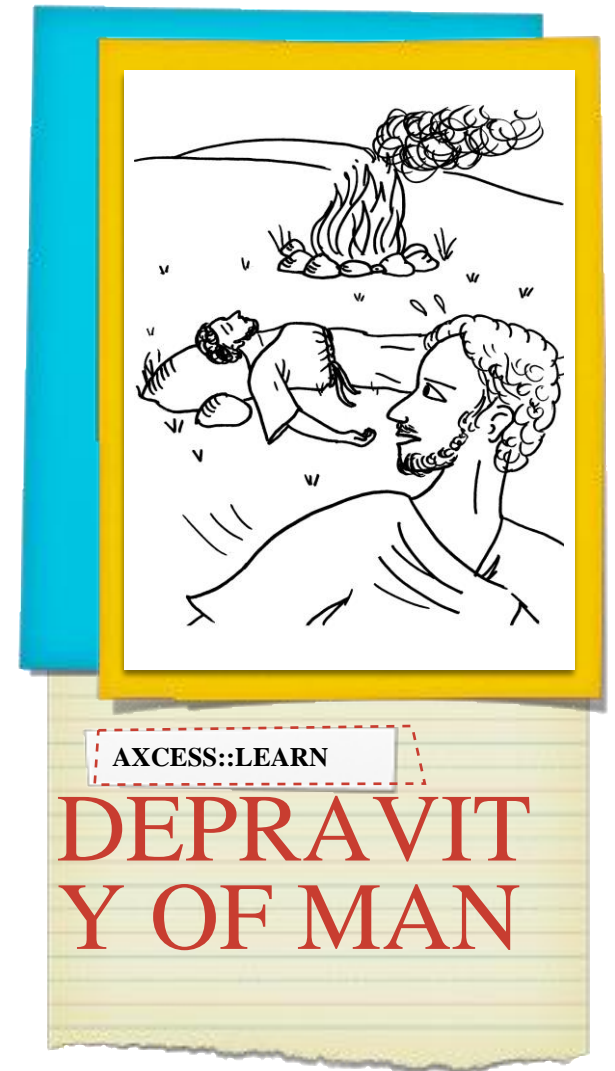




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****Italicized words in brackets interlaced in the text are the Hebrew words that were used in the oldest known manuscripts. Approaching Scripture through the Hebrew mindset and context can help us to appreciate more fully and to properly interpret what the passage is actually intending to communicate.*



GENESIS 4

≈ **v.1-2** Adam & Havah were dwelling just east of the Garden of Eden after being cast out. They had sexual relations. Havah/Eve conceived and gave birth to Kayin/Cain. In addition she gave birth to Hevel/Abel. Hevel was a shepherd (ro'eh). Kayin was a tiller of the ground (o'ved literally, servant).

≈ **v.3-5** Kayin brings an offering to God from the produce of the soil. Hevel also brings an offering from the firstborn of his sheep.

**At this time man was only to eat plants, not animals. The purpose for sheep was not meant for meat but only for sacrifice and clothing. The purpose of the sheep was for “covering”...to provide covering (clothing) for man’s physical nakedness, but also to provide covering (its own innocent blood) for man’s spiritual nakedness, his sin.

Why did God accept Hevel and his offering, but not accept Kayin and his offering? The passage doesn’t indicate that it was a *sin* offering (which would require a blood sacrifice). We can speculate that it was the quality of the offering...Hevel’s being superior (because it was the firstborn and with its fat) and Kayin’s being common, but the passage does not explicitly say this.

A MATTER OF THE HEART?

“By trusting, Hevel offered a greater sacrifice than Kayin; because of this, he was attested as righteous, with God giving him this testimony on the ground of his gifts. Through having trusted, he still continues to speak, even though he is dead.” —*Hebrews 11:4*

“For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning: that we should love each other and not be like Kayin, who is from the Evil One and murdered his own brother. Why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil, and his brother’s were righteous.”
—*1 John 3:11-12*

≈ **v.6-8** God addressed Kayin’s countenance, “Why are you angry? Why are you downcast?” It seems that God is calling out Kayin’s character and drawing attention to the attitude of his heart.

“If you’re doing what is good, shouldn’t you hold your head high? And if you don’t do what is good, sin is crouching at the door—it wants you, but you can rule over it.” What important lesson is God teaching here?

Certainly, Kayin was not doing what is good...he allowed the evil inclination (*yetzer harah*) to take over and he ends up attacking Hevel in the field and kills him.

≈ **v.9-12** God asks Kayin where Hevel is, giving him an opportunity to confess and come clean. Instead, Kayin lies and says, “I don’t know; am I my brother’s guardian?”

God said that the voice of Hevel’s blood was crying out to God from the ground. The ground opened it’s mouth to receive Hevel’s blood at Kayin’s hands.

Just as Adam and Havah were constantly reminded of their transgression by wearing the animal skin, so God sets a curse on the ground as a reminder that anywhere Kayin wandered the ground would no longer yield such good fruits or increase as before. The seed would not become so fruitful.

≈ **v.13-16** The family was banned from the Garden already, but they were still dwelling in the presence of God just to the east of the Garden. But now Kayin was being banned from the Land of Eden and from the presence of God.

Kayin had fear that as he wanders the earth that whoever finds him would kill him. Do you see the mercy of God when he puts a sign on him to indicate that anybody who kills Kayin will “receive vengeance sevenfold.”

Kayin leaves the presence of God and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden. ***Nod means “wandering.”* When we are separated from God we find ourselves in a state of symbolic wandering and unrest. The only rest that exists for humanity is when we are in God’s presence.

≈ **v.17-24** Kayin was the head of a line of wicked people who turned their back on God. The fifth generation down we meet Lamekh who is greedy and took two wives. He boasts to them that he murdered a young man and thinks that if Kayin would be avenged seven fold, that he would be avenged seventy-sevenfold!

≈ **v.25-26** The all-merciful God gave Havah another child who in her view, was a replacement for Hevel. He was named Shet/Seth. Kayin’s descendants (line of evil) wandered further and further from God. Shet led people (line of good) to look to God for direction and offered Adonai their praise and worship.

NOTES

HEBREW WORD DEFINITIONS

Kayin:: acquired from God

Hevel:: (no direct meaning) likened to smoke or breath or vapour; to be empty; vain or vanity in the sense of being empty of substance—here for a moment and then gone.

Nod:: wandering; restlessness

Shet:: compensation, granted

Enosh:: mortal, person

Adam:: man, mankind

adamah:: ground

dam:: blood