

## WHICH WAY?

### Genesis 4-6

What kind of sacrifice is God pleased with?

OT tells us 2 kinds He's NOT pleased with:

**1 Sam. 15:22** *"Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice"*

God doesn't delight in "going-through-the-motions" rituals...

... going to church because "everybody's doing it"

"because parents or friends expect it"

Legalistic rituals don't give God pleasure—don't even give US contentment!

God isn't pleased with giving Him bare minimum—with "just-getting-by" gifts.

**So, what kind of sacrifice IS pleasing to God?**

**Contrast between Cain and Abel, Gen. 4, reveals sacrifice that delights God**

### GENESIS—THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

In addition to understanding why we trust what God says about **CREATION**,

it's important for us to understand the **FOUNDATION** our faith rests on.

#### **Beginning of the Universe Gen. 1-2:3**

Describes 7 days of creation—**God spoke and it all came into being.**

#### **Beginning of Humanity Gen. 2:4-25**

Creation of man => God creates a helper, suited to man and his needs.

Everything's perfect! Man has everything he needs.

#### **BEGINNING OF SIN Gen. 3:1-6:8**

##### **Temptation to sin 3:1-5**

Satan uses what God gave for good, to ruin everything.

He deceives the woman.

She begins to doubt what God says, doubt His love, focus on her desires!

##### **Intrusion of sin 3:6**

##### **Consequences of sin 3:7-24**

Guilt 7

Broken fellowship 8-11

Blaming one another 12-13

Punishment 14-19 People will never be the same again.

#### **CULMINATION OF SIN 4-6:8 What does their sin lead to?**

Long-term consequences of sin continue in ch. 4

Gen. 4-6 focuses on 2 *kinds* of people:

#### **CONTRAST: 2 ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLES Gen. 4:1-5**

Cain's way vs. Abel's way

Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I've brought forth a man."<sup>2</sup> Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil.<sup>3</sup> In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD.<sup>4</sup> But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering,<sup>5</sup> but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

[1<sup>st</sup> alternative:] **Man's way chosen by some 4:5b-24**

### **CAIN'S LIFESTYLE**

Cain's children reflect peoples' natural direction:

Secular, humanistic lifestyle. "*Doing what comes naturally!*"

***Cain's descendants accomplish great things,  
but have no time for God.***

Cain produces a "**me-centered**" lifestyle.

Live for themselves; seek to satisfy their desires.

**Cain's children become great builders.** 4:17

**Cain's children become great farmers.** 4:19

**Cain's children become great musicians/artists.** 4:21

**Cain's children become great tool makers.** 4:22

They're into accomplishing great things—proud of their abilities!

{ Just one problem: }

**Cain's children have no time for God.**

**Cain's children are out to make a name for themselves.**

Typical self-made people—achievers.

**Cain's children ultimately become murderers.**

That's where self-centered, accomplishment-driven society leads.

When we pursue making a name for ourselves, . . .

Like Cain—the father of it all! —We become murderers!

*Is it any wonder our society is where it is today?*

"Me-centered" life kills millions of unborn children.

"Me-centered" life will lead to killing millions of old people

Killing people who outlive usefulness—people who "get in the way"

"Me-centered" life leads to killing people who seek to please God

—Like Abel, they must be silenced!!! —they get in our way too!!!

### **ABEL'S LIFESTYLE**

**Abel produces a God-centered lifestyle.**

Abel's children—and Seth's like him—identified as "*children of God*"

They live for God; seek to please Him; walk with Him.

–aren't afraid to follow God and be different

**4:1-8** –“showdown” between people who live for self–“me-centered” line

–and those who put God first!

Abel is first in a long line of people who see life differently.

Abel offers better sacrifice **4:3-5**

Is the contrast **flocks versus fruit?** [TRADITIONAL VIEW]

- Both describe acceptable offering to God.
- Grains offered as act of gratitude, accepted by God.

*What makes THIS offering less acceptable?*

Cain offers *some fruit*;

Abel brings "*plump, rich juicy*" **portions; firstborn of flock.**

- Cain *just* fulfills his duty; Abel brings *first and best* to God.
- Cain brings "*an offering*," but Abel brings *best* he has.

Living Bible "*Abel brought **the fatty cuts** from his **best** lambs*"

**Abel gives God *the first and the best.***

**Therefore, God is pleased with him.**

Doesn't think: "*Any ol' thing will do.*"

Something's wrong with Cain's attitude.

Cain doesn't bring the best; doesn't bring first fruits.

He doesn't give an appropriate acknowledgment to his Lord.

**Therefore, God is NOT pleased.**

God isn't pleased *with Cain* first, then with his offering **4:5**

*"but **on Cain and his offering** God did not look with favor."*

Cain's problem is confirmed by his response to God's correction.

**4:5b-8** "So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. 6 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." 8 Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him."

If Cain *really* wants to please God, he'll change course.

Instead, he's angry; he attacks one who tries to please God.

If people really want to please Him, we'll turn to Him.

BUT, people turn away from Him; we *attack* those who seek Him.

Cain's attitude toward God => unacceptable offering.

Abel offers better sacrifice because He trusts God; gives *Him* 1st place

**GOD'S PERSPECTIVE ON ABEL'S SACRIFICE** 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."

*Abel stands out as a man of faith;*

*. . . he trusts God rather than his flocks and his income.*

\* **Because he trusts God, he offers a better sacrifice.**

\* **Because he trusts God, God declares Him righteous.**

3 X Scripture refers to Abel as **righteous**.

**Because he trusts God rather than his flocks and income,  
GOD IS PLEASED WITH HIM.**

### **ABEL'S EXAMPLE TO US**

**Abel is more concerned about pleasing God,  
than about living for himself.**

Abel isn't afraid to be different from people around him.

**Abel is determined to give God his best.**

People today are "wired." Everywhere you see people walking around connected to headphones and a little box.

When you try to talk to them, you realize they're off in another world.

They're not hearing what's going on around them.

They're walking along, bobbing to beat of different music.

Similarly, to hear God's promise is to hear something no one around us hears.

–like tapping your toes and moving to the beat of the music.

It leaves people around us bewildered.

They can't hear our music. They just see our response.

### **Abel hears God's music.**

Are we going to be satisfied to give God the "left overs?"

–after our life's spent? Worn out? Used up?

Or, are we going to give God the best?

It's never too late to offer God the best we've got!

Eating dessert–Helen: eat best first–you're always eating the best!

**Sacrifice that pleases God requires that we give Him the best we've got!**

***Are WE giving him OUR best–the fat, choice, juicy cuts of our life?!!***

Or, are we just giving him "some of the fruit"–enough to get by?

[2<sup>nd</sup> alternative:] **GOD'S WAY CHOSEN BY OTHERS 4:25-5:32**

Gen. 4 lists **Cain's sons**–Values focused on *their* performance–living for self

God sends replacement for Abel–values pleasing God–lives for God =>

**4:25-26** “Adam lay with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, “God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him.” 26 Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call on the name of the LORD.”

Result of **Seth's** birth: people identify with Yahweh—call selves by His Name  
Seth becomes source of—**people who, like Abel, want to please God =>**

### **ENOCH Gen. 5:21-24**

“When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. <sup>22</sup> And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. <sup>23</sup> Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. <sup>24</sup> Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.”

**\* Because He trusts God, Enoch walks with God**—for 300 years!

While Lamech, Cain's descendant, lives for self,

Enoch, Seth's descendant, walks with God—delights in God's company;

In a passage where everyone “lives, . . . and then **dies**, . . .

here's a person who doesn't just live, he walks with God.

after 300 yr, he doesn't die—he walks with God.

**\* Because He trusts God, Enoch never experiences death.**

**Little girl:** “Mommy, teacher told us about a man who went out to walk with God. One day they walked and walked, till almost dark; the man was tired. When he started to go home, God said to him, why don't you just come home with Me?”

### **Chronological insight:**

Some scholars make issue of “gaps” among *people* in list—that's possible.

What *ISN'T* possible is “gaps” between *the years* listed.

It tells us how old the “parent” is when the child is born!

Seth might be Enosh's father, grandfather, or great-grandfather.

But v.6 clearly attests that Seth is 105 years old when Enosh is born.

Ages in Genesis, combined with known chronologies of kings, are basis

Ussher used to calculate about 4000 years from Adam to Christ.

Ages and chronologies in Bible attest that the human race is young.

There's not much room to push the years back.

Conservative calculation of population growth forces us to conclude:

By time of flood, population would've been near world population today.

**Either God's Word is wrong, or God affirms recent creation of people!**

*Who are we going to trust?*

In the story, **chronology is significant!**—it's part of the story!

Generations are long; easy to miss important relationships.

Lamech dies 5 years before his father, Methusaleh

Flood begins 5 years after Lamech dies—he misses flood by 5 yrs!

**Methusaleh dies the year of the flood—IN it?!!**

**When Enoch is taken: Methusaleh**—his son—is 300 years old.

**Lamech**—his grandson—is 113 years old.

Enoch is taken just 69 years before **Noah** is born.

**Adam** dies when Enoch is 308—57 years before Enoch is taken!

**Seth** dies 55 years after Enoch is taken!--

**Jude 14-15** gives additional insight: Prophecy attributed to Enoch:

*“The Lord is coming ... to judge everyone and to convict every single person because of all the ungodly deeds they do in such an ungodly way and because of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. “*

Enoch warns: God’s going to judge the world because of extreme wickedness.

Seth, Methusaleh, and Lamech, hear Enoch preach about God’s judgment

Methusaleh hears dad—sees his walk—but rejects warning—dies with rest!

One day—suddenly—Enoch’s gone! No one ever found him! God took him.

Man who walks with God is nowhere to be found! Sound familiar?

**2 Pet. 3:** in last days mockers will come.

When God’s people are warning of coming judgment, they’ll laugh, dogmatically asserting, “God has never intervened”

Peter says they’re *deliberately ignorant* of Creation and Flood!

**1 Pet 3** tells us the Spirit was warning the disobedient, *while God waited patiently, and Noah built the ark.*

They still don’t listen—They won’t listen to Enoch—They won’t listen to Noah.

**Methusaleh and his neighbors die in the flood.**

*What’s the impact of Seth’s life on his kids? What happens to Seth’s sons?*

Gen. 4 concludes: when Seth is born, people begin to call on the Name of

Yahweh —or, better, begin *“to call themselves”* by *His* Name.

Gen. 4 and 5 point to two distinct lines. After Seth’s birth, people divided into

**TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE:**

**People known for great accomplishments** (without God) Gen. 4

**People who call themselves by God’s name** Gen. 5

—known by God’s name — identified with God

Between chapter 5 and chapter 6 something happens.

**CROSSING OF THE WAYS 6:1-8**

**More than 500 years go by—things get worse.**

Any semblance of godliness is gone! Gen. 6:5

*“The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.”*

**By Noah’s day, the distinction fades.**

**God’s people begin to view life from man’s perspective.**

**All people follow a perverted lifestyle.**

- They all look alike => ALL become pagan, ungodly, evil.

**God says man’s thoughts are ONLY evil ALL the time.**

**God decides to destroy what He made.**

**What happened to the godly descendants?**

*They’re gone! There’s no longer a difference!*

**EVERY INTENT OF THE HEART OF ALL PEOPLE**

**IS ONLY EVIL CONTINUALLY!**

*That description sound familiar?*

*In modern culture, we’ve lost the distinction.*

*God’s people are NOT being defeated on the battlefield, or by persecution.*

*We’re being defeated by absorption. We’re absorbed into our society*

*We look just like everybody else!*

*History demonstrates the destiny of any people that loses its distinctive*

*—when godly people are absorbed into their society . . .*

*From the flood ... to Sodom ... to Israel ... to Asia Minor, and Rome*

*When God’s people lose our edge—when we lose our distinctiveness—*

*judgment is never far behind*

*If God does judge our country,*

***it won’t be because pagans act like pagans!***

*It will be because God’s people stop acting like God’s people!*

**God’s looking for *faithful people*, who model godly living.**

*By Noah’s time there were none! —they’re all gone!*

**EVERY INTENT OF THE HEART OF ALL PEOPLE**

**IS ONLY EVIL CONTINUALLY!**

**ONLY ONE ON THE PLANET WANTS TO LIVE FOR GOD!**

*Noah trusts God, and does what God says.*

*Noah models godliness, and *his kids* catch it!*

***“May those who come behind us find us faithful.”***

*May the fire of our devotion light their way.*

*May the footprints that we leave, lead them to believe.*

*And the life we lead, inspire them to obey.*

*In pagan darkness, that’s some witness to *unique* faithfulness and integrity.*

Standing for godliness in world that couldn't care less about God,  
and thinks you're just a "right-wing" fanatic!

*DO WE stand for what's right and what's pleasing to God?*

Or, do we capitulate—cave in—compromise—to look like everyone else?

**LESSONS FOR US FROM NOAH'S TIME:**

Noah's example teaches IMPORTANCE

OF FOLLOWING in his footsteps—even if we stand alone

Blessing extends to the children of those who obey God!

Our actions impact our children.

When we turn from sin to godliness, there's even greater impact *for our kids*, they see our example and follow in our footsteps.