

The Beginning of False Worship (Cain)

The way of Cain vs. the way of the Cross

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Text: Genesis 4:1-8

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Series: Genesis (The Book of Beginnings).

Introduction: Take your Bibles please and turn to Genesis 4. We are in the book of Genesis, which is the book of beginnings. If you want to know where you came from and where you are going, you need to read this book. God made us and our relationship with Him determines where you will be for the next 10 trillion years and beyond!

Genesis 4:1-2, “Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.” 2 And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground.”

We are All Called to Worship

One son was a shepherd. The other son was a farmer. Nothing wrong with either occupation. But what ever you do, from the beginning we have been required to bring a portion of our time, our resources, our free will offerings to God. We are to do it in the way He prescribes with the right heart attitude. We see Cain and Abel attempting to do what God called all men to do. We are to worship the Lord. It’s what we were created for. They bring a tangible part of their worship here in verse 3.

Genesis 4:3-8, “In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, 4 and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, 5 but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. 6 ¶ The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7 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 rule over it.” 8 ¶ Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.”

What a sad story – but it gets to the very core of who we are without Christ, and what God requires. He requires that we come to Him though a blood atonement with a sincere heart.

The Old Testament – A Shadow of Christ

Now the Old Testament is a shadow of Jesus Christ. When Jesus was on the road to Emmaus He gave the most important hermeneutical principle we can have. The Old Testament is all about Jesus Christ. That’s the principle. We read in **Luke 24:27**, “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Illustration: Have you ever noticed that in the morning perhaps as you walk out of the house when the sun is just coming up, that it cast the shadow of your body? Early in the morning the

shadow of your body is somewhat distorted and elongated. The higher the sun is in the sky, the shorter your shadow. Once the sun is directly overhead the shadow disappears altogether because you are standing in the brightest light possible.

Now, really, in a way, that is a picture of what happened in the Bible as God revealed to us His truth. The Bible tells us in the book of Hebrews and also in the book of Colossians that the things that happen in the Old Testament were shadows – a shadow of things to come.

Colossians 2:17, “These [the Old Testament ceremonies and feasts] are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.”

Speaking of the Old Testament saints Paul says in **1 Corinthians 10:11**, “Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction.”

You see, in order for there to be a shadow, there first of all must be a light and then there must be some object upon which the light is shining. God has given us the light of His word to shine upon the blood atonement of Jesus Christ. We see it in this passage!

In Genesis 4 we have the story of the two sons of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel. Cain is the first born son of Adam and Eve. He’s a murderer. He begins the process of sin in the human race that will end in the destruction of the entire human race with the exception of Noah and his family. So from this point until chapter 7, when the earth is judged, we find almost everyone on a path to destruction.

Worship is Everything

Worship is not just important. It’s everything. At all times you are worshipping. You are valuing and loving what you ought to love, namely God, or you are engaging in idolatry and false worship. In this story we find that there is a right way and there is a wrong way to worship.

Jesus said in **John 4:23-24**, “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.”

That means that some people worship God but they don’t have the right spirit-or in communion with the Holy Spirit. And some people worship God but their worship is not according to the truth of God's Word. You must have both truth and a sincere submitted heart.

Somebody once said, “Half way worship is not worth half a Hallelujah!”

I want to show you the difference between biblical worship and biblical salvation and false worship and false salvation. And we find it here in the story of these two boys who came to worship the Lord. Cain, of course, was a farmer and so he worshiped the Lord by bringing of the fruit of the ground. He brought vegetables, fruit to offer to the Lord and then Abel, who was a shepherd took a little animal. Perhaps it was a lamb. A precious, spotless little lamb and with shed blood he worshiped the Lord.

Now, you see such a contrast. It is a contrast here that is as far removed as the east is from the west. And I want you to see with me this morning as we study under three headings.

- I. First of all, I want you to see the **contrast** of their worship.
- II. Next week, we are going to see the **consequences** of their worship.
- III. And also the **conflict** of their worship. Sadly, one of these brothers ended up murdering the other.

Now, let me say, that all religion is not the same. You know, somehow we have thought almost un-American if we don't just put our arms around everybody else and say, "God bless you." The popular thing to say today is, "You believe one way and I believe another way and your way is just as good as my way." That is absolutely not true. There is only one way to approach God, and that's God's way. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Paul said if someone or even an angel of heaven comes down and preaches to you any other Gospel, let that one "be accursed".

Jesus either a Fraud or a Faker or the Son of God

Jesus is not just a good way to heaven. Jesus is not even the best way to heaven. Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven. Now, that may sound narrow to some people but it's just as true as that we are orbiting the sun right now. If Jesus Christ is not the only way to heaven, Jesus is a faker, Jesus is a fraud, Jesus is a sham, Jesus is a charlatan because he claimed to be something that he was not. A faker, a fraud, a sham and a charlatan is nobody's Savior. If he's not the only way, he is none of the ways.

So we come to our first point, that there is a contrast between these two ways.

- I. First of all, I want you to see the **contrast** of the worship of Cain and Abel. Look at **verse 3**, "In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground"

Now, remember, that God had said cursed is the ground and, and, and in order to get anything out of the ground Adam, now, you're going to have to work the ground. It's not going to be like it use to be in the Garden of Eden. So Cain is out there working hard in the noon day sun, plowing and planting and cultivating and weeding and hoeing and now he takes all of this. He takes this that represents the very best that he can do.

I imagine he took the most beautiful flowers. He took the most fragrant of the herbs. He took the most luscious vegetables and the ripest fruits and he propped them and spread them before the Lord. How beautiful it was. But, the Bible says, that God would not accept it. God had no respect to that offering.

Verse 4-5, "and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, 5 but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell." God turned his back on that offering. Commentators have disputed how Abel knew his offering was accepted. Some

have speculated that fire could have come out of heaven and devoured the offering as God did when the Tabernacle was inaugurated or when Elijah called on God to accept the true offering before the priests of Baal.

Cain's offering was nauseous to God. Why? Because Cain did not understand the biblical principle that he should have understood. Here is a biblical principal. We can only come to God and approach God in the way He prescribes, and that is on the basis of the blood atonement. In the New Testament we read in **Hebrews 9:22**, "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." Absolutely emphatically beyond a shadow of any doubt the Bible teaches that without the shedding of blood is no forgiveness of sin.

Have you ever heard this expression? You can't get blood out of a turnip? I don't know where that expression originated. But, it may have originated right here. Now, he may have brought some turnips to the Lord but there's no blood in the turnip. Without the shedding of blood, is no forgiveness of sin.

A. Cain's offering was very beautiful but it represents the salvation of works.

People try to save themselves by doing good. They think that they can bring the fruit of their labor, of their toil and offer it to God and God's going to be accept, God's going to accept it. You see from his reaction that it was something he wanted to be appreciated for. **Verse 6**, "The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen?"" Cain was angry because he had done his best.

But, the Bible says in **Titus 3:5**, "he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit". The Bible says without the shedding of blood is no forgiveness of sin.

Application: Now, we divide religions up and there are all kinds of different religions. We say there's Christianity and there's Confucianism and there's Buddhism, and Islam and all of these religions. Then we divide Christianity up. We say there's the Baptist, and there's the Methodist, and there's the Episcopalian, and there are the Assemblies of God, and there are this and this and that, and we divide Christianity up. But truly there are only really two divisions of all ways of worship and that is the salvation of works and ;the salvation by grace. That's it. There are only two religions—the religion of works and the religion of Christ.

Romans 3:20, "For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin". Now, Cain represents the salvation by works where he tries to be right with God and clean himself up by what he does.

You see the difference between religion and real salvation is religion is rooted in what man tries to do for, for God but salvation is rooted in what God does do for man. One is spelled do, the other is spelled done.

B. If righteousness comes through being good, then Christ's work on the Cross is

worthless (**Romans 4:14**) . You see if righteousness come by the law, if you could be saved by being good, if you could offer the fruit of your hands to God and be right with God, then Calvary was a blunder.

God made a way for us to worship Him, but Cain came up with his own manmade religion, his idea on works and rituals. It was beautiful. It was cultured, it was gorgeous, it was sacrificial but it was not accepted. That was the religion of Cain.

- C. God's got an opinion of the religion of Cain (Jude 11). Look at **Jude 11**, "Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion. 12 These are blemishes on your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, looking after themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; 13 wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever".

Salvation is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. God says to those who come another way, "Woe unto them, for they've gone the way of Cain". Are you offering to God the fruit of your hands today? Are you saying to God, God, what a good boy I am. I go to Tabernacle Baptist Church. I go to Sunday School. I give my tithe. I read my Bible. I pray. You can do all of that and go to hell. We are not saved by the works of your hands.

- D. Abel understood the blood atonement and that's the reason he brought a lamb.

Now, in the first place the bible says in **Hebrews 11:4**, "By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice." By faith, Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice. Now where does anybody get faith? Nobody has had faith until God first speaks. Now, put it down. "Faith comes from by hearing by the Word of God" (**Romans 10:17**).

1. Now, the Bible says it was by faith that this man offered a more excellent sacrifice. Able knew and he understood the blood atonement.
2. Did you know that Able was a prophet? **Luke 11:49**, "Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,' 50 so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary". Do you know what Jesus said Abel was there? He was a prophet who was killed for his faith. He was a prophet. He was a martyr who proclaimed Jesus. Every prophet had the same message. Do you want me to tell you what it is? **Acts 10:43** tells us what the message of every prophet was.
 - **Acts 10:43**, "To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Conclusion: Genesis is the book of beginnings. In chapter four we see the beginning of false worship. The Bible speaks of some today and it says, "Woe to them, for they have gone the way of Cain." **There are but two ways, the way of Cain and the way of the cross.** Which way you going? There are but two ways, the way of Cain, and the way of the cross. Woe unto them, for they have gone the way of Cain. In the dawn of civilization, God is teaching this lesson and would to God that you'd learn it. Without the shedding of blood, is no forgiveness of sin.

The battle on this earth is for the name of Jesus. People will be fine with you until you mention the Name of Jesus. Don't give way to the way of Cain. Jesus is the only Way, the Truth and the Life.

Acts 4:12, "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."