

Fall Narratives of Adam and Cain¹

Genesis 3—4

	Genesis 3: Adam and Eve	Genesis 4: Cain and Abel
<i>Given a choice about “good”</i>	You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die. (2:16-17)	The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? ⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted?” (4:6-7)
<i>Tempted by an animal</i>	Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field ... He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” (3:1)	And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. (4:7)
<i>Give into temptation</i>	So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate (3:6)	Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. (4:8)
<i>God shows up with a leading question</i>	But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” (3:9) Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” (3:13)	Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” (4:9) And the LORD said, “What have you done?” (4:10)
<i>Avoids the question</i>	The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” (3:12)	He said, “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?” (4:9)
<i>Perpetrator is cursed</i>	The LORD God said to the serpent ... “cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field” (3:14)	And now you are cursed from the ground (4:11)
<i>Inverted desire</i>	To the woman he said ... “Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you” (3:16)	Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it. (4:7)
<i>Increased difficulty in working the ground</i>	And to Adam he said ... “Cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life” (3:17) therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken (3:23)	When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. (4:12)
<i>Banished from divine presence</i>	He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword (3:24)	¹⁴ Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground ... ¹⁶ Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. (4:14, 16)

¹ Adapted from Tim Mackie