

"Without Christ and with Christ"

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"Without Me, ye can do nothing." John 15:5.

Cain and Abel were the first two brothers that ever lived upon the earth.

Like all the other brothers who have lived upon the earth, they were of a weak and sinful nature because they partook of the sinful nature of their father Adam.

They were also tempted by Satan, just as brothers and sisters are tempted to-day. But they did not need to yield to Satan then, any more than you need to yield to Satan now, for God had provided a Way of escape. He had given His only Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not be overcome by Satan and perish, but should gain the victory over Satan, and have everlasting life. Then, even as now, the words of the Son were, "Without Me ye can do nothing."

Abel, as we learned last week, believed this with all his heart, and showed his faith by bringing the offering that God had commanded. But Cain did not believe it. He thought that his own way was just as good as God's way, and that he did not need Christ to save him from the power of Satan. He showed his unbelief by not bringing a lamb, as God had commanded.

We see, then, that Abel chose to live with Christ, and Cain chose to get along without Christ, for we are told that Christ dwells only in the heart of the one who has faith in Him. Let us study carefully that we may see which made the better choice.

In the first place, we read that Abel's offering was accepted by the Lord, and Cain's offering was not accepted.

Of course not, for Christ says, "No man cometh to the Father but by Me," for "I am the Way" and "I am the Door." [John 14:6; 10:9] Since Cain would not consent to use the only way and the only door to God, he should not have expected to reach Him, any more than you should expect to reach a garden if you refuse to use the only entrance to it.

Here was an Almighty Friend, then, for Abel, that Cain could not reach because he was without Christ. And was it not a Friend worth having? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" [Rom. 8:31]

And when Cain saw that his brother was accepted and he was not, he was very angry with his brother, and drew his face down until it looked just as yours does when you are very angry; and he said sharp, cruel words to his brother.

The Lord talked with him and tried to show him that he would be accepted as quickly as Abel if he would come in the right way. But Cain refused to accept Christ as Saviour, so he had no way of escape from the temptations of Satan.

“And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him”! [Gen. 4:8]

And why did He slay him? Had Abel done anything to harm Cain?

No, he had not so much as said one unkind word, even when Cain had spoken so cruelly to him.

Then why did Cain kill him?

In 1 John 3:12 we are told that it was “because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous”! It was because he had yielded to Satan’s mind instead of to Christ’s mind.

Satan always hates those who have the mind of Christ. And so he puts this same hateful mind into every one who will yield to him. This is why every one who will live godly must suffer persecution.

But remember this: It is better to be dead with Christ than to be alive without Him; for the one who is alive without Him will soon be dead, and the one who is dead with Him will soon be alive.

Look at the one who is alive without Christ, who yields to Satan and allows him to put his own selfish, hateful mind within him—

“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him;” “He that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death;” “The Wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.” [1 John 3:15; Prov. 11:19; Psalm 37:20]

But hear the promises to the one who is dead with Christ:—

“Whosoever shall lose his life for” “My sake shall find it;” “Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven;” “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life;” “Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” [Mark 8:35; Matt. 10:39; Luke 6:22, 23; Rev. 2:10; Col. 3:3, 4]

Then, never mind, if your brothers or sisters or playmates or friends are angry with you for not joining in their disobedience. Be kind and gentle, and walk bravely on with Christ, and though you suffer now, your reward will be great by and by.

It is not enough for your father or mother or your brother or sister to have Christ; you must have Him for yourself. Abel’s having Christ did not save Cain.

1. Have you a brother?

2. Who were the first two brothers that ever lived on the earth?

3. In what way were they like all the other brothers and sisters who have lived on the earth?
4. By whom were they tempted?
5. But did they need to yield to Satan when he tempted them? Why not?
6. Was the "Way" of escape for them alone? 1 Cor. 10:13.
7. To how many has God given it? Heb. 2:9; John 14:6.
8. Then do you need to yield to Satan when he tempts you?
9. What could brothers and sisters do then, and what can they do now, without Christ? John 15:5.
10. Is there no other way of getting rid of all our sins and of coming back to God? Acts 4:12.
11. Did Abel believe this?
12. Did Cain?
13. How do you know that Abel had faith in Christ? Gen. 4:4; Heb. 11:4.
14. How do you know that Cain did not have faith in Christ? Gen. 4:3; James 2:18, 26.
15. In whose heart only does the Lord dwell? Eph. 3:17.
16. Then whom did Abel choose to have with him?
17. And whom Cain choose to get along without?
18. Which, do you think, made the better choice?
19. What are you asked to do to-day? Josh. 24:15.
20. What was the first difficulty that Cain got into because he was without Christ? Gen. 4:4, 5.
21. Suppose we should gain the whole world and yet not have God on our side, what would it profit us?
22. Then did not Cain miss something that was well worth having? Rom. 8:31.
23. How might he have gotten out of this difficulty and been made acceptable in the sight of God, if he had chosen to do so? Gen. 4:7; 1 John 1:9.
24. What was the next difficulty that Cain got into because he was without Christ? Gen. 4:5, last part.
25. Does it do any harm to get angry? 1 John 3:15.

26. Why does it keep one from having eternal life? Because it is yielding to Satan who brings death, instead of to Christ who is our life.
27. How did this mind of Satan, to which he had yielded, lead Cain to look? Gen. 4:5.
28. How did it cause him to speak?
29. How did it make him act? Gen. 4:8.
30. What did it cause him to tell, when God asked him where Abel was? Gen. 4:9.
31. How did it cause him to regard his brother?—"Am I my brother's keeper?"
32. And what did it cause him to become? A wanderer, with no true happiness in this life or hope of any in the life to come. Gen. 4:11-15; Prov. 1:19; Ps. 37:20.
33. Did it pay for Cain to choose Satan?
34. Did Abel get angry, and look cross, and speak harshly, and strike? 1 John 3:12.
35. Don't you suppose he was tempted to when Cain spoke so cruelly to him?
36. Then why did he not do it?
37. Did it pay for Abel to choose Christ when he was hated, and reproached, and cruelly treated, and killed?
38. What has God, who cannot lie, promised? Matt. 16:25; Luke 6:22, 23; Rev. 2:10; Col. 3:3, 4.
39. When will God fulfil these promises to Abel and to all who, like Abel, bravely walk with Christ and suffer with Him? 1 Thess. 4:13-15; Heb. 11:39, 40.