

THE FIRST CHILDREN, CAIN AND ABEL: FALSE VERSUS TRUE WORSHIP — THE BEGINNING OF FALSE WORSHIP GENESIS 04:01–07

Introduction

This is a significant passage of Scripture. The central lesson deals with true and false worship, true and false approaches to God. The lesson centres around the first two children born upon earth, Cain and Abel. Note how Scripture just covers the overall scenes of their lives. In one brief statement or description, whole periods of their lives are covered. Our minds thirst and reach out for more information, but the Holy Spirit has given us only this brief record. But note how much information is given when we closely observe each statement and description, and in some cases, the words.

This is, *The First Children, Cain and Abel: False Versus True Worship, the Beginning of False Worship*.

- I. Scene 1: the children's birth, (vv. 1-2).
- II. Scene 2: the work of Abel (a herdsman) and Cain (a farmer) (v. 2).
- III. Scene 3: the personal worship of Cain and Abel (vv. 3-4).
- IV. Scene 4: God's response (vv. 4-5).
- V. Scene 5: Cain's reaction — very angry and downcast (v. 5).
- VI. Scene 6: God's warning (vv. 6-7).

I. *Genesis 04: 01–02 The Birth of Cain and Abel*

Scene one is the children's birth.

1. There was the birth of Cain. Adam had sexual relations with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. Remember, there had never been a pregnancy or birth upon earth before. Adam and Eve had been created by the direct power of God's Word and breath. But not any more; hereafter, the human race was to be reproduced through the process of conception, pregnancy and birth.

Just imagine the experience of Adam and Eve throughout the nine months, their surprise and joy...

- when Eve began to gain weight and her stomach began to enlarge
- when Eve began to feel movement within her and Adam began to feel the growing child kick

Today, the joy of expectant mothers and fathers is wonderful, but the joy of Adam and Eve must have been a joy beyond imagination. Just imagine being the father and mother of the first child ever born upon earth!

But, there was more to Adam and Eve's joy than just the pregnancy and birth of the first child. There was the hope of *the promised seed*, the Saviour of the world. Remember:

=> God had promised that He would send the Saviour through the seed of the woman. (See note 5, Gen 3:15.)

=> Adam and Eve believed the promise of God. Their belief was so strong that Adam named the woman Eve, which means to give life or the mother of all living. (See note, Gen 3:20.)

Adam and Eve were bound to be hoping, if not expecting, that this child would be their Saviour, the One who was to restore them to perfection and make it possible for them to re-enter the Garden of Eden, their paradise. What makes us say this? The name Cain (ganah, verb form). The Hebrew word means to acquire, get or possess. When the child was born, Eve declared that her child was to be called Cain because she had acquired or gotten a man *from the Lord*. She thought the Lord had given her *the promised seed*, the very child who was to deliver the human race. Thus she wanted her son named Cain because her child *had been promised and was now given* by the Lord. (Note: James Montgomery Boice has an excellent discussion of this point. *Genesis, An Expository Commentary*, Vol. 1, p. 199f.)

Thought 1. There are three great lessons for parents in this point.

1) Every parent should be as joyful and hopeful for their children as Adam and Eve were over their first child. But note: one's joy and hope can be turned into sorrow and tragedy by the child just as Adam and Eve's joy and hope were soon to be. Usually one thing makes the difference between a joyful or a sorrowful child: how the parent trains up the child.

Prov 22:6 *Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.*

2) Every parent needs — desperately needs — to believe in *the promised seed* of the world, the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ.

John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”.*

John 11:25 *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.”*

John 20:21 *Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”*

Rom 10:9-10 *That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

1 John 5:1 *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.*

3) Every parent needs — desperately needs — to believe the Word of God and the promises of God.

Acts 20:32 *“Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*

2 Tim 3:16-17 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.*

1 Pet 2:2-3 *Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

2. There was the birth of *Abel* (hebbhel). The Hebrew word means vanity, breath, temporary, meaningless or empty. Why would Eve name her second son Abel, a name that meant empty or meaningless?

=> Had she already learned that Cain was not the promised seed or Saviour? Had she become disillusioned by the fact? Was she now disheartened and downcast because she sensed that the promised Saviour was not to come any time soon? Some commentators think this.

=> Was Eve just sensing the emptiness and meaninglessness of life itself? She and Adam were, most likely, having to work and work hard to cultivate enough land to provide food and to survive in a fallen and harsh environment. Some commentators think this.

Note the Scripture: Scripture does not say why Eve was sensing the vanity — emptiness, meaninglessness and brevity — of life. But by naming the child Abel, Eve was saying that human existence is sometimes vanity upon vanity: life is sometimes empty and meaningless, and it is always temporary, ever so short, as brief as breath itself.

Thought 1. Man so often senses the vanity of life, life in all its emptiness, meaninglessness and brevity.

Job 7:6 *“My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and they come to an end without hope.”*

Job 9:25 *“My days are swifter than a runner; they fly away without a glimpse of joy.”*

Psa 39:5 *You have made my days a mere hand-breadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man’s life is but a breath, even those who seem secure.*

Psa 49:12 *But man, despite his riches, does not endure; he is like the beasts that perish.*

Psa 49:17 *For he will take nothing with him when he dies, his splendour will not descend with him.*

Psa 78:39 *He remembered that they were but flesh, a passing breeze that does not return.*

Psa 103:14 *For he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.*

Eccl 1:2 “Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”

Eccl 2:1 I said to myself, “Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.” But that also proved to be meaningless.

Eccl 5:10 Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless.

Eccl 6:7 All man’s efforts are for his mouth, yet his appetite is never satisfied.

James 4:14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

1 Pet 1:24 For, “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall.

II. Genesis 04:02 The Work of Abel and Cain

Scene two is the work of Abel and Cain. Abel was a herdsman and Cain a farmer. Note several facts.

First, their profession met the very basic needs of man: that of clothing and of food. Their chosen professions were honourable and contributed to meeting the needs of the family and society.

Second, they had learned their profession from their father. Remember, God Himself had shown Adam how to clothe his family with the skins of animals (Gen 3:21), and God had instructed Adam to till the ground (Gen 3:17-19, 23). As the father, he had apparently taught his sons to work diligently.

Thought 1. Two great lessons are seen in the profession and work of the two sons.

- 1) Our profession — in fact, all professions — should always be for the good and betterment of man, to meet the very basic needs of man’s life. We should never be engaged in any profession that damages, destroys, tears down or hurts man or society.
- 2) Parents should always teach their children to work and to work diligently. And they should always teach their children to choose an honourable profession, never to work at anything that hurts or destroys life. (See the industries involved in alcohol, drugs, immorality and crime.) Every child — every person — should always make whatever contribution he can to life and society. Everyone of us owes life and society this, just for the privilege of living in such a beautiful and wonderful universe. All the filth and crime of our cities and societies is due...
 - to the dishonourable and destructive professions that some of us have chosen
 - to our allowing some legitimate industries to pollute and destroy our environment and the quality of our lives
 - to our not working diligently enough to do all we can for life and society

III. *Genesis 04:03–04 The Personal Worship of Cain and Abel*

Scene three is the worship of Cain and of Abel. Note: Scripture indicates that Cain and Abel approached God at a specific time and at a specific place for worship.

=> The specific time is indicated by the words “in the process [or course] of time” (v. 3). The Hebrew means *at the end of the days*. What days? Scripture does not say. It could refer to the days of harvest, a very special time when Adam and his sons wanted to set aside a very special day of worship and offering to God.

However, it most likely refers to the end of the week, the seventh day of rest. Remember: God had already blessed the seventh day and set it apart as a day of rest and worship. (See note, Gen 2:3.)

But note this: it could also refer to the first time Cain and Abel worshipped on their own, apart from their parents. It may refer to the day when the two sons cut the apron strings — so to speak — and became men on their own and began to approach and worship God on their own. This may be the first time the two sons approached God independent of their parents.

=> The specific place is indicated by the fact that both Cain and Abel “brought” their offering to a particular place for worship. Where was that place? Again, Scripture does not say, and to guess is just that, a guess.

However, we would expect Adam to establish a place of worship. Adam’s soul was just like our souls — except more so — restless, unfulfilled and thirsty for fellowship with God. Adam had known perfect fellowship with God. In his fallen condition, he was bound to thirst deeply for God. He was bound to seek more and more for a restoration to the perfect fellowship he had once known. If knowing God in a personal way — if fellowship and communion with Him — is the summit of experiences, then Adam must have sought after God with a diligence seldom, if ever, matched. Having known God in perfection and having experienced perfect fellowship with God must have put an insatiable desire for God within Adam’s heart.

Adam must have, therefore, established a very special place and a very special altar where he and his dear family sought after God and faithfully worshipped God. Where, then, was the place where Adam and his family worshipped? Again, Scripture does not say. But note this: it would be only logical and rational for Adam to worship God right at the entrance to the Garden of Eden, the very place where he had known face to face fellowship with God. Many commentators hold this position, thinking that God actually instructed Adam to build an altar and to worship Him at the entrance to the Garden where the cherubim stood guard. Note that God seems to still talk with Adam and his family face to face, probably from between the cherubim (Gen 4:6-7, 9-15). This fact plus the fact that the sons bring their offerings to a particular place for worship gives significant weight to the place of worship being at the entrance to the Garden. The Garden’s entrance

would certainly be the dearest and most meaningful spot to Adam's heart. And note two other things:

- => Adam would have been very careful how he *approached God*. He would want to please God to the utmost when he approached God, ever hoping to be restored to the perfect fellowship he had known. Therefore, when Adam entered the place of worship, he would approach God exactly as God had instructed: by the way of sacrifice. (See note, Gen 3:21.)
- => Adam would also have been very, very careful to teach his family how to approach and worship God. In fact, Adam would have shared time and again his own personal experiences with God, how wonderful face to face fellowship and communion with God is.

Now, to the major subject of these two verses and of this particular scene (v. 3-4): the personal worship of Cain and Abel.

1. First, there was Cain's false worship: he approached God and offered produce — the works of his own hands — to God. Cain was a farmer, so he took what he had, produce, and he brought his produce as an offering to God. We can imagine that the produce was the very first of Cain's harvest and the very best produce he had.
2. Second, there was Abel's true worship: he approached God and offered a sacrifice — a substitute life — to God. Abel approached God by taking the first — the very best — of his flock and sacrificing the animal and offering it to God.

IV. *Genesis 04:04–05 God's Response to the Worship of Cain and Abel*

Scene four: God's response to the worship of Cain and Abel. The Lord looked upon Abel with favour and accepted his offering, but He looked upon Cain with disfavour. 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.
 - => Both Abel and his offering were accepted by God (v. 4b).
 - => Both Cain and his offering were rejected by God (v. 5).

This is of critical importance: it was the offering that made the man either acceptable or unacceptable to God. Scripture is very clear about this. This is what this passage is all about — its major lesson — the worship of God, the false and true approach to God.

2. What was it that made Abel's offering acceptable? The New Testament tells us:

Heb 11:4 *By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.*

What was the sacrifice of Abel? The sacrifice of an animal: its life, its blood. Why did Abel sacrifice an animal? Because his father, Adam, had taught him to approach

God through the sacrifice of an animal. When Adam sinned, God killed an animal and clothed Adam with its skin. By this very act, God taught Adam...

- that sin causes death
- that an innocent substitute had to sacrificially die in order to clothe man's shame and guilt
- that thereafter man could approach God only if his shame and guilt were hid through the sacrificial death of an innocent substitute

This, of course, pointed to Christ, *the promised seed* and Saviour of the world (see note 5, Gen 3:15; note 3:21). As pointed out above, Adam was bound to teach his family how to approach and worship God. This is what Abel is doing, approaching God just as his father had taught him. Abel had no other way — none whatsoever — to know that such a thing as killing an animal and offering it to God would be acceptable to God. Adam is bound to have taught him this approach to God.

Now, note the New Testament verse again: “By *faith* Abel offered to God a more excellent *sacrifice*...by which he obtained witness that he was *righteous*” (Heb 11:4).

=> Abel had *faith* — he believed — that God would accept him through the sacrifice of an innocent life.

=> God accepted Abel's approach and worship: he was counted *righteous* because he believed and approached God through the sacrifice of an innocent life.

Thought 1. Remember: the sacrifice pointed toward Christ, His sacrifice upon the cross for the sins of men. Abel might not have known the full revelation of Christ, but he believed that God accepted the sacrifice of the innocent life as a substitute for him. He believed, even as his father Adam believed, that God accepted the sacrifice...

- as bearing his sins for him
- as suffering the judgment of his sins for him, the judgment of death

Rom 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

1 Pet 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

1 Pet 3:18 *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.*

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.

Heb 11:4 By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice... By faith he was commended as a righteous man.

1 John 3:12 Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's 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 (Heb 11:4). 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, see Jude 4).

Note what Scripture says:

Jude 1:4, 11 For certain men [false teachers] whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.... Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain.

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

- by his own way
- by his own approach
- by his own works
- by his own mind and ideas
- 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 Saviour.

=> 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 life. (See note, Gen 3:21.)

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: “We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 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.

Rom 5:8-9 *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!*

Heb 9:22 *Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*

1 Pet 1:18 *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life [empty behaviour and conduct] handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

Thought 2. God accepts no person apart from Jesus Christ, *the promised seed* and Saviour of the world. Before Christ came, the persons who truly believed in the promised Saviour approached God through the sacrifice of an innocent life (an animal sacrifice). But since Christ has come, we who believe in Him — truly believe — know that He, Himself, is the great Lamb of God who was sacrificed for our sins.

The point is this: God has never accepted any person — Old Testament or New Testament, before Christ or after Christ — apart from the shedding of blood. The blood of the innocent life — the animal which pictured the coming Saviour and His death — had to be shed for Old Testament believers. The blood of Christ Himself had to be shed for all persons through all the generations of human history.

Rom 5:6 *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.*

John 1:29 *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”*

1 Cor 5:7 *Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast — as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*

1 Cor 15:3 *For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.*

Gal 1:4 *Who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.*

Eph 5:2 *And live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

Heb 9:14 *How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

Thought 3. Note this: there have been two Scriptures thus far in Genesis that deal with the sacrifice of an animal(s). These two Scriptures are significant events in the early life of man's history as recorded in Genesis (Gen 3:21; 4:2-5). In both cases an animal was sacrificed.

=> In the first case, the animal's life was given up to clothe Adam and Eve, thereby symbolizing their need to be covered by God in righteousness through the sacrifice of another.

=> In the second case, the animal life was given up as an act of worship.

The clearest explanation as to why Abel offered an animal sacrifice and was approved by God is that God did institute salvation by animal sacrifice with Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve were bound to have taught their sons to approach God through animal sacrifice. But only Abel approached God properly. Cain, as so many down through history, rebelled and did not.

Thought 4. Some persons look upon the Old Testament sacrifice of animals as ugly, repulsive and awful. They call such an approach to God a "bloody religion." They reject *the blood of Jesus Christ* — His death, His cross — as the major purpose for His life. They turn away from the sacrifice of His death to the teachings of His life. They claim to follow His teachings, to approach God by patterning their conduct, goodness, rituals, ceremonies and religion after His teachings. They do just what Cain did, they offer God the best they are able to produce with their own hands and works.

Man just feels a little more humane, a little more civil, by denying "the blood of Christ" for the sins of the world. To reject what is sometimes called a "blood religion" makes a person feel more acceptable in a so-called *civilized society*. Two things need to be noted.

- 1) The cross should be viewed as repulsive. The cross is a symbol of sin and shame. Hanging upon the cross, God's *very own Son* bore our sins and the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:1-2). Sin and shame are always repulsive, and the fact that God's Son hung there *becoming sin for us* is abhorrent. Nothing could be any more distasteful than what actually happened.

- 2) The cross should be viewed as glorious. The cross is a symbol of life and of forgiven sins (1 Pet 2:20). Through the cross God gloriously reconciles man to Himself and to one another (see notes, Eph 2:13-18). So much comes through the glorious work of the cross that Paul just exclaimed, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal 6:14).

V. *Genesis 04:05 Cain’s Reaction: Very Angry and Downcast*

Scene five is Cain’s reaction. He became angry — very angry — and downcast. The Hebrew is descriptive in picturing Cain’s reaction: he burned with anger, ferocious anger, and his face and countenance fell and were downcast. Cain was furious, full of rage and malice, and his face showed it. He walked around looking downcast, deeply disappointed.

Cain was angry at God for not accepting and blessing his worship. He was angry because he could not approach and worship God as he wanted, because he was told that he was not acceptable to God if he did not worship God through the sacrifice of an innocent life. He should have been angry at himself, for his own unbelief and hypocrisy. Cain was the one at fault; he was the one who had disobeyed God and approached God in his own strength, with the works of his own hands. As soon as he felt his face and countenance fall, he should have fallen to his knees, begged for forgiveness, and repented of his unbelief and hypocrisy.

Cain was also angry with his brother, filled with envy and jealousy against his brother. Why? Because God had accepted and blessed the worship of Abel. Cain resented and despised Abel. He was furious because Abel was full of assurance and confidence, because Abel had done exactly what God had said, and God had richly blessed Abel. Again, Cain should have been angry at himself, repented and begged God for forgiveness, but he refused and reacted instead.

Psa 37:8 Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret — it leads only to evil.

Prov 14:17 A quick-tempered man does foolish things, and a crafty man is hated.

Prov 16:32 Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.

Prov 22:24 Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered.

Eccl 7:9 Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools.

Mat 5:22 “But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”

Col 3:8 But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

VI. *Genesis 04:06–07 God's Warning*

Scene six is God's warning. This is a striking scene, a scene of God's love and compassion. Despite Cain's terrible sin of false worship, of unbelief and apostasy, God was willing to forgive Cain. In fact, God wanted Cain to repent and to approach God through sacrifice. God was not willing for Cain to perish, not without God first reaching out and trying to save Cain. God drives four points home to the heart of Cain.

1. If you do what is right, you will be accepted. Note that God asks several questions of Cain:

=> Why are you angry?

=> Why is your face and countenance downcast?

Note that God answers the questions Himself by asking Cain another question:

=> If you do what is right, will you not be accepted?

God used questions to stir Cain to think about right and wrong worship, about the right and wrong approach to God, about the right and wrong offering to secure God's approval. God longed for Cain to repent and to bring the right sacrifice, to approach God in the right way: by the sacrifice of an innocent life.

2. If you do not do what is right, then sin lies at the door. Doing right means approaching God properly, just like a person should. Abel's approach by animal sacrifice was doing right; therefore, his worship and approach to God was accepted. Cain's approach was not *doing right*, therefore, his offering was not accepted.

Cain did not do what was right; he did not approach and worship God as he should.

Note: God calls this sin. Failing to approach and worship God as He dictates is sin.

The picture of sin painted by the Hebrew is graphic: sin is like a wild beast crouching at the door of a person's house, ready to jump upon and devour the person.

But note: this is a particular sin, the sin of a false worship, of a false approach to God. It is this particular sin that is so fierce and ferocious.

Note this also: this is the first time the word sin (chattath) is mentioned in the Bible. It means to miss the mark just like an archer who misses his mark. Cain had missed the mark in his approach to God. He had approached and worshipped God, but his approach and worship had missed God.

3. Sin desires to have you. The sinful false worship — the sin of offering your own goodness and works, ritual and ceremony to God, the sin of personal goodness and righteousness — wants to enslave and devour you, to possess you. This particular sin, the sin of false worship and of a false approach to God, will lead to more and more sin. It will devour you and lead you into more and more self-righteousness and self-sufficiency.

4. You must master sin. You must approach and worship God as He dictates. You must *approach* God through sacrifice, and *depend* upon God for His presence and power to conquer and overcome sin.

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

Eph 3:20 *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.*

Note Cain's silence. No response is mentioned. Apparently, he never responded to God. He chose to continue on in his sin of false worship, of approaching God as he wished. He just continued to reject sacrifice as the only approach to God.

John 14:6 *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

John 14:9 *Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

1 Tim 2:5 *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

1 John 5:4-5 *For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. ■*