**‘Was Cain Hidden From the Face of the LORD?’**

**13Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is too great to bear! 14Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.” 15So the Lord said to him, “Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold.” And the Lord appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one finding him would slay him. 16Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. *Gen. 4:13-16***

Was Cain hidden from the face of the LORD? The immediate answer to this question may be obvious to us but it wasn’t obvious to Cain. Of course Cain wasn’t “hidden from the face of the LORD.” It simply isn’t possible to be hidden from an omnipresent (all-present) God. We know this, but what did the first inhabitants of the earth know?

This isn’t easy to answer. We do know that eventually the peoples of the nations believed their gods were limited to specific territories and regions. We find this idea expressed in the Bible. Even Israel seems to have had this idea. We can see that Cain seems to think that by being “driven from the face of the ground,” he will also be “hidden” from the face of the LORD.

Very likely, this is exactly what it felt like to him. He had lived in the large expanse of Eden (not the garden in Eden, but in territory of Eden) his entire life. It was home. It was familiar. Outside of Eden was the unknown and so it was very scary to him. Cain didn’t exactly choose to be a restless wanderer on the earth. He was thrust into it by God as a consequence of his sin.

God chose this punishment for Cain for two reasons: First, to get the sin out of the “camp” where Adam’s family dwelled.[[1]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2017/09/" \l "_ftn1) And second, to make it more difficult for one of Cain’s sibling to avenge Abel’s death.[[2]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2017/09/" \l "_ftn2)

This second reason does appear to be on Cain’s mind, because he expressly states it. In response to what Cain fears we read, **15*So the Lord said to him, “Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold.” And the Lord appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one finding him would slay him.***

What was the sign? We don’t know. Maybe the LORD will reveal it to us when we get to heaven, but for now we have no answer to this question. Whatever it was, the LORD had no doubt that it would be enough to keep Cain from being killed.

It was only after Cain was assured that his life was not in danger from any “avengers of Abel’s blood” that we read, ***16Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.*** There is great sadness in these words. This verse unfortunately points to a very hard truth regarding sin – it separates us from the ones we love AND from God. The separation may be real, as in Cain’s banishment from Eden. But regardless of how real it is, the relationships have suffered and broken relationships are not easily mended.

*Kathleen*

[[1]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2017/09/" \l "_ftnref1) Sin is often compared to leaven (yeast) in the Bible. If it is not dwelt with, it will affect other and spread. A terrible example of this is found in Joshua 7 when a man by the name of Achan took some of the things the LORD had devoted to destruction from Jericho. He brought trouble upon all of Israel by his sin. In fact, Israel could not stand up against their enemies until the sin was dealt with, with great severity!

[[2]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2017/09/" \l "_ftnref2) Numbers 35:9-27