

I. Introduction and review: The first religious war and the first broken home.

II. By faith Abel offered a better sacrifice and gained God's approval.

A. How did Cain and Abel know to offer sacrifice?

1. Faith (including that of Abel) rests upon God's revealed Word. Rom. 10:17
2. God had promised One Who would deliver them from sin. Gen. 3:15
3. God had introduced the killing of animals to cover sin. Gen. 3:21 Heb. 9:22
4. God probably revealed other aspects of worship to the first family.
 - a. An appointed time for worship. Gen. 4:3
 - b. An appointed place of worship. Gen. 3:24 4:14 Heb. 9:5 Ex. 25:17f
 - c. An appointed sacrifice. 4:7 Heb. 11:4

**B. How did Cain and Abel know whether God had accepted their sacrifice? Gen. 15:17
Lev. 9:24 Judges 6:21 I Ki. 18:24-39 II Chron. 7:1 I Chron. 21:26**

C. What made Abel's sacrifice superior? Gen. 4:4-5 I Jo. 3:12 John 4:24

1. Our author uses a different Greek word for "better" than he used of Christ's superiority. 9:23 10:34 12:24
2. Inwardly, Abel had faith in God. 10:22,36-38 Gen. 4:4b
3. Abel's faith was expressed by obediently offering the right sacrifice in the right manner. 9:22 Gen. 3:21 4:4 Lev. 17:11
4. Cain's heart attitude was wrong. Gen. 4:5b I Jo. 3:12 Jude 1:11 Pr. 15:8 Mt. 15:8
5. Cain's offering was wrong. Gen. 4:5c,7a I Jo. 3:12

D. How does Abel still speak? *Dead men do tell tales!*

1. His blood cried out for vengeance. Gen. 4:10f Rev. 6:9-10 Ps. 94:1
Human life is precious to God. Gen. 9:6 Deut. 32:35
2. He speaks, through Scripture, of the righteousness which comes by faith.
3. He tells us to persist in trusting God whatever the cost.
4. Abel's undeserved death of one whom God's declares righteous is a preview of Jesus' death. 12:24

E. Why did God allow Abel to die?

1. The seed of the serpent continues to wage war against the godly seed. Gen. 3:15
Mt. 23:35 Luke 11:50-51 John 8:44
2. Abel's violent death seems to contradict the promise of 10:38a and Hab. 2:3-4.
3. Abel exemplifies the one who lives by faith, even after physical death. He lives because of the promise of a Savior who overcomes death. 12:23 Gen. 3:15

III. Practical lessons.

A. We must approach God exclusively in the way He has prescribed.

1. We can only come to God through the blood of Jesus Christ. 10:10,14,19-20
John 14:6 Acts 4:12 Ro. 10:2-3 Mt. 7:13-14
2. Our worship of God must be regulated by Scripture (in truth). John 4:24
 - a. The Bible is a sufficient guide for worship. Acts 2:42 II Tim. 3:16
 - b. God rejects false worship, no matter how sincere. Ex. 20:4-5 Lev. 10:1-3
I Cor. 11:29-30 Acts 5:1f I Kings 18:26
 - c. Cain is the father of man-made religion.
 - d. Worship should be God-centered and reverent. 12:28-29

3. **Cheerfully and sincerely give God your best in worship (in spirit). 13:15-16 Pr. 3:9 Rom. 12:1-2**
- B. If you worship and serve the true God, you will face opposition.**
1. **The first murder was over religion.**
 2. **Religious differences continue to fuel violence.**
 3. **Religion is not necessarily a good thing.**
 4. **It is not our place to violently fight those who oppose Christianity. John 18:36 II Cor. 10:4-5 Rom. 12:19**
 5. **Your belief in Jesus Christ, whose sacrifice is the only way to God, will produce fierce opposition. Gen. 4:5c Heb. 12:4 11:37 John 3:19-20 15:18 8:44 II Tim. 3:12**
- C. The battle between the serpent and God's Son continues to affect our families.**
1. **What was the difference between Cain and Abel?**
 2. **God Himself appeals to Cain who rejects the divine warning. Gen. 4:6-7**
 3. **Jesus warned that the kingdom of God would divide families. Luke 12:51-53**
 4. **You cannot save your children. John 6:44 Rom. 9:16,18**
 5. **God knows what it is like to have wayward children. 4:15 Isa. 1:2 Jer. 2:30**
 6. **If your children love and serve God, give Him ALL of the glory!**
- D. We need to live by faith: acting in response to the unseen God and His promises.**
1. **Mere religion will not give you access to God.**
 - a. **Cain was not an atheist. He was a religious man who believed in God and sought to worship in his own way.**
 - b. **It is not enough to believe in God. You must believe God.**
 - c. **Cain was the first apostate. 10:25f I Jo. 2:19 Gen. 4:16**
 2. **It is by faith alone that you gain God's approval. 11:6**
 3. **Faith must have the right object. 10:19 Acts 16:31 Acts 4:12**
 4. **Your faith will produce works. Eph. 2:10 Js. 2:18f**
 5. **Do not be surprised when the world hates you for your faith. I Jo. 3:12-13**
 6. **You will receive the promised reward. 11:13,16 Ps. 19:11 Rom. 8:18,31f**

IV. Concluding applications: Are you of Cain or of Abel?

Discussion questions

1. **How did Cain and Abel know about sacrifice?**
2. **Why did God accept Abel's sacrifice, but not Cain's?**
3. **In what way does Abel still speak?**
4. **What does this passage teach us about how to approach God in worship?**
5. **Does good parenting guarantee godly children? Why or why not?**
6. **Is religion a good thing? Why or why not?**
7. **What does Abel teach us about what we should expect in this life if we are faithful to God?**