

Questions & Answers

Did God Judge Cain For His Sacrifice, Or For The Condition Of His Heart?

Question: A young minister who I will call Jesse, a guest in our church, taught about the story of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-8). He stated Cain's sacrifice of "his garden" to the Lord had nothing to do with God's anger toward him (Cain); nor had anything to do with "a blood sacrifice".

In proving his theory, the young minister used two passages: 1) "*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins*" (Heb 10:4); and 2) He attempted to show that the Lord was pleased with Cain's fruit offering by going to Deuteronomy 26 concerning "firstfruits". He believed these firstfruits proved Cain's honor before God. Is it possible God was angered only because of the sin of murder?

Answer: Peter said Jesus, the Lamb of God was without blemish or spot; and His blood was precious (1 Pet. 1:19). From the beginning, God saw the necessity of teaching his people that blood was important, and was a huge part of the sacrifices of Cain and Abel. From Eden, to the Tabernacle in the wilderness and all the way to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, God Continued to show His people a "picture" of Christ's giving of Himself for the sins of the world. In showing Jesus throughout the Old Covenant, He was preparing the world for the One Who would save the world from their sin.

When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, they suddenly realized their nakedness, and God showed them their realization was because they had sinned against Him. They had been disobedient. Realizing their guilt, they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves; but God slew an animal and, after discarding the fig leaves, used the animal hides to cover them (a picture of animal sacrifice). God was teaching that only blood could take care of man's sin problems. God could do nothing to cover or forgive sin without the blood. On one occasion, God said, "NOT WITHOUT BLOOD". "*But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:..*" (Heb 9:7) [KJV – italics mine]

Today it is through the blood of *Jesus* that man can be saved, and not animal blood, for it's true that the blood of animals cannot save, but in the Old Testament, it did cover sufficiently for a period of time. Then this rite was to be repeated until Jesus would give Himself. God could do nothing in the Old Testament without blood, just as today He can't. It must be by the blood.

So you see, Cain and Abel both fully realized that sin sacrifices must be by the blood of animals (a picture of Jesus' shed blood at the Cross), and not by vegetation. Compare that with God's act of substituting the fig leaves for animal skins coming from the animals God Himself slew.

But Cain had a rebellious heart. He rejected God's law and sinned against Him. He wanted to do it his own way, thereby gaining in himself the spirit of antichrist. Here's Biblical proof of God's dissatisfaction with the sacrifice of Cain because:

1) His sacrifice did not coincide with God's plan for eternity.

“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: . . .” (Heb 11:4)

2) He hated his brother because God honored his brother's sacrifice.

“Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous” (1 John 3:12)

3) He tested the spirit's of the enemy, and greedily lusted after the pleasures therein.

“Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished. . .” (Jude 11).

God intended for Abel *and* Cain's sacrifices to be a temporary covering of their sins...But the "firstfruits" had nothing to do with Cain's sacrifice. The firstfruits was a celebration of God's gracious acts in the deliverance of His people from Egypt, and a tithe to be given to the tribe of the Levites. This tithe was given to minister to the Levite tribe and was administered only after the twelve tribes of Israel entered into the land of milk and honey (Dent. 26:1). This tithe was given the Levites because they were not allotted any land to farm, and it became their "substance". Also, the tithe was given for the sake of "...the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled" (Deuteronomy 26:12).

The firstfruits was a part of God's blessings to His people in deliverance from Egypt, the many miraculous feats for His people during the forty years, and the claim to the land of milk and honey. They now had a nation and God promised His continued blessings if they would consistently harken unto His Word. The 26th chapter of Deuteronomy discusses the "firstfruits" celebration.