

The way of Cain

Cain is a very interesting character study from the Bible because he is the first born of a fallen Adam and Eve and the first of a generation of those born “in the world”. Cain would have, according to Genesis Chapter 4, been born after the banishment of his parents for eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree. He was a child who would never have the benefit of simply living by receiving bounty that he didn’t have to toil for and he would see pain and hardship as a way of life and not a symbol of a curse and opposition to Gods original plan. His dominion over his environment was now limited and his seed did not always produce fruit but was plagued with the mingling of thorns and thistles where abundance was suppose to be. This seemed like a situation that could bring about hopelessness and despair at the prospect of never being able to reverse the curse or to make any headway against poverty and want. They were doomed, so it seemed, to survival and unfulfilled desires as a result of the past sins and that nothing that they could do would cause increase to be where decrease should be by justice. In other words they needed something the make up the bridge from their inadequacy to blessed abundance. God provided and answer to the dilemma of lack, giving in obedience and worship. The answer to problems that derive from disobedience will be answered by obedience and the gap between god and man has always been bridged by man humbling himself before God and worshipping him because he is God. **Genesis 4: 3-7** says *“And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him”*. You will notice here that even though Adam had sinned and forfeited his Edenic lifestyle God has never restricted his access to him through worship. What was really lost in the perfect garden as a result of sin was not a created place of paradise but it was the perfect worship that God taught Adam to have through obedience. By obeying God in his precepts, being a God led lord over his environment, cherishing and protecting his wife and cultivating the gifts that God gave him, was in fact the perfect form of gratitude and is true Worship. After this fall from innocence God gives man another opportunity to be redeemed by instituting in the hearts of men the desire to give. This is not religious but is in fact a proven attribute of humanity. Even the most hardened people have multiple recorded instances of sharing and helping someone in need with their substance. Cain and Abel both were led to give to God but their was a major difference in the heart of the givers. The heart is essential in sacred worship and offering of any type to God because this is the seat of truth and therefore the determiner of the purity and truth in our Worship. **Psalm 73:1** says *“Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a CLEAN heart.”* According to the text Cain presented his gift to the Lord and then Abel. Cain gave the bounty that he had received from the earth and Abel picked put the best of the best from his flock to offer to God. We can use conjecture or revisionist history and theological opinion to determine why god preferred Abel’s offering over Cain but the text seems to reveal the hidden things such as motive and truth. God shows respect for Abel’s offering and then instructs Cain on what to do to please Him. What is the problem? God does not destroy Cain’s offering or even reject it, He simply states what he prefers and a true son and servant, who desire to please their Father and master, would have no problem accomplishing this task. What is exposed is that God was not truly a sovereign master in the heart of Cain. When asked to alter his worship to suit his God Cain refused and showed openly what was in his heart. The offering exposed the true motive and nature of god. He was doing a service to God with malice in his heart and resentment at Gods instructions. He didn’t want to please god but was trying to do what he thought was right even with Clear instruction in his face. He walked in a false humility and thought of himself as a victim instead of a liar, deceiver and a bully. He did not reject God outright Lord but he simply desired to worship him however he saw fit that caused him the least discomfort and change. Cain chooses his way over obedience and anger over contrition. He thought what he gave was sufficient even though God had specified that he wanted the fat of the Flocks. What God asked of Cain was not difficult because he certainly had access to herds but his mindset, in the midst of abundance, was blind to the prosperity planned by the Giver of all things at his obedience (*“...If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?”*) His obedience in his giving was a prelude to immeasurable favor. God promised that “doing well” was his future if he followed Gods instructions and did not let his head get in the way. The way of Cain is still prevalent today and many of us are holding back God , by our disobedience, and are opening the door to the poverty and depression that is waiting on the other side of Gods order (*and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him”*) *Abandon your ship today and come aboard the Eternity express.*