

East of Eden

WHAT WE FOUND

- Abel brought the firstlings and the fat portions; Cain brought “an offering.” Hebrews 11:4 names the difference: faith, made legible in the gift.
- Genesis 4:7 pictures sin as a predator couching at the door, desiring you; and it commands mastery, which means that, with God’s grace, mastery is possible.
- God’s mercy laces the judgment: He warns Cain before, questions him after, and marks him for protection. Even the mark of Cain is mercy, halting the vengeance spiral.
- Two lines run east of Eden: Cain’s builds civilization and breeds Lamech’s seventy-sevenfold vengeance; Seth’s simply calls on the name of the LORD. Chapter 5 tolls “and he died” over generation after generation, broken strikingly once: Enoch walked with God, and God took him.
- Both bloods speak: Abel’s cries from the ground for justice (Genesis 4:10); Christ’s speaks “more graciously” for mercy (Hebrews 12:24).

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. Augustine · *The City of God, XIV.28; XV.1*

Cain and Abel begin the two cities of history: one built on love of self, the other a pilgrim people seeking the City of God. Applied to us: every heart holds a border between them.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH

St. Ambrose of Milan · *On Cain and Abel*

The two brothers are two postures of the soul: one offers God the first and the best; the other offers the convenient and keeps the first for himself. Does God get your firstlings or your leftovers?

VOICE OF THE CHURCH

St. John Chrysostom · *Homilies on Genesis*

God deals with Cain with a physician’s gentleness: warning before, questioning after, shielding even in sentence. Mercy was refused, never unavailable.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Offer God one firstling this week: the first fifteen minutes of your day, the first call on your generosity, the best hour of your Saturday.
- Name your crouching door and put one obstacle between you and it.
- Where a grudge is tallying interest, pray for that person daily, by name: a first step toward seventy-sevenfold.
- Read Genesis 6–9 before next session.

MEMORY VERSE

“If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it.” (Genesis 4:7)

BEFORE NEXT SESSION

Read Genesis 6–9 before next session.

Catechism references: CCC 401, 1867, 2258–2262, 2538–2540.