



Week of March 20 Origins¹

Overview:

At some point in our lives, we have to wonder: Why are we here? How did all of this come to be? What are the origins of our universe, our story, and our purpose? In Genesis, we see a cosmic story unfolding—an epic narrative—of God shaping a good and meaningful world, what went wrong, and how God is redeeming the mess, restoring us to something good. Over the next several weeks, we will explore new ways to study this narrative and learn how to apply those tools to all of Scripture.

Group Objectives:

- Reflect on this past Sunday's message and other devotional reading.
- Pray together and provide encouragement for other group members.
- For each person to consider how their attitude and motivations affect their giving.

DNA statement(s) tie-in:

- *We are outrageously generous.* We are most like God when we are generous. It's all God's anyway.

Conversation Starters:

- If you had lived during the patriarchal age, would you have been a farmer or a shepherd? Why?

Read and Reflect: Bible Study Discussion

The story of Cain and Abel is about posture, not preference. God did not choose Abel's sacrifice because he liked him better, but because Abel offered his sacrifice out of gratitude and humility. He willingly placed God first and did not give sin a foothold.

It is also a story of grace. God warned Cain; he gave him a chance to turn away from evil. He also showed mercy after his fall. There are many questions left unanswered in this chapter, but God makes his love for us clear. When we struggle, return to what you know to be true. God could have destroyed Cain. He could have ended humanity. Instead, he offered us another chance and set the stage for Jesus' ultimate sacrifice.

Opening our minds to new possibilities can be a painful process. Give grace to those in your group who struggle. This is a journey, and we are all in different places along the path. You will not have all the answers. That is okay; God can handle your questions.²

¹ This week's lesson was written by Rachel Vaughn; edited by Dawn Gentry.

² To help you in this process, some additional resources—including books, videos, and podcasts—can be found at cccomaha.org/origins. If you need any additional help, please reach out to a member of the Adult Ministries team.

- **Read Genesis 4:1-5**
 - What is happening here? Why do you think Cain and Abel bring offerings at all?
 - *Genesis does not explicitly say why God does not look on Cain's offering with favor.*
 - Why do you think that is? What might we imply from the passage?
 - How does a knowledge of Genesis 1-3 aid our understanding?
- **Read Hebrews 11:1-4**
 - How does the author of Hebrews interpret Genesis 4?
 - How did Abel's offering demonstrate faith?
- **Read Genesis 4:6-16**
 - How does Cain respond to God's correction? What does this tell us about Cain?
 - List all the ways God shows mercy to Cain. What does this teach you about God?
 - What does it mean to have sin "crouching at your door"? How could Cain "rule over" sin? What sin(s) do you believe led Cain to murder?
- **Read Genesis 4:17-26**
 - Why do you think God allowed this family to continue? What does Lamech's attitude tell you about how each generation regarded God?
 - What might the birth of Seth indicate to us?

Summarize and Respond:

- What does God want in our offerings? Does an offering have to be financial?
 - What does our posture toward giving tell us about our relationship with God?
- *Consider a time when you knew sin was "crouching at your door."* Using as much (or little) detail as you are comfortable sharing, how did you recognize the sin?
 - Did you believe you could "rule over it" or feel powerless to stop it?
 - What were the consequences of turning away (or giving in)?
- Looking back through your family history, how has God been at work throughout multiple generations (legacy of faith, mercy in the face of sin, providing a way to break the cycle, etc.)?
 - Where have you seen God's mercy and grace evident in your life?

Prayer Prompts:

- Invite members of the group to share personal prayer requests.
- *Lord, give us eyes to see your generosity. May we never take your mercy and grace for granted. May our response to your mercy be overflowing with gratitude and generosity.*

For further study:

- Bible Project Video – *Generosity*. <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/generosity/>
- Bible Project Video – *Khata / Sin*. <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/khata-sin/>
- *Cain and Abel: Bible Story, Meaning, and Significance*. <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/bible/meaning-and-significance-of-cain-and-abel.html>
- *Why is the Story of Cain and Abel So Significant?* <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/bible-study/why-is-the-bible-story-of-cain-and-abel-so-significant.html>