lord God told the woman, "I will cause you to have trouble when you are pregnant. You will suffer pain when you give birth to babies. Yet, you will desire your husband's affections, and he will rule over you."

The Lord God said to the man, "You listened to your wife; you ate fruit from the tree which I forbade you to eat from. Therefore, the ground is under a curse because of you. You'll work hard and you'll experience pain as you struggle to grow food from the ground. Your food will be plants; however, the ground will produce thorns and thistles. You will sweat in the fields to get food until you return to the ground. You started out as dirt. When you die, you will end up as dirt" (3:8-19).

Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of everyone who ever lived (3:20).

The Lord God made leather clothing for Adam and Eve and dressed them. The Lord God said, "The man has become like one of us. He knows good from evil. He must not be allowed to eat fruit from the Tree of Life that would let him live forever." The Lord God banished the couple from the Garden of Eden and posted an angel-cherubim and a revolving sword of fire to prevent people from getting to the Tree of Life (3:21-24).

## **Cain and Abel**

Eve gave birth to Cain. Later she gave birth to another son. Abel became a herdsman and kept flocks; Cain became a farmer and worked the soil (4:1-2).

Time passed. Cain brought some of his crop as an offering to the Lord. Abel brought choice cuts of meat from the firstborn of his flock. The Lord accepted Abel and his offering, but rejected Cain and his offering (4:3-4).

Cain became angry; his face was dark with rage. The Lord asked Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face so dark with rage? If you do what is right, I will accept you. But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door waiting to pounce; it is out to get you, but you must tame it" (4:5-7).

One day Cain invited his brother Abel, "Let's go out into the field." While they were in the field, Cain killed his brother Abel (4:8).

The Lord asked Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

Cain replied, "I don't know. Is it my job to take care of my brother?"

The Lord asked, "What have you done? Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Because you made Abel's blood run out on the ground, you will never be able to farm the land. The land you work will no longer yield good crops for you. You will be a restless tramp upon the earth going from place to place."

Cain complained, "This punishment is too much! You are driving me from the land; I can never again face you; I will be a homeless wanderer; whoever finds me will kill me."

The Lord answered, "Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times greater than your punishment." Then the Lord put a mark on Cain as a warning to anyone who met him not to kill him (4:8-15).

Cain went out from God's presence and lived in No-Man's-Land, east of Eden (4:16).

Lamech was one of Cain's descendants. Lamech married two women. Lamech sang a song to his two wives celebrating that he had killed one man for wounding him and a boy for striking him (4:19-24).

### **Seth's Descendants**

Adam and Eve had another son named Seth. Some of Seth's descendants called on the name of the Lord (4:25-26). Enoch was one of Seth's descendants. Enoch walked with the Lord (5:21-24). Enoch was the father of Methuselah, and the great grandfather of Noah (5:21, 27).

### **God Plans to Destroy Mankind**

The earth became heavily populated. The Lord saw that the people on earth were wicked and their thoughts were always evil. The Lord's heart was filled with pain. He said, "I will destroy every person, every animal, and every bird, because I am sorry that I made them" (6:5-7).

But Noah was different. Noah pleased God. Noah was a righteous man, a man of integrity who walked with God.

So God told Noah, "People have filled the earth with violence. I am going to destroy all people from the earth. So make yourself an ark of cypress wood and coat it with tar pitch inside and out" (6:8-13).

## **GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS**

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

## **SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Why was it wrong for Adam and Eve to eat the fruit from the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?
2. How were Eve and Adam tempted to disobey God?
3. What were the consequences of Adam and Eve disobeying God?

4. How did Cain disobey God?
5. How were Abel, Seth, Enoch and Noah different from other people?

## LIFE-LESSONS

1. The person who modifies God's words is not prepared to resist Satan. God said they could not eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (2:16-17). Eve increased God's demands, saying that they were neither to eat nor touch the tree (3:3). Eve was not prepared to resist Satan, because she modified the Word of God.
2. Sin: so easy the act, so painful the consequences. It was easy for Eve to take the forbidden fruit, eat it and give it to Adam (3:6). However, the results of sin were painfully hard (3:16-19). Sin affected the woman as a mother and wife (3:16) and the man as a worker (3:17-19).
3. God's action on behalf of the sinner is man's only hope for liberation from sin's consequences. God promised that one of Eve's descendants would crush the snake's head, while the snake would wound his heel (3:15). This is the first promise referring to the coming of Jesus.
4. God is omniscient and knows everything. God is aware of both man's actions and man's thoughts. He knew Cain was in danger of allowing his anger to dominate him, and he knew when Cain killed his brother (4:5-9). The Lord saw man's wickedness and knew that his thoughts were inclined towards evil (6:5-7).
5. There is hope in the middle of violence and evil, because God continues to communicate with people. God spoke to Cain (4:6-7; 9:15), he communicated with Enoch (5:22-24), and he spoke to Noah (6:13-21). The New Testament informs us that Noah transmitted God's message to the people (2 Pt 2:5).