

# Am I my brother's keeper?

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## The first murder in the Bible (Genesis 4:3-16)

**T**HIS first murder is revealed in the first few pages of the Bible when one brother kills the other. The two men were the first two children of Adam and Eve: Cain and Abel - and Cain killed Abel.

God was not pleased but did not prevent (stop) the murder. As God knows everything that will happen in the future he actually warned Cain that trouble was lurking - but Cain chose to ignore the warning and killed his brother.

He later complained bitterly at being expelled from his land because of the murder. *Maybe he thought God would ignore the killing.*

**The story:** It was time to bring offerings (gifts) to God and Abel brought the best gift he could - the finest parts of one of his lambs as his offering to God.

The Bible does not tell of a place to worship God and a place to put gifts there. They did not come face to face with God either.

Cain brought gifts of fruit and vegetables from his garden but God regarded Abel's gift as much more pleasant (valuable - in that it cost Abel one of his first animals that he had bred and looked after). Cain's garden gifts were not so costly to him.

When Cain realised how much God appreciated Abel's gift more than his, he became jealous and very angry. God came and spoke to him saying: "Sin is lurking at your door, and wants to have (dominate) you but you can master (beat) it."

Cain *chose* to ignore God's warning and planned to murder his brother. He invited Abel to go for a walk in the fields and soon after that he picked up a rock and killed him. Abel's blood spilt onto the land (soil) thus causing a 'curse' to be on that land.

God then called on Cain and asked him: "Where is your brother Abel?" Cain answered: "I don't know. Am I supposed to take care of my brother?" (or "be my brother's keeper") (Revised Good News Bible). But he did know and he declined to answer the question.

So maybe we all should be careful if someone answers a question with a question.

God went on to tell Cain: "Your brother's blood calls to me from the ground. What have you done?" (a chance for saying 'Sorry' but Cain did not say sorry.) "You are hereby banished from this ground which you have defiled with your brother's blood. No longer will it yield crops for you, even if you toil on it forever! From now on you will be a fugitive and a tramp upon the earth, wandering from place to place."

Cain replied, “My punishment is greater than I can bear. For you have banished me from my farm, you and made me a fugitive and a tramp and everyone who sees me will try to kill me.”

Cain seemed to forget that he was warned but planned to kill Abel anyway (that is called premeditated murder).

Cain did have to leave his country, and farm, but God put a mark on his forehead to stop strangers – or anyone – from killing him. He went into obscurity and built himself a city but the saying: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” remains the hallmark of somebody wanting to change the subject or not answer a question. His very name conjures (brings up) thoughts of a murder or foul play...yes and also that we are to care for our ‘brother’.

If this story has ‘touched your heart’ and you want to know more, then Google up on Youtube: Am I my brother’s keeper. There is a good sermon by Charles Haddon Spurgeon on this very subject. Cheers, and may God bless you as you learn more of the Bible.



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