

8. Their fall and redemption are the subjects of Genesis: Chapter Three. Chapter Four presents them as Homo sapiens, but with bodies corrupted by the sin nature ultimately will result in physical death.

9. The drama in Genesis 4 continues in verse 4:

Genesis 4:4 But Abel, he also brought of the first born of his flock and of the best parts thereof. The Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering;

v. 5 but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

10. Both men brought offerings as directed, but with quite different motivations. Cain's offering was bloodless offering from his crops while Able brought the first born of his flock and its best parts.

11. Abel's offering was superior because he did not give any thought about just going through the motions. His desire was to present to the ultimate Provider a choice portion of the sheep the Lord provided.

12. Cain's vegetables were offered because he felt the whole exercise was silly but he went along with the idea, but without gratitude.

13. Therefore, the two sons of Adam and Eve have had their first opportunity to pay homage to God. Cain showed no gratitude for the grace of God while Abel recognized the importance of showing gratitude. His offering was the best of his flock.

14. This exercise was designed to discover in both men who would show proper gratitude to the ultimate provider of their means of physical sustenance. Because of Cain's obvious absence of grace orientation to the Lord, he is the recipient of a divine dressing down.

Genesis 4:6 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why do have that angry facial expression?"

v. 7 "If you do well [orient and adjust to divine mandates] will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well [reject the gospel], sin [חַטָּאת (*chatta'th*)] is crouching [רָבַץ (*ravas*)] at the door; whose desire [תְּשׁוּקָה (*teshuqah*)] is to dominate you, but you must master it [Qal future imperfect of מָשַׁל (*mashal*): through the free-will choice of faith alone in Messiah alone].

15. Cain's status in the Adamic family was based on the Old Testament principle of primogeniture: an exclusive right of inheritance belonging to the eldest son.

16. This means that as first-born son, Cain becomes at Adam's death the *paterfamilias*: "head of the household." When the sacrifices were conducted according to schedule, Cain valued his vegetables as superior to Abel's animal.
17. When the Lord rejected Cain's sacrifice before the entire family, it resulted in an inner resentment that was reflected by the expression on his face — his countenance fell.
18. The mental attitude behind it was known to the Lord and in verse 6 He asks Cain why he was resentful. The Lord did not need to hear the answer to the question as omniscience already knew. The line of questioning was designed to alert Cain to his sins.
19. In addition, the Lord gives Cain an analysis of his choices: **(1)** If you do well, i.e., arrive with a grace mental attitude, then you will be accepted. However, **(2)** if you do not do so then you will enter into locked-in negative volition and fall under the power of satanic influence. This is the warning of the last half of Genesis 4:7b.
20. This is Cain's opportunity to believe in Messiah and assume his rightful place as priest-designate of Adam's family. The warning contains a double entendre: an ambiguity of meaning arising from language that lends itself to more than one interpretation.
21. The first key to the double entendre is the word for sin: **חַטָּאת** (*chatta'th*): "sin offering." This word can be interpreted either way. Thus, the Lord places a challenge before Cain's volition.
22. With reference to "sin," its meaning refers to Cain's arrival without recognition of his unconfessed sins. He just thinks his vegetables are so impressive that the Lord would be pleased with his offering.
23. With reference to his "sin offering," it refers to the opportunity Cain has to repent, i.e., to change his mind about his carnality. In other words, the Lord is offering Cain an opportunity to show gratitude to the Lord for His grace.
24. The options are brought out by the word "crouching" [NASB & NIV] or "lieth" [KJV]. It is the Qal active verb: **רָבַץ** (*ravas*): "actively crouching."
25. If Cain does well and decides to approach the sacrifice with humility, then the animal patiently awaits him to do so. The real issue in redemption is the change of mental attitude toward Messiah from which emerges the desire to approach the altar with a grace mental attitude.
26. However, if Cain does not decide well, then satanic influence lies at the door of his stream of consciousness and he will move into intensified bitterness.

27. The next key word is desire: תְּשׁוּקָה (*teshuqah*). On the one hand, “desire” refers to Satan’s objective to capture the thinking of Cain, to influence him into committing the heinous act of murdering his very own brother in order to destroy the line of Christ. Peter comments on this cosmic motivation in:

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober and alert. Your enemy the devil, like a roaring lion, is on the prowl looking for someone to devour.
(NET)

28. Peter’s observation refers to the danger faced by the carnal believer. The application to Cain is that he has been given an opportunity to believe in Messiah and forewarned that should he fail to do so, Lucifer will seize the opportunity in his nefarious scheme.
29. On the other hand, “desire” (תְּשׁוּקָה (*teshuqah*)) refers to the motivation behind the sacrifice, depicted in context as a lamb from the flocks but, as a type, representative of the coming Messiah. The Lord is offering Cain a gracious second chance to go positive and then demonstrate that decision by approaching the altar with both confession and grace.
30. The issue before Cain can only be resolved by his own free will: “... but you must master it.” The word “master” is the Qal future imperfect of the verb, מָשַׁל (*mashal*).
31. Cain has free will and thus has the power and authority to make the right choice and in so doing must take the responsibility to rule over the desires of his sin nature.
32. Consequently, the primary meaning of the double entendre is the fact that Cain is an unbeliever who is about to fall under the evil influence of Lucifer himself.
33. The secondary influence is that this does not need to continue, for if Cain believes in Messiah the power of his sin nature will be broken, he can take control over his own body, “master” his sinful desires, and approach the Lord with a grace-oriented attitude. Cain’s choices can be illustrated by this paraphrase of:

Genesis 4:7 “If you do well by approaching the Lord with grace, will not your change of mind be demonstrated in your facial expression, indicative of your grace orientation? And if you do not do well, then sin crouches at the door like a roaring lion, lying in repose. Both have a desire that you respond to them, but you must make the final decision so you can rule over your sin nature and then submit to the divine mandate.”

34. The Lord challenged Cain's volition by emphasizing the downside of the wrong decision. Cain is an unbeliever functioning under the three arrogant skills: (1) self-justification, (2) self-deception, and (3) self-absorption.
35. If Cain makes the decision to continue appearing under cosmic motivations, then he will move into the area of intensified bitterness and become vulnerable to further satanic influence.
36. The Lord presented two options for Cain to consider: maintain his status quo or decided to go with grace orientation.
37. The word translated "sin" is: **חַטָּאת** (*chatta'th*) and can be translated negatively as a personal sin or positively as a sin offering.
38. The word translated "crouching" is the Qal active verb: **רָבַץ** (*ravas*): "actively crouching," but can be translated "aggressively" as "crouching," for example, of a lion anticipating an attack, or passively as a lamb in repose awaiting to be sacrificed.
39. Which way will Cain choose? If he continues to bring vegetables then he continues to remain in rebellion against the divine mandate to bring an offering respective of the Lord by his mental attitude.
40. The sin crouching at the door has to do with the intensification of bitterness and the reverse process of the three arrogant skills.
41. The implied alternate choice is salvation through faith alone in Messiah alone. Salvation is commemorated by the offering brought to the altar by Abel, a sacrificial lamb upon an altar. It lies in repose awaiting Cain's grace orientation.
42. The verb "desire," **רָשָׁעָה** (*ʿshuqah*), can also be translated two ways as either a positive or negative motivation. It could indicate a desire to respectfully approach the Lord as Savior. But in context it refers to sin, whose desire is to co-opt Cain into Satan's plan to destroy the line of Christ through the murder of Abel.
43. The only way that Cain can stop his rapid rush into fratricide is to become the ruler of his sin nature which can only be accomplished through salvation.
44. The word translated "master," is **מָשַׁל** (*mashal*). It is the same word found in Genesis 3:16 for Adam's rulership over the woman.
45. In Genesis 4:7b, the word **רָשָׁעָה** (*ʿshuqah*) refers to Cain's first husband who seeks to advance his tyrannical control over his soul in order to not only maintain its power, but also to increase it thereby satisfying its lust for murder.