

Message Three

Abel – An Overcoming Martyr for God’s Purpose

Scripture reading: Gen. 4:1-15; Heb. 11:4.

I. Abel was a tender, a feeder, of sheep so that he might have an offering to present to God—Gen. 4:2, 4.

- A. Abel was working not for his living, but for God’s satisfaction.
 - 1. Before the flood man was permitted to eat only vegetables and fruits, not meat—1:29; cf. 9:3.
 - 2. Thus, Abel’s tending of sheep was his working not to produce food for his living but to provide offerings for God’s satisfaction—cf. Heb. 10:5-10.
- B. Abel not only knew God but also took God’s way of worshipping God according to God’s divine revelation, not according to his concept.
 - 1. “By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain” —Heb. 11:4a.
 - 2. Abel’s faith came from hearing the word of the gospel from his parents; therefore, what Abel did come out of revelation—Rom. 10:14, 17; cf. Gen. 3:21.
- C. According to God’s foreordained redemption, Abel offered to God the firstlings of his flock, with the shedding of blood for his redemption, the burning of the fat for God’s satisfaction, and the covering of the coats of skin for him to be justified by God—4:4, Heb. 9:22; 11:4; cf. Lev. 3:2-5; 8-11; 13; 2Cor. 5:21; Phil. 1:19-21a.
- D. Abel was the first priest of God, living for God and by God, in type, offering Christ to God—cf. Num. 18:17.
- E. Abel is the representative of all the overcoming martyrs; because Abel presented offerings with the shedding of blood according to God’s revelation and was accepted by God, he incurred Cain’s hatred and religious jealousy and was killed by Cain—Gen. 4:4-9; Matt. 23:34-35; John 16:2; Rev. 17:6.

II. Cain was a tiller, a server, of the ground so that he might earn a living for himself—Gen. 4:1, 2c.

- A. Cain served the earth while Abel served God.
 - 1. Cain served the ground and the earth produced food for man, while the sheep were used primarily as offerings for God.
 - 2. All the worldly people serve the earth diligently and earnestly, not caring at all for God.

- B. *The way of Cain* is to do good to please God and to worship God presumptuously by man's own effort and according to man's own invention under the devils motivation—v.3.
1. Cain did not follow the way of God's salvation through the anticipated redemption by the bleeding sacrifice but continued man's fall by forsaking God's way of salvation and presumptuously offering the fruit of his own labor to God.
 2. Cain's way of worshipping God was to invent a religion according to his human concept and opinion, which were motivated by Satan—Jude 11; 1John 3:12.
 3. Cain was in the flesh, trusting in the fruit of his labor, but Abel put his trust in his offering, boasting in Christ Jesus and having no confidence in the flesh—Phil. 3:3.
 4. When Cain learned that God did not look upon his offering he became very angry and his countenance fell—Gen. 4:5.
 5. "And Cain said to Abel his brother, Let us go out into the field. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him"—v.8.
 6. This fall of Cain, the second fall of man, began with a self-made religion and was completed by an act of murder.

III. Abel was not only redeemed but also brought back to God to contact God and fellowship with God; Abel cared for the Lord's presence, but Cain went out from the Lord's presence to become a fugitive and a wanderer—Gen. 4:14, 16.

- A. If we are not in the presence of God, we will have the sense deep within that we are wanderers with nowhere to go.
- B. Our real dwelling place is the presence of God—Psa. 90:1.
- C. The people who follow God's way to live in the presence of God all have an uplifted countenance in contrast to Cain, who had fallen countenance—Gen. 4:6-7a; cf. Psa. 42:5, 11.
- D. The issue of Cain's going out from the Lord's presence was the producing a culture without God—Gen. 4:16-24.
 1. God wants to be everything to man—his maintenance, supply, amusement, and protection—cf. 15:1.
 2. Man's loss of God forced him to invent an anti-God human culture, the main elements of which were cities for existence, cattle-raising for making a living, music for amusement, and weapons for defense—4:17, 20-22.

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Reference Scripture Verses:

Gen. 4:1-15. 1 And the man knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain and said, I have acquired a man, Jehovah. 2 And again she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a tender of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 And in the course of time Cain brought an offering to Jehovah from the fruit of the ground. 4 And Abel also brought an offering from the firstlings of his flock, that is, from their fat portions. And Jehovah had regard for Abel and for his offering. 5 But for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. And Cain became very angry, and his countenance fell. 6 And Jehovah said to Cain, Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and his desire is for you, but you must rule over him. 8 And Cain said to Abel his brother, Let us go into the field. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him. 9 Then Jehovah said to Cain, Where is Abel your brother? And he said, I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? 10 And He said, What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying out to Me from the ground. 11 And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you till the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you. You will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth. 13 And Cain said to Jehovah, My punishment is greater than I can bear. 14 Now You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground, and from Your face I will be hidden; and I will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me. 15 And Jehovah said to him, Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold. And Jehovah put a mark on Cain, so that anyone who found him would not strike him.

Heb. 11:4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying to his gifts; and through faith, though he has died, he still speaks.

I.

Gen. 4:2 And again she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a tender of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

Gen. 4:4 And Abel also brought an offering from the firstlings of his flock, that is, from their fat portions. And Jehovah had regard for Abel and for his offering.

Gen. 1:29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be for you as food.

Gen. 9:3 Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; just as I gave you the green herb, so I have given you everything.

Heb. 10:5-10. 5 Therefore, coming into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. 6 In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin You did not delight. 7 Then I said, Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written concerning Me) to do Your will, O God." 8 Saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin You did not desire nor delight in"

(which are offered according to the law), **9** He then has said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will." He takes away the first that He may establish the second, **10** By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Heb. 11:4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying to his gifts; and through faith, though he has died, he still speaks.

Rom. 10:14 How then shall they call upon *Him* into whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe *into Him* of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without one who proclaims *Him*?

Rom. 10:17 So faith *comes* out of hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Gen. 3:21 And Jehovah God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins and clothed them.

Gen. 4:4 And Abel also brought an offering from the firstlings of his flock, that is, from their fat portions. And Jehovah had regard for Abel and for his offering.

Heb. 9:22 And almost all things are purified by blood according to the law, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Lev. 3:2-5. **2** And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and slaughter it at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood on and around the altar. **3** And he shall present from the sacrifice of peace offerings an offering by fire to Jehovah. The fat that covers the inward parts and all the fat that is on the inward parts, **4** And the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the appendage on the liver with the kidneys, he shall remove. **5** And Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt offering, which is on the wood that is on the fire; it is an offering by fire, a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah.

Lev. 3:8-11. **8** And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and slaughter it before the Tent of Meeting, and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood on and around the altar. **9** And he shall present from the sacrifice of peace offerings an offering by fire to Jehovah. Its fat, the entire fat tail which he shall remove close to the backbone, and the fat that covers the inward parts and all the fat that is on the inward parts, **10** And the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the appendage on the liver with the kidneys, he shall remove. **11** And the priest shall burn it on the altar; it is the food of the offering by fire to Jehovah.

Lev. 3:13 And he shall lay his hand on its head and slaughter it before the Tent of Meeting, and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood on and around the altar.

2Cor. 5:21 Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Phil. 1:19-21. **19** For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and *the* bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, **20** According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death. **21** For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Num. 18:17 But the firstborn of a cow or the firstborn of a sheep or the firstborn of a goat you shall not redeem; they are holy. You shall sprinkle their blood upon the altar and burn their fat as an offering by fire for a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah.

Gen. 4:4-9. 4 And Abel also brought an offering from the firstlings of his flock, that is, from their fat portions. And Jehovah had regard for Abel and for his offering. 5 But for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. And Cain became very angry, and his countenance fell. 6 And Jehovah said to Cain, Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and his desire is for you, but you must rule over him. 8 And Cain said to Abel his brother, Let us go into the field. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him. 9 Then Jehovah said to Cain, Where is Abel your brother? And he said, I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?

Matt. 23:34-45. 34 Therefore, behold, I send to you prophets and wise men and scribes. Some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, 35 So that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zachariah, son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

John 16:2 They will put you out of the synagogues; but an hour is coming for every one who kills you to think that he is offering service to God.

Rev. 17:6 And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And I marveled *with* great marvel when I saw her.

II.

Gen. 4:1-2. 1 And the man knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain and said, I have acquired a man, Jehovah. 2 And again she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a tender of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

Gen. 4:3 And in the course of time Cain brought an offering to Jehovah from the fruit of the ground.

Jude 11 Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain and have rushed out in the error of Balaam for reward and have perished in the rebellion of Korah.

1John 3:12 Not as Cain was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's, righteous.

Phil. 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,

Gen. 4:5 But for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. And Cain became very angry, and his countenance fell.

Gen. 4:8 And Cain said to Abel his brother, Let us go into the field. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him.

III,

Gen. 4:14 Now You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground, and from Your face I will be hidden; and I will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.

Gen. 4:16 And Cain went forth from the presence of Jehovah and dwelt in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Psa. 90:1 O Lord, You have been our dwelling place In all generations.

Gen. 4:6-7. 6 And Jehovah said to Cain, Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and his desire is for you, but you must rule over him.

Psa. 42:5 Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I will yet praise Him For the salvation of His countenance.

Psa. 42:11 Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I will yet praise Him, The salvation of my countenance and my God.

Gen. 4:16-24. 16 And Cain went forth from the presence of Jehovah and dwelt in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

17 And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch; and he built a city and called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch. 18 And Irad was born to Enoch, and Irad begot Mehujael, and Mehujael begot Methushael, and Methushael begot Lamech. 19 And Lamech took two wives for himself: The name of the first was Adah, and the name of the second Zillah. 20 And Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and raise cattle. 21 And his brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. 22 And Zillah also gave birth to Tubal-cain, the forger of every cutting instrument of bronze and iron; and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah. 23 And Lamech said to his wives, Adah and Zillah, listen to my voice; O wives of Lamech, hearken to my speech; For I have slain a man for wounding me, Even a young man for striking me. 24 If Cain is avenged sevenfold, Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.

Gen. 15:1 After these things the word of Jehovah came to Abram in a vision, saying, Do not be afraid, Abram; I am your shield and your exceedingly great reward.