

The Anatomy of a Church (29)

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[Acts 20:28](#)

(Continuation from 08/24/14)

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.

2. What was it that made Abel's offering acceptable?

3. What was it that made Cain's offering unacceptable?

Note what Cain did; **note two facts about his offering**:

⇒ Cain offered only produce to God, only what his own mind and hands had produced.

⇒ Cain did not offer what Abel offered: an animal sacrifice—a substitute life—to God.

Cain did not approach God through the sacrifice of an innocent life.

Why? Why would Cain not approach God through the sacrifice of an innocent life?

The answer is again found in the New Testament.

- a. Cain did not do what Abel did: seek to be acceptable to God—seek the righteousness of God—through the sacrificial offering of an innocent life.

Hebrews 11:4 (NASB)

⁴By **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.

1 John 3:12 (NASB)

¹²Not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brothers were righteous.

- b. Cain wanted to use a different way and approach to God.

For some reason, he brought the fruit of his own hands to God. He wanted God to accept him because of his hard work and because he worshipped and gave offerings to God. Why did Cain approach God this way?

⇒ Was Cain reacting against the **bloody** sacrifice of animals as an approach to God?

Scripture definitely says this.

He just did not believe—not like Abel—that the sacrificial offering of an innocent life was the way to approach God (**Hebrews 11:4**).

Hebrews 11:4 (NASB)

⁴By **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.

If he had, he would have offered a sacrifice to God.

⇒ Did Cain think that giving God the best of his own mind, work, and fruit was a much better way to approach God? That is, was Cain seeking to establish a different approach and way to God? This is exactly what Scripture says. Scripture says that Cain was a false teacher who sought to establish a false way to God.

In fact, Scripture calls all false approaches and ways to God “**the way of Cain**” (**Jude 11**, cp. **Jude 4**).

Note what Scripture says:

Jude 1:4 (NASB)

⁴For certain persons [false teachers] have crept in unnoticed [quietly, secretly], those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Jude 1:11 (NASB)

¹¹**Woe to them!** For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

09-07-14

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The point is this: Cain's worship was false.

Cain was seeking God's acceptance...

1. by his own way
2. by his own approach
3. by his own works
4. by his own mind and ideas
5. by some other approach than by the sacrifice of an innocent life.

This is the reason God rejected Cain's offering.

Cain—just as Adam, Eve, Abel, and all of us—needed a Savior.

- ⇒ Cain needed the innocent (righteous) life that could bear his sin for him and stand before God as his righteousness.
- ⇒ Cain also needed the sacrifice of an innocent (righteous) life that could stand before God as his substitute in death.
- ⇒ Cain needed the faith; he needed to believe in God, that God would accept him if he approached God just as God had dictated: through the sacrifice of the innocent (See [Genesis 3:21](#))

[Genesis 3:21 \(NASB\)](#)

²¹ **The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.**

Thought 1. No person can earn, win, or merit salvation.

No person can approach God through his own works, energy, efforts, fruits, ways, religion, ceremony, or ritual. The reason is clearly evident: no person is perfect: **“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”** ([Romans 3:23](#)). We have a sin problem and a death problem that has to be taken care of before we can ever be acceptable to God. God has taken care of this in the sacrifice of His Son for our sins. Jesus Christ took our sins upon Himself and died for them. This is what the sacrifice of the innocent life symbolized in the Old Testament. Abel believed God, believed that the death (the blood) of the sacrificial animal covered his sins. Therefore, God accepted him—accepted him because his sins were removed—by the blood of the animal.

[Romans 5:8-9 \(NASB\)](#)

⁸ **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**

⁹ **Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.**

[Hebrews 9:22 \(NASB\)](#)

²² **And according to the Law, *one may almost say*, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.**

[1 Peter 1:18-19 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁸ **Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life [empty behavior and conduct] inherited from your forefathers,**

¹⁹ **but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood of Christ.***