

The Anatomy of a Church (28)

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[Acts 20:28](#)

(Continuation from 06/29/14)

PERSONAL HOLINESS

STRUGGLE AND CONFESSION: THE BELIEVER IS TO BE FREE FROM THE LAW, [Romans 7:1-25](#)

The Third Lament

[Romans 7:21-23 \(NASB\)](#)

²¹ I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

²² For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

²³ but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

[Genesis 4:4-5 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴ Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering;

⁵ but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

[\(Genesis 4:4-5\) Worship— Offerings— Cain— Abel](#): next scene: God's response to the worship of Cain and Abel. The Lord looked upon Abel with favor and accepted his offering, but He looked upon Cain with disfavor. He did not accept Cain's offering.

Note several significant points.

1. God did not just accept and reject the offerings; He accepted and rejected the man as well.

⇒ Both Abel and his offering were accepted by God ([Genesis 3:4b](#)).

⇒ Both Cain and his offering were rejected by God ([Genesis 3:5](#)).

This is of critical importance: it was the offering that made the man either acceptable or unacceptable to God. Scripture is very clear about this. This is what this passage is all about—its major lesson—the worship of God, the false and true approach to God.

2. What was it that made Abel's offering acceptable? The New Testament tells us:

[Hebrews 11:4 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.

08-24-14

Series: [The Anatomy of a Church](#)

What was the sacrifice of Abel? The sacrifice of an animal: its life, its blood. Why did Abel sacrifice an animal? Because his father, Adam, had taught him to approach God through the sacrifice of an animal. When Adam sinned, God killed an animal and clothed Adam with its skin.

By this very act, God taught Adam...

1. that sin causes death.
2. that an innocent substitute had to sacrificially die in order to clothe man's shame and guilt.
3. that thereafter man could approach God only if his shame and guilt were hid through the sacrificial death of an innocent substitute.

This, of course, pointed to Christ, *the promised seed* and Savior of the world (see [Genesis 3:15](#)).

[Genesis 3:15 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁵“**And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.**”

As pointed out above, Adam was bound to teach his family how to approach and worship God. This is what Abel is doing, approaching God just as his father had taught him. Abel had no other way—none whatsoever—to know that such a thing as killing an animal and offering it to God would be acceptable to God. Adam is bound to have taught him this approach to God.

Now, note the New Testament verse again: “**By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous...**”([Hebrews 11:4](#)).

⇒ Abel had **faith**—he believed—that God would accept him through the sacrifice of an innocent life.

⇒ God accepted Abel's approach and worship: he was counted **righteous** because he believed and approached God through the sacrifice of an innocent life.

Thought 1. Remember: the sacrifice pointed toward Christ, His sacrifice upon the cross for the sins of men. Abel might not have known the full revelation of Christ, but he believed that God accepted the sacrifice of the innocent life as a substitute for him. He believed, even as his father Adam believed, that God accepted the sacrifice...

1. as bearing his sins for him.
2. as suffering the judgment of his sins for him, the judgment of death.

[Romans 6:23 \(NASB\)](#)

²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[1 Peter 2:24 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁴And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

[1 Peter 3:18 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁸For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the just for the unjust*, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.