

4—BECAUSE OF MY BROTHER’S FLOCKS

(Genesis 4; Moses 5–6)

Adam and Eve were blessed with a large family, and they taught their children the gospel. Many of their children, however, did not obey the gospel teachings, for Satan came among them claiming to be the Son of God and telling them not to believe the teachings of their parents. Many of Adam and Eve’s children loved Satan more than they loved God and began, as the scriptures say, to be carnal, sensual, and devilish.

After many years, Eve had a son whom she called Cain.¹ She was very happy because she thought this son would surely be a man of God. Cain, however, proved to be a disappointment for he rejected God and the teachings of his parents. Cain, like his brothers and sisters before him, loved Satan more than he loved God and was quick to do whatever Satan asked.

Later Eve had another son whom she named Abel.² Abel loved God and obeyed him; he also obeyed his parents. Abel became a sheep farmer and had many flocks.

Satan commanded Cain, who farmed the land, to offer a sacrifice to Jehovah of the fruits of his ground. Though Cain was reluctant, he obeyed Satan and made the offering after a long time had passed. Cain’s offering, however, was not accepted by Jehovah because it was not a blood sacrifice as Jehovah had commanded and because it was inspired by Satan rather than by faith in God.

When Jehovah accepted Abel’s animal offering, Cain became jealous of his brother. He was angry because his offering was rejected while Abel’s had been accepted. He felt his offering was as good as his brother’s offering and that Jehovah was playing favorites.

Satan knew the feelings of Cain’s heart, and he was pleased.

Jehovah spoke to Cain and asked him why he was upset. “If you do well,” said Jehovah, “you will be accepted. But if you do not do well, sin lies at the door and Satan desires to have you. Except you repent and keep my commandments, I will deliver you up to Satan, and you will rule over him. You

will become the father of lies and will be called Perdition, for you were known as such before this world was.”³ Jehovah went on to warn Cain that future peoples, upon seeing wickedness among them, would say it began with Cain, because Cain rejected the counsel of God.

Cain was offended and became even more angry. And because he refused to listen to Jehovah’s voice, Adam and Eve suffered great heartache. They mourned for their son because they loved him.

While Cain was still upset, Satan came to him and asked him to swear an oath of secrecy. He also asked Cain to have his wicked brothers swear the same oath so Adam would not know of it. “If you will do this,” Satan promised, “I will deliver Abel into your hands, along with everything he owns.” This was all done in secret, and Cain felt evil satisfaction because of the secret oath that would allow him to murder his brother for gain.

One day while Cain and Abel were together in the field, Cain rose up and slew his younger brother. He rejoiced in his murderous deed, “For,” said he, “I am now free, and my brother’s flocks are mine.”

Cain, however, was not left much time to gloat. When he returned from the field that day, Jehovah came and spoke to him again. “Where is your brother Abel?” asked Jehovah.

“I do not know,” Cain lied in response. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

Then Jehovah said, “What have you done, Cain? Abel’s blood cries to me from the ground, and the earth that has opened her mouth to receive your brother’s blood shall curse you. From this time forth, the ground will not yield to you in its strength, and you shall be a fugitive and vagabond in the earth.”

“Such a punishment is too hard for me to bear,” cried Cain. “Satan tempted me because of Abel’s flocks—and I was angry when you accepted his offering but rejected mine. If you drive me out now, I fear that whoever finds me will kill me because of my sins.”

“Whoever slays you,” answered Jehovah, “shall receive of my vengeance sevenfold.”

Jehovah then put a mark upon Cain so no one would slay him. Then Cain went to dwell in the land of Nod, east of Eden, with his wife and many of his brothers. And, from that time forth, he was shut out of Jehovah’s presence.

¹ The name *Cain* means “possession.”

² The name *Abel* means “breath” or “vapor,” probably because of the shortness of his life.

³ The title *Perdition* means “to give ruin” and suggests the idea of eternal damnation.

Though Adam and Eve mourned for both Cain and Abel, they were soon blessed to receive another son in place of the martyred Abel—a son whom they named Seth.⁴ Seth looked exactly like father Adam,

except for the difference in their ages. He obeyed God and, as his brother Abel had done before him, offered an acceptable sacrifice to Jehovah.

⁴ The name Seth means “compensation” or “substitute.”