

“THE OFFERINGS THAT GOD ACCEPTS”

GENESIS 4:3-7

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INTRODUCTION

God wants us to worship Him; but He wants us to worship Him according to His will and in His way!

God does not accept merely any kind of human effort!

WE MUST WORSHIP GOD IN GOD’S WAY, AND WE MUST RESPOND WELL TO HIS CORRECTION

I. THE WORSHIP

A. Time of the Offerings—“In process of time”; lit. “after the end of days”

B. Cain’s Offering (3)

1. “Offering”—i.e. gift; the same word used for Abel’s offering.
2. Brought it unto Yahweh—faithful God of the covenant.
3. “Of the fruit of the ground”—some of the fruit he grew [a tithe?] Meal [called “meat” in KJV] offering in OT always accompanied with animal offerings.
4. Why is Cain’s offering mentioned first?
 - He is the eldest—expected to lead the way.
 - Likely did bring his first.
 - But, pure formalism—not acceptable to God!
 - *Right time, place, custom, and form!*

C. Abel’s Offering (4)

1. “Firstlings of his flock”
 - It was *his* flock.
 - It was the **best**—“firstlings.”
2. “Fat pieces of the firstlings”-- Again, signifying his best.

II. THE RESPONSES (4-5)

A. God’s Response (4b; 5a)

1. The Lord “had regard/respect” for Abel and his offering.
2. The Lord “had no regard/respect” for Cain and his offering.
 - The verb means “to gaze, to look upon with favor.”
 - The **key** is the person, then the offering.
 - God first considers the person worshiping, then the worship.
 - Abel worshiped God **by faith**—Heb. 11:4.
 - Cain worshiped with **pride and self-confidence**.
 - **God does not accept mere formalistic worship, even if everything is done properly!**
 - **Moreover, their attitudes did affect their gifts, also.**
3. How did God show His favor?
 - a. Did fire consume the sacrifices—as in Lev. 9:24 (Levi); Jud. 6:21 (Gideon); 13:19-20 (Manoah)?
 - b. Cannot be the ensuing prosperity of Abel or lack of prosperity of Cain; seemed immediate.
 - c. **Most likely** it involved God’s conversation with the two at the garden as they worship.
 - d. In one way or another God made clear his acceptance or lack thereof.
 - e. The rejection of Cain’s offering was really a gracious warning; note the use of “Yahweh.” Cain should have been quite concerned about God’s lack of favor.

B. Cain’s Response (5b-7)

1. He became very angry (5b)
 - Excessive anger—“and it burned for Cain”; omitting the obvious word “anger.”
 - Cain was “burned up, very much.”
2. His countenance fell

- His face drooped and his eyes fell.
 - “Anger that does not break out into violence seeks to hide itself by not looking freely into the eye of the one at whom it is directed.”
3. His Confrontation with God (6-7)
- a. God’s questions (6)
- “Yahweh” still speaks—in mercy and faithfulness.
 - God literally speaks here—no mention of a merely psychological experience.
 - God wishes to make Cain aware of the grievous disorder in his life by his question concerning Cain’s condition.
 - Cain should recognize that **God had a right to be angry at Cain, not Cain at God!**
 - Cain should be sorry (repentant) for his sin, and thankful that God warned him!
- b. God’s Suggestion and Warning (7)
- The form is a double question.
 - The question suggests an affirmative answer.
- (1) Suggestion (7a)—“If you do well, will you not be accepted?”
- The verb “accepted” means “to lift up, take.”
 - This is a word play based on the use of “face” in vv. 5, 6.
 - The face “is fallen,” but God will lift up the face of the obedient—i.e. accept him—if he does well.
 - God would accept Cain—i.e. lift up his face; but, since he has sinned, his face has fallen!
 - Not a reference to the forgiveness of sin: “Will not [your sin--implied] be taken away?” Sin is not forgiven on the basis of doing right! We don’t merit forgiveness!
 - The emphasis is upon moral responsibility; one must do what God expects if he wants to be accepted.
 - How does he do so? Come as Abel did—in humility and with no self-merit.
 - Directing his heart to what is good.
- (2) Warning (7b)—“If you do not do well, sin lies at the door and unto you shall be its desire....”
- If you do not accept your moral responsibility before God.
 - Then SIN, as a menacing wild beast crouches at the door of Cain’s life, waiting to seize him and destroy him [cf. the serpent of Gen. 3:15; see Peter’s figure of Satan as a lion in I Pet. 5:8].
 - In this case, Cain becomes “the seed of the serpent.”
 - Hurt is inevitable; ultimate escape is possible, but problematic.
 - Therefore, **DO RIGHT NOW, NOT LATER!**
 - “Unto you is its desire.” It strives to gain complete control of Cain.
 - It *thirsts for your blood!*

CONCLUSION

This is the first mention of **Sin** in the Bible.

This fact seems to justify the fact that the offerings were related to sin; Cain is in danger of being mastered by Sin.

The verb [participle] used for “crouching” shows that sin is **ready** and **waiting** for the right moment to attack.

Cain must resist the power of evil pressing from without to gain complete control of him within.

God doesn’t promise that sin will cease to lurk for us, but that it may be kept from conquering us!

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