

Cain and Abel – Genesis 4:1-17

Two Sons, Two Different Paths

Cain's name means 'gotten'. What does Abel's name mean? [breath, vapor, transitoriness](#)

What would have impressed Adam and Eve to give such a meaning to his name?

[They were realizing the curse of God upon the world. \(Gen 3:17\). The creation was made subject to vanity \(Rom 8:20\). Vanity = futility](#)

What were Cain and Abel's occupations?

Cain was a [farmer](#). Abel was a [shepherd](#).

What did Cain's work provide for the family? [Food](#)

What did Abel's work provide for the family? [Clothing; sheep for sacrifice to God, but not food!](#)

Many people do not realize that God had not authorized man to use animals for food until after the Flood (this would even leave out animal's milk, wouldn't it?). Reference Gen 1:29, 2:16, 3:19, 9:3. This is not to say everyone until the time of the Flood was a vegetarian, only that they should have been if they were obeying God's command.

In the Presence of the Lord

Gen 4:3 'And in the process of time' – Let's examine the Hebrew words of this opening phrase

'And in the process' - Hebrew → קֵץ (Strong's 7093), meaning "end, at the end of (of time) "

'of time' – Hebrew → יום (Strong's 3117), meaning "day, time, year" – a certain period of time

Literally translated 'At the end of the days' seems to imply that sacrifice was a regular occurrence.

What prompted Cain and Abel to bring a sacrifice to the Lord? [The Bible doesn't say whether sacrifices had been commanded by God or whether the practice started as a spontaneous expression of thanksgiving and worship. Adam and Eve had probably received instruction from God and passed on the knowledge to Cain and Abel.](#)

Do you think this was Cain and Abel's first such sacrifice to God? [Probably not. They were both grown men. For some time they had both made pleasing sacrifices to God.](#)

Why did Cain's sacrifice make God angry? [If God had not provided instructions regarding the sacrifice, then why would He be displeased with Cain's fruits? It seems likely that God](#)

had given specific instructions which Cain purposefully had broken. The presentation of vegetables did not follow the revelation of God regarding the necessity of substitutionary sacrifice as a prerequisite to approaching God.

What should have Cain presented as his sacrifice to God? A firstling of the flock (sheep)
Where would Cain have gotten his pleasing sacrifice? Quite probably from Abel.

If God would be angry with Cain's sacrifice, then why did Cain bring his fruit of the ground? Maybe Cain had a careless disregard of God's word. Maybe Cain resented having to get a sheep from Abel while his own fruits were not suitable. Maybe Cain simply rebelled against the implication that he needed the blood sacrifice to cover his own nakedness before God.

The Faith of Abel

Heb 11:4 – By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks

Cain's heart was not right before the Lord. Cain's offering likely disobeyed God's specific instruction and was not offered in faith like Abel's.

God's displeasure caused Cain's inward nature to be revealed. The pride and resentment became manifest in Cain's face and was directed to both God and Abel.

Abel – God's Prophet (Luke 11:49-51)

Abel became the outward symbol of the fact that Cain's works were not adequate enough to get him into God's presence. For proud Cain, Abel's existence and probably his counsel became unbearable.

God's displeasure with Cain's sacrifice may have been public knowledge, if God consuming the sacrifice with fire indicated acceptance. Abel, as God's prophet, may have attempted to speak with Cain about the whole matter.

The Way of Cain (Jude 11)

What is the 'way of Cain'? unbelief, empty religion leading to jealousy, persecution of those truly godly, and murderous anger. There is no greater curse on the earth than empty, vain religion, those who have a form of godliness, but deny the power of God (2 Timothy 3:5). Many are deathly afraid of "secular humanism" or atheism, but dead religion sends more people to hell than anything else.

Cain and Abel - Supporting Materials

CAIN – The New Testament refers to Cain in three places. Abel’s offering to God was “a more excellent sacrifice” than Cain’s because Abel was “righteous.” His heart was right with God, and Cain’s was not (**Heb. 11:4**). John calls Cain “the wicked one” and asks why he murdered his brother; the answer was, “Because his works were evil, and his brother’s righteous” (**1 John 3:12**). Jude warns his readers to beware of those who have “gone in the way of Cain” (**Jude 11**).

ABEL – The second son of Adam and Eve (Gen. 4:2). His brother Cain, who was a farmer, brought an offering of his produce to the Lord. Abel, a shepherd, brought to the Lord an offering “of the firstlings [the best quality] of his flock.” Genesis records: “And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but he did not respect Cain and his offering” (Gen. 4:4–5). Envious of Abel, Cain killed his brother and was cursed by God for the murder.

In the New Testament, Abel is described as a man of faith, who “offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain” (Heb. 11:4). Cain murdered his brother Abel, writes John, “because his [Cain’s] works were evil and his brother’s [Abel’s] righteous” (1 John 3:12). Jesus spoke of “the blood of righteous Abel” (Matt. 23:35; Luke 11:51) and implied that Abel, the first righteous martyr, anticipated in symbol His own death on Calvary at the hands of evil men. The blood of the new covenant, however, “speaks better things than that of Abel” (Heb. 12:24). The blood of Abel cried out for vengeance; the blood of Christ speaks of salvation.

SACRIFICE - We don’t precisely know how Can and Abel knew their sacrifices were accepted or not accepted. Seemingly, there was some outward evidence making it obvious. There are Biblical examples of having an acceptable sacrifice consumed by fire from God (Judges 6:21; 1 Kings 18:38; 1 Chronicles 21:26; 2 Chronicles 7:1). Perhaps an acceptable sacrifice, brought to the cherubim at the tree of life, was consumed by fire from heaven or from the flaming swords of the cherubim (Genesis 3:24).

Hebrews 10:3 – But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.