

The background of the slide is a light gray gradient with several realistic water droplets of various sizes scattered across it. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. They are located in the top-left, bottom-left, and bottom-right areas of the frame.

# ABEL

HEBREWS 11:3

# INTRODUCTION

- **HEBREWS 11:3** BY FAITH [PLACE YOUR NAME HERE] UNDERSTANDS THAT THE UNIVERSE WAS FORMED AT GOD'S COMMAND, SO THAT WHAT IS SEEN WAS NOT MADE OUT OF WHAT WAS VISIBLE. 4. BY FAITH ABEL OFFERED TO GOD A **BETTER SACRIFICE THAN CAIN**, THROUGH WHICH HE OBTAINED THE TESTIMONY THAT HE WAS RIGHTEOUS, GOD TESTIFYING ABOUT HIS GIFTS, AND THROUGH FAITH, **THOUGH HE IS DEAD, HE STILL SPEAKS.**

- It is hard to talk about Abel without also talking about his big brother, Cain.
- The Bible says that Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain and obtained the testimony that God saw him as righteous.
- Intrigued by the end of this verse which says that though dead, Abel still speaks.
- This is interesting because there is not one word recorded in the Bible that Abel spoke. And yet, even today, he still speaks. Clearly this is saying something to us.
- It is saying “look at what Abel did. He is speaking to you. It is important!” It may have been thousands of years ago but through his act he still speaks today.
- So let’s have a look. We’ll look at four aspects:
  1. The historical story of Abel and Cain
  2. What Abel speaks about our salvation
  3. What Abel speaks about Christ
  4. What Abel speaks about the time of the end

# WHERE IT ALL BEGAN - BACK TO GENESIS

**GENESIS 4:1-10** ADAM LAY WITH HIS WIFE EVE, AND SHE BECAME PREGNANT AND GAVE BIRTH TO CAIN. SHE SAID, "WITH THE HELP OF THE LORD I HAVE BROUGHT FORTH A MAN." (2) LATER SHE GAVE BIRTH TO HIS BROTHER ABEL. NOW ABEL KEPT FLOCKS, AND CAIN WORKED THE SOIL. (3) **IN THE COURSE OF TIME** CAIN BROUGHT SOME OF THE FRUITS OF THE SOIL AS AN OFFERING TO THE LORD. (4) BUT ABEL BROUGHT FAT PORTIONS FROM SOME OF THE FIRSTBORN OF HIS FLOCK. THE LORD LOOKED WITH FAVOR ON ABEL AND HIS OFFERING, (5) BUT ON CAIN AND HIS OFFERING HE DID NOT LOOK WITH FAVOR. 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. (9) THEN THE LORD SAID TO CAIN, "WHERE IS YOUR BROTHER ABEL?" "I DON'T KNOW," HE REPLIED. "AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?" (10) THE LORD SAID, "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? LISTEN! YOUR BROTHER'S BLOOD CRIES OUT TO ME FROM THE GROUND.

- The story of the first two little boys born on this planet
  - The first human being born on this planet – **Cain**.
  - He is named '**Cain**' meaning '**acquired of the Lord**' and no doubt
  - When Eve's second boy is born she calls him **Abel** meaning '**breath or vapor**' or some say '**vanity**'.
  - Abel grew up to tend sheep but Cain worked the ground.
- The Bible says that in the course of time they both brought an offering to the Lord. You know the story – the **Lord looked with favor on Abel** because of his offering but not so with Cain.
  - So was the Lord being picky? Was He being unkind? Was Abel just His favorite? Or should Cain have known what to bring as an offering?
- The story is very brief and only includes the important points but there are enough clues to tell us that Cain should have known better.
  - Firstly we read that they brought their sacrifice '**in the course of time**'.
    - It is clear that there was a prescribed time indicated for the bringing of an offering. The phrase which in our version is translated, "In the course of time" is, in the Hebrew, 'At the end of days'.
    - This is a strong suggestion that there was a definitely prescribed period. Perhaps it was once a year, at the end of days, i.e., at the end of the winter season, just before spring.
  - Second, it is clear from this account that a **prescribed place** existed for this offering.
    - They were to bring it before the Lord, a definite place where they were to appear in the presence of the Lord.'
    - The Lord spoke directly to Cain about what to do and Cain wasn't surprised or startled. It seems that it was normal. God wasn't trying to keep His truth and ways secret or hidden.

# GOD'S GRACIOUS APPROACH TO CAIN

- **GENESIS 4:6-7** 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."
- When Cain's offering was not accepted, note that Lord was still incredibly gracious with Cain.
  - He doesn't speak in thunderous tones saying 'who are you to offer incorrectly?'
  - He does not send lightning upon the earth where Cain is.
  - The Lord encourages Cain not to be downcast and says that if he does right, he will be accepted.
  - It is to come to God in the way He has prescribed. So God is gracious and wants Cain to know this.
  - There is still a way for Cain but he is warned about the serious nature of sin. The Lord **pictures sin like a lion or a wild animal, crouching ready to strike**. But there is a way, the Lord says, to overcome it.
- What does Cain do?
  - Having heard directly from God Himself, he goes completely against what the Lord spoke and allows His anger to become rage and his rage, murder - even the murder of his brother that he grew up with.
  - Think about Cain for a moment. He didn't grow up playing violent video games. He hadn't watched a continuous stream of TV shows about murder and death like is the current fascination. There was no peer pressure to do something 'crazy'. He wasn't damaged by a toxic polluted environment and nor was he doing drugs – prescribed or illegal! He didn't have abusive parents and hadn't been treated improperly. He even knew and had heard God directly. And yet even in this near perfect environment, jealousy stirred over and over within his heart. That jealousy became anger which boiled within before the rage found its vent in striking and killing his brother.
- This tells us something about what the true **source of people's problems** is - It is the **heart of man** – desperately wicked and deceitful above all things. Who can know it? And nor can we just point the finger at Cain for in and of ourselves we have the same **fallen nature**.

# WHAT DOES ABEL SPEAK ABOUT OUR SALVATION?

- **HEBREWS**

**9:22** "WITHOUT THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD THERE IS NO FORGIVENESS" AND

- **ROMANS 3:20** "NO ONE WILL BE DECLARED RIGHTEOUS IN HIS SIGHT BY OBSERVING THE LAW."

- **THE SCARIEST PASSAGE IN THE BIBLE?**

**MATTHEW 7:21-23**

- Why was Abel's sacrifice accepted and Cain's rejected? There is a theme that runs the entire length of the Bible that can be summed up by two declarations: **Heb 9:22 and Rom 3:20**
- Cain and Abel were aware of what God required as mentioned earlier.
  - Abel had an understanding of his own heart and his need for there to be a substitute as an offering for his sin in order to be right with God. So, through faith in the revealed will of God, he offered up the firstborn of his flock. It was an offering that pleased God for it pointed to the sacrifice that Jesus, the firstborn of all creation, would make on our behalf. And that is someone in whom God is 'well pleased'.
  - Remember – Hebrews tells us that **Abel still speaks!** He speaks to us about the right way to come to God, both in becoming a Christian and as being the Christian we have become.
  - It is always in faith in a blood sacrifice, the substitute who died on your behalf. We trust not in our own goodness either as a sinner wanting to be saved or as a Christian wanting to draw closer to God. We listen to Abel's instruction.
- Cain however rejected that approach. He was a worker of the ground.
  - He had worked hard out in the hot sun, with sweat pouring off his face, and had grown crops that he would now present to the Lord.
  - This was the best of his effort. This was the work of his hands which he surely thought the Lord would accept. "Who cares about the offering of the firstborn lamb?"
  - I've worked hard and I'm pretty good. I'll show God my works and everything will be fine between God and me!' What a mistake to make!
  - A large part of mankind believes this right to this day. The Bible however says 'Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain...' (**Jude 1:11**).
  - **Read the scariest passage in the Bible? Matthew 7:21-23**



# WHAT DOES ABEL SPEAK ABOUT CHRIST?

- Abel, as the first person to die in the Bible, is able to teach us something about the life and death of Jesus. In fact, not only was Abel the first to die but he was the first one to be martyred for his faith so he stands as a type of Christ.

ABEL	JESUS
Abel was a shepherd who looked after the sheep	Jesus was and is the true Shepherd who looks after His sheep. ( <a href="#">John 10:11</a> )
There are no reports of Abel doing any wrong	Jesus was sinless in all that He said and did ( <a href="#">2 Cor 5:21</a> , <a href="#">1 Pet 2:22</a> )
Abel was hated by his own brother Cain, without proper cause.	Jesus was hated by His brothers and brethren in Israel without cause. ( <a href="#">John 15:25</a> )
Abel was martyred by his brother and died because of his brother's sin	Jesus was rejected by His own brothers and delivered up to die by His own people. ( <a href="#">John 1:11</a> , <a href="#">John 7:5</a> )
The blood of Abel cries out to God	Jesus' blood is also said to cry out but it speaks a better word than the blood of Abel ( <a href="#">Heb 12:24</a> ). Abel's blood cried out to God for justice. Jesus' blood cries out for mercy.

In like manner, Cain is a type of the religious Jews of Israel. Cain hated Abel and killed him because he was jealous of Abel's righteous act and acceptance with God which highlighted the folly of his own self-righteous works. In like manner the religious Jews of Christ's time hated Jesus because He exposed their self-righteous bankruptcy before God. And so they killed Jesus as Cain killed Abel.

# WHAT DOES ABEL SPEAK ABOUT THE LAST DAYS?

Do you know what the word 'Genesis' means? It means 'beginning'. When we hear that we think, "Oh yeah the beginning of creation". That's part of it. But the book of Genesis is also the **beginning of God's revealed truth** and it is really interesting how so much truth that was first established in Genesis is **replayed or finds fulfilment in the last days**.

- Jesus said that as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man. It will replay once again.
- The days of Lot speak about the last days as well.
- Genesis tells us that man tried to unite against God in the days of Tower of Babel and that will occur again with mystery Babylon shown to play a large role in the book of Revelation.
- In Genesis we see God dwelling with man, in perfection, with the tree of life in the midst. This is restored as shown in **Revelation 22** and **23**.
- Even the stories of well known characters in Genesis teach us about the end. Just as Eve, Adam's bride was hidden in Adam before being revealed, so the church, the bride of Christ, is hidden in Christ (**Col 3:3**) and will be revealed in glory when Christ returns.
- The story of both the conflict and eventual reconciliation between Jacob and Esau teaches us of the current struggle between Israel and their Arab neighbors as well as the reconciliation still to come.
- The great story of Joseph in Genesis speaks about Christ in His rejection, exaltation and eventual reconciliation with His Israelite brothers in the last days.

So what of the story of Cain and Abel?

- It tells us something about the times of the last days. So what would it say prophetically?
- It tells us that if you believe that salvation and acceptance with God comes through the narrow road of Jesus alone and faith in the One who died as a sacrifice on your behalf, it is not going to be acceptable to the majority.
- It also tells us that the way of Cain, which is thinking that your own good works are good enough, is going to increase. We see these points all around us today.