

"Faith and Unbelief"

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"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." Heb. 11:4.

We have learned that God fulfilled His promise. Jesus, the Lamb of God, really came and was slain and raised again, that guilty man might have a way back to God and all that he had lost.

But Jesus did not come until after Adam and many of his children were dead. Yet every one of them that accepted this "Way" that God provided, and believed God's promise, and died trusting in the coming Lamb to save them, is safe; for God's promise was as sure as though it had already been fulfilled. They were cleansed from every sin and will live again with God and angels in Eden, when Jesus comes the second time and calls them from their graves. And the promise is that we, too, may join that happy throng and go with them to be with the Lord, if we also accept the Lamb of God for our Saviour.

The Lord has told us in the Bible about many of those who died in faith, and also of many who died in unbelief. He has told us of the faithful, that we might be encouraged by their victories; and He has told us of the unbelieving, that we might be warned by their defeats. The closer we study the story of their lives, the better we shall know how to be saved ourselves.

The first ones that God tells us about are Cain and Abel, because they were the first children that Adam and Eve had. Cain was the elder and Abel was the younger.

When Adam was created we read that he was in the image of God,—beautiful, glorious, perfect, partaking of all the goodness and life of God. But he lost all of that by following Satan. And when we read of Adam's children we find that they were in Adam's own likeness, and after his image,—weak, frail, sinful, partaking of all the evil and dying nature of Adam. You see he could give to his children only what he had himself.

Cain and Abel, therefore, were in as much need of a Saviour as Adam was, and their only hope of salvation was in Jesus, the coming Lamb of God. If they believed in Him, He would cleanse them from every sin, and keep them from sinning day by day, and finally restore them, with all of the believing ones, to Eden and its joys.

Oh, did they accept the "Way" which God, at such great cost, had provided? Did they have faith in the precious blood that was to be shed for them? Notice carefully, and you will see.

We read in the fourth chapter of the Bible that Abel was a keeper of sheep and Cain was a tiller of the ground.

"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."

Why was Abel's offering accepted and Cain's rejected? Was God partial? Did He love Abel better than Cain?

Oh, no, for read that the Lord talked with Cain and said, "If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted?" He will accept anyone who comes to Him by faith in Jesus.

In Heb. 11:4 we are told that it was by faith that Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.

Ah, now we see why Cain was not accepted,—he tried to come to God in his own way, in place of in God's way. He did not have faith in the cleansing, saving power of the blood of Christ. He thought that some other way would do just as well as the way God had commanded. But without faith in Jesus all the sacrifices in the world could not do him any good, for there was no other way under heaven whereby he could be saved.

Without the blood of Christ there is no remission (pardon) of sin. But Cain showed his unbelief in the blood of God's Lamb by not bringing a lamb and offering its blood as his sacrifice. By bringing an offering of the fruit of the ground, without any blood, he showed that he thought he could be saved without Christ's blood. For God had commanded that all who believed in the blood of Christ should bring the blood of a lamb in their offerings.

Notice: Abel had faith in Jesus, therefore he was careful to obey Him in every little thing; but Cain did not have faith in Him, therefore he was not careful to obey Him in every little thing. Your actions will always show whether you have faith or not. If you really believe God and have faith in His Son you will obey Him. And without faith in Jesus it is impossible to please God, or be accepted, or be saved, no matter what you may do. Why? Because "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." "Neither is there salvation in any other." [Acts 4:12]

1. What wonderful promise did God make to lost man concerning His Son? Gen. 3:15.
2. Was the promise ever fulfilled? Acts 13:23.
3. When?—Long after Adam and many of his children were dead. Luke 2-24.
4. Then are they all lost?—No; everyone who believed the promise and died in faith is safe.
5. When will they live again? John 5:28, 29; Heb. 9:28.
6. If we have faith in Jesus, what has the Lord promised us? Heb. 11:39, 40; 1 Thess. 4:13-17.
7. About whom has the Lord told us in the Bible?—Of many of those who died in faith, and of many who died in unbelief.
8. Why has He told us about them? 1 Cor. 10:11.

9. About whom does He tell us first? Gen. 4:1-15.
10. In whose image was Adam created? Gen. 1:27.
11. What became of all this when he sinned?
12. In whose image were Adam's children? Gen. 5:3.
13. Then what did Cain and Abel need, as much as Adam?
14. Did they believe God's promise, and accept Jesus for their Saviour?
15. How do you know whether they had faith or not? James 2:26.
16. What does faith always lead people to do?
17. What does unbelief lead people to do?
18. What did Abel bring for an offering? Gen. 4:4.
19. What did Cain bring for an offering? Gen. 4:3.
20. What had God told them to bring?
21. Then which showed faith, Cain or Abel?
22. Why were they to shed the blood of a lamb when they offered a sacrifice?
23. If they did not do this, what would it show?
24. Could their sins be washed away without the blood of Christ? Heb. 9:22.
25. Could any one else save them? Acts 4:12.
26. Then if they did not have faith in Jesus, could they please God, or be accepted? Heb. 11:6.
27. Whose fault was it, then, that Cain's offering was not accepted?
28. Must we come to the Father now in the same way that they did then? John 14:6.