

CAIN AND ABEL: THE BETTER SACRIFICE

By Keith Greer

After being driven from the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had two sons, **Cain and Abel**. "...And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain a tiller of the ground ..." {Genesis 4:2}

We do not know much about their early upbringing, but the time came when they brought an offering before the Lord. "... Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering ..." {Genesis 4:3-5}

Why did God receive one, and not the other? Did God demonstrate favoritism over one, being a "**respector of persons**?" According to Hebrews 11:4, Abel's sacrifice was "according to faith." Although we do not read of the instructions given to these two men, it is apparent that God had instructed them concerning sacrifices. How do we know that to be true? "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." {Romans 10:17} In other words, Abel faithfully followed God's guidelines, while Cain substituted something he thought would be acceptable, according to his standards.

This lesson is very important for us to understand. God is the one whom we worship and offer sacrifices towards. Does He not have the right to request of us how we are to worship and what the sacrifices will be? Many believe as long as they worship, and sacrifice unto the Lord in sincerity, honesty, and with a good conscience-God will accept it. Did not both of these men offer the very best they had? Did both give unto the Lord in sincerity? Yet, the text clearly shows one was rejected by God. The difference is clear when reading Hebrews 11:4. One was offered according to God's standard, the other by man's standard.

We need to grasp the spiritual application of this example in our time. Men may believe they can worship God in any manner. Offer anything that will be a sacrifice to Him in their minds. Yet, does this mean that God will accept that worship and sacrifice as being acceptable? Sadly, many are following Cain's example. Do you believe the outcome will change if one follows Cain's example? ***