

# ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

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Department of  
**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**  
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

## The Inescapable Question

**During the week of March 4 we read the fourth chapter of the Book of Genesis, which includes the story of Cain and Abel.**

These sons of Adam and Eve make offerings to God. Abel, a keeper of sheep, brings a choice young animal. Cain, described as a "tiller of the soil" or farmer, offers grain. God accepts Abel's gift, but not Cain's.

Though no reason is given for the choice God makes, He sees the anger it causes in Cain. God gives him what seems to be both a reassurance and a warning: "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it." God is telling Cain that everything depends on his righteousness.

But sin does get the better of Cain. He kills Abel and then faces the inescapable question from God: "Where is your brother Abel?" God knows perfectly well where Abel is, just as He knew the answer to a similar question He posed to Adam earlier in Genesis: "Where are you?"

Like Adam, Cain fails to give an honest answer. He lies, and speaks defiantly and disrespectfully: "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" Cain knows that his "brother's keeper" is exactly what God expects him to be, but he has fallen away from what God expects. His answer is a kind of self-defense, as if to say that God's expectations are unreasonable or unreachably high for a mere human being.

God announces Cain's punishment for the sin of murder, and Cain bewails his fate, saying, "I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will slay me." But

## Intercessory Prayers

We pray for all our fellow parishioners, and we pray especially for those who are incapable of being with us in church. Please keep in your prayers our Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Genevieve Bobenko, Mary Fechisin, Andrew Fabian, Edward Fedush, Mary Hadginske, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazorczyk, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

God's mercy is with him, even after his terrible deed. The Lord puts a mark on him, "lest any who came upon him should kill him." Though the "mark of Cain" is often misunderstood as a sign marking Cain as a murderer, it is in fact a sign of God's protection.

In the next verses of Genesis, the author has fused together two Biblical sources. So now rather than being one of only three people on earth (Cain, Adam and Eve) Cain is married and has a son called Enoch. Genesis names several generations of Enoch's offspring, ending with Lamech.

If Cain murdered, Lamech murders with boastful pride. He says to his wives, "Hearken to what I say. I have slain a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me." The author wants to show that mankind is becoming increasingly evil. The disobedience to God's law that began with Adam and Eve increased with Cain, and has now become truly ugly with Lamech.

Yet the world can be saved if there is one righteous person willing to obey God. In the next chapter of Genesis, God finds that man and instructs him to build an ark. He is Noah, the son of none other than Lamech.

## Birthday Greetings

Our best wishes to **Lydia Bzik**, who celebrates her Birthday this Thursday, and **Amy LeBorgne Kovalycsik**, this Saturday. May God grant each of you and all those celebrating a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Многая Лета!

## Announcements

◆ **Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers** tonight will be celebrated at St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral, 355 State St, Brooklyn, NY at **4:00PM**. Concelebrating will be: His Beatitude TIKHON, Metropolitan of All America and Canada, His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH of Antiochian Archdiocese, His Eminence Archbishop Michael of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey, and other area hierarchs. Everyone is invited for this Pan-Orthodox celebration of our Faith. Alternatively, for those who cannot make it to Brooklyn, a Deanery Mission Vespers will be served at Ss. Peter & Paul Church in South River, NJ at 5 PM.

◆ **Daylight Saving Time** this year starts next Sunday, March 12. To be in church on time, please do not forget to **turn your clocks forward** one hour.

◆ **Deanery Mission Vespers** this year (starting at 5PM) will be as follows:

**Mar. 12** - Holy Assumption Church, Clifton

**Mar. 19** - Holy Trinity Church, 830 Jefferson Ave. Rahway

**Mar. 26** - Our parish will host the service

**Apr. 2** - Holy Spirit Church, 102 Rte. 284, Wantage

**Apr. 19**, Bright Wednesday, **7:00pm** - Christ the Saviour Church, Paramus, NJ. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ **Joint Mission Pre-Sanctified Liturgies** this year (starting at 6:30PM) will be as follows:

**Mar. 8** - Holy Apostles Church in Saddle Brook

**Mar. 15** - our parish will host the service, with His Eminence Archbishop Michael presiding.

**Mar. 22** - Holy Assumption Church in Clifton.

**Mar. 29** - Christ the Saviour Church in Paramus, with His Eminence Archbishop Michael presiding.



March 5, 2017

**FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT**  
**Sunday of Orthodoxy**

- **8:50am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy of St. Basil  
Epistle: Heb. 11:24-26, 32-12:2  
Gospel: Jn. 1:43-51
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.

## Schedule of Services

### FRIDAY, MARCH 10

6:00pm - Akathist to the Divine Passion & Panikhida for the Departed

### SATURDAY, MAR. 11 - MEMORIAL SATURDAY

6:00pm - Great Vespers

### SUNDAY, MARCH 12, ST GREGORY PALAMAS

9:00am - Divine Liturgy