

**“HOW MAY I APPROACH GOD?”**  
**[SIN’S DEVELOPMENT IN THE HUMAN RACE—PART ONE]**  
**GENESIS 4:1-2**  
**Pastor Keith E. Gephart**

INTRODUCTION

The “seed of the woman” would crush the head of the serpent. Maybe the fulfillment would be in the birth of Cain. In case we did not take to heart the seriousness of man’s ruin and fall, this passage drives the message home clearly. Our hope must be firmly placed in the Lord—not in our own ambitions or dreams. Once the sons are born, the issue arose of proper worship to the Lord. This passage deals with the issue.

**YOU MUST APPROACH GOD STRICTLY ON THE BASIS OF BLOOD SACRIFICE.**

- I. THE BIRTH OF THE TWO SONS (1-2a)
  - A. The Cause: “The man knew his wife Eve.”
    1. Still called ‘the man’—not yet Adam.”
    2. “Knew”—a euphemism for physical relations.
      - Represents a deeper knowing of which the physical event is the culmination.
      - He understands God’s purpose in marriage and in the particular woman God had given him.
    3. “His wife”—protest against promiscuity.
      - Intended to be a monogamous relationship.
      - Adam had not “known” Eve prior to this.
    4. “Eve”—the mother of all living
  - B. The Birth of Cain (1b)—“She conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, ‘I have gotten a man-child with *the help* of the LORD.”
    1. The fullness of the expression is characteristic of the Hebrew—“conceived and gave birth.”
    2. The meaning of his name—similar to the verb meaning “to get, acquire”, but not a strict etymology
      - Eve made an alliteration in Hebrew—it may have been an exact etymology in the language she then spoke.
      - For example: “I have gotten a man-child.” Therefore she named her child “Got.”
    3. Source of the child—“The LORD—Yahweh, the faithful God of the covenant.”
      - Literally “with the LORD—i.e. with His help.
      - An expression of thankfulness—deliverance from pain and danger.
      - An expression of praise—Yahweh’s manifestation of His grace and faithfulness.
      - The promised seed of the woman is given by Him; the beginning of the fulfillment of this promise. Such is a word of faith by the woman.
  - C. The Birth of Abel (2)
    1. Not Cain’s twin brother
    2. “Abel” means “breath, vapor, vanity.”
      - By this time Eve had come to recognize the vanity of human existence now marred by sin.
      - She likely experienced disillusionment in the prospect of Cain as the Messiah.
    3. As often in Genesis, we see the election of the younger over the older; God is sovereign and does not follow set rules of propriety.
      - The meaning of the boys’ names is not the basis of God’s choice.
      - Eve seemed to have a higher expectation at Cain’s birth than at Abel’s.
      - God judges not as a man judges; fleshly privileges do not prevail in His sight.
- II. THE OCCUPATIONS OF THE TWO SONS (2b)
  - A. Abel—a shepherd, “keeper of flocks”
  - B. Cain—a farmer
    - “Server of the ground”—the emphasis being on serving because of the curse.

- These occupations are equal in God’s sight; one is not better than the other.
- Both were likely performed by Adam himself; farming in 2:15; 3:17, 18, 23, and being a shepherd in 3:21.
- God wants men to differ in their tastes, talents, and pursuits.
- All this is **also in sharp contrast to evolutionary teachings**.

### III. THE WORSHIP OF THE TWO SONS (3-5a)

#### A. The Origin of Sacrifices

1. God had likely taught Adam—see message on 3:20-21—and Adam had taught his sons accordingly.
2. This event likely describes their first individual efforts at sacrifice, or Cain’s earlier effort in worship would also have been rejected.
3. Cain’s heart was wrong—bad; such always perverts outward worship.
4. The casual mention of this worship shows that this was nothing new or unusual for them.
5. Sacrifice did not originate spontaneously on man’s part as the “natural expression of a devout spirit,” and as “gratitude toward an omnipotent Giver of good things.”
6. **See Psalm 14:1-3.**
7. Fallen man did not seek after God in the Garden—he hid from God!
8. Man certainly would have no inclination to offer blood sacrifices!
9. Revelation is the only adequate explanation—see Gen. 3:21.

#### B. Why is the Origin not described in Scriptures?

1. Genesis was written by Moses, to Israel, a nation that certainly understood the allusions in Genesis because of their own rituals.
2. We have other early examples of later developments.
  - a. Clean and unclean animals—Noah and the animals in the Ark.
  - b. The Sabbath—Genesis 2.
  - c. Tithing—Genesis 14.

#### C. All of these are quite casually introduced; these early believers knew much more than we give them credit for.

#### D. We must not read Leviticus back into Genesis, but we can see certain similarities.

#### E. There has never been any other proper way to approach God except on the basis of blood—Heb. 9:22.

- Sin must be accounted for—even though not specifically mentioned here.
- However, see v. 7—sin is referred to as getting mastery over Cain.

#### F. But, the word used in Gen. 4:3-5 is the ordinary word for “offering”—any kind of gift brought by man.

- True, but note that in Hebrews 11:4 these “gifts” are specifically called **“sacrifices.”**
- Their offerings were in accordance with their occupations—True.
- But Cain also needed an animal sacrifice as a preliminary to his fruit offering—the same principle is true in OT law.

#### G. Abel is called both “a righteous man” and a “prophet”—see Mt. 23:35; Lk. 11:50-51.

- He must have received revelation from God and spoke of it to others—even to Cain.
- Obviously Cain rejected his younger brother’s prowess in spiritual matters.
- He probably also resented the fact that he needed to purchase or trade with Abel for his sacrifices.
- Were not his own fruits every bit as valuable, attractive, and useful as Cain’s sheep?

### CONCLUSION

As usual, pride was at the root of Cain’s problem with his sacrifice and his approach to God.

His own self efforts led to his rejection of God’s plan, and to God’s rejection of his worship.

God has always had only one way of approach to His holy presence—the offering of shed blood for the forgiveness.

**YOU MUST APPROACH GOD STRICTLY ON THE BASIS OF BLOOD SACRIFICE.**

**Jesus paid it all—come to the Father through the finished work of the Son.**