

THE RIGHTEOUS ABEL AND THE RIGHT SACRIFICE

Hebrews 11:4

By Raymond White

Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

Why did God accept Abel's blood offering and reject Cain's offering of the fruit of the ground? And what message does this dead man, Abel, and his gifts still speak to us today?

Israel's offered many different sacrifices to God, Not all of them were blood offerings. There was, for example, a flower offering (*Leviticus 2*), and there was a fruit offering (*Leviticus 19:25*). There was nothing wrong with those offerings, but before a Jew could make any such offering he had to first make a sin offering which was a blood offering.

Why first? Because sin separates man from God, and you can't offer something to God as long as you are separated from him. The bridge of atonement must come first.

Why blood? Because *Romans 6:23* *The wages of sin is death*. Each time a priest slit the throat of an animal, the Jews were reminded again how horrible sin is. A sin offering is an admission and a pleading for forgiveness. Only the humble can approach God, with a broken heart and seeking grace.

Cain brought no such sacrifice. He didn't think he needed to. He had an "I'm okay" attitude. "Hey, God. Look at my vegetables. Aren't they great? Aren't I great?" Cain didn't believe in God, he believed in himself, and he disguised his rebellion in religious pretense. He never understood why God rejected it. Instead of repenting, he slew his brother. The word slew implies "to slit the throat." In other words, "God, you want a blood offering? I'll give you a blood offering. I'll give you Abel!" Spiteful. Vindictive.

Abel brought a right sacrifice, a blood sacrifice, a sin sacrifice. He had an "I need forgiveness" attitude. And Abel got forgiveness because he believed God. He believed that if he offered the right sacrifice, confessing his sins and laying them on God's altar, that God would forgive his sins. And God did.

That is why Abel is called righteous and that is the message that "he being dead yet speaketh."

It is interesting, isn't it, how sinners claim to be righteous and the righteous claim to be sinners.