

BIBLE STUDY LESSON: 10 PEOPLE IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Abel

Scripture Reading

Gen 4:2, Heb 9:22, Heb 11:4, Matt 23:34-35

I. The Meaning of Abel's Name – "Vanity, Like a Breath" (Ecc 1:2-3)

- A. Disappointed with first child: Cain
 - 1. Life of fallen man: vanity
- B. Second son: Abel - inherited same realization and feeling

II. Knowing God AND Taking God's Way

- A. According to God's delight/requirement: Presenting offering with shedding of blood (Heb 9:22)
 - 1. Firstlings of flock and fat of lambs
- B. Justified by God (Gen 4:4, Heb 11:4)
- C. Believed God's redemption – neither acted according to his preference nor trusted in his deeds/works
 - 1. Fallen sinner cannot cover or conceal sinfulness with man's works or behaviour
- D. For satisfying God's righteous requirement: acceptance/fellowship of God
- E. Corresponded to requirements of Mosaic law
- F. Proves way of redemption/worshipping God: according to God's divine revelation and not according to his concept

III. Caring only for God's purpose, not for his own existence

- A. Feeder of sheep (Gen 4:2, lit.) for offering to God
 - 1. Cain, server of the ground: earn a living for himself
 - 2. Before flood, man ate only vegetables and fruits (Gen 1:29)
 - a. Not yet ordained that man should eat of cattle, whose blood could be shed (Gen 9:3-4)
 - 3. Feeding sheep was only for presenting to God and not for earning a living
- B. Man's need for covering; skin from sacrificial lamb for covering man's shame
 - 1. Made acceptable to God and contact God
- C. Abel's occupation indicates living according to God's desire
 - 1. Men should care for God's purpose more than their livelihood
 - 2. Everything for the purpose of serving God

IV. Becoming the representative of all those who take God's way of redemption and life

- A. Abel's living, indicates he cared for God's way of redemption
 - 1. According to God's revelation and by faith

- B. To present offerings with the shedding of blood according to God's revelation and thereby be justified and accepted by God is to act by faith, doing something that man cannot perceive by his natural senses
- C. Way of faith (Heb 11:4), representing God's way of redemption and life taken by the believers in Christ through the ages
- D. Abel vs. Cain represents believers vs. unbelievers
 - 1. Way of life vs. way of death
 - 2. Result of believers: New Jerusalem in the new heaven/earth and express God's life and glory for eternity
 - 3. Result of unbelievers: lake of fire, which also is in the new heaven/earth (Rev 20:15, 21:8; 22:15) and express God's condemnation, righteousness, and holiness for eternity (John 5:29)

V. Becoming the representative of all the martyrs

- A. Abel represent all who take God's way of redemption/life and thus martyred
- B. Because Abel presented offerings with the shedding of blood according to God's revelation and was accepted by God, he incurred Cain's hatred and was killed by Cain (Gen 4:4-5, 8)
- C. Jesus said, "I send to you prophets and wise men and scribes: some of them you will kill... and some of them you will scourge... that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of the righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar." (Matt 23:34-35)
 - 1. In Old Testament and New Testament ages, all who take God's way of redemption/life will suffer persecution
- D. All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (2 Tim 3:12)

Focus: Having accepted the revelation his parents have received, Abel approached and worshipped Jehovah by faith, presenting an offering through the shedding of blood. Abel took God's way and did not take a way according to his own concept. Caring only for God's purpose, and not for his own existence, he thus became the representative of all those who take God's way of redemption and life, by faith.

Review Questions

Question 1 Describe briefly how Abel cared only for God's purpose and not for his own existence.

Question 2 What category of people does Abel represent?