

The Wednesday Word, Aug. 21, 2013: The Sin of Cain

Most of us know the story of Cain and Abel. In this story, there's excellent instruction, especially about the blood. Cain's great sin, the sin that led to his total downfall, was his refusal to come to God with the blood. In doing so, he refused to admit that he was a sinner, worthy of death, and in need of a substitute to save him.

Cain was not an atheist, he was a religious man, and being religious, he was the type of man who wanted to worship God in his own way. Like so many today, however, he despised the blood! He wanted to impress God with his own work (Genesis 4:3). He would not take his place before God as a ruined sinner in need of the death of a substitute. It is of no surprise then that, in Cain, we meet the first religious murderer (Genesis 4:8). Religious folk hate God's message of ruin by sin and the gracious redemption by blood alone ... it angers them.

Notice also how Cain's religion made him a hypocrite; observe how he would not corrupt his altar with the blood of a lamb, but was willing to stain the earth with his brother's blood (Genesis 4:2-8).

So let's understand the truth about Cain ... he rejected the blood!

When the blood was shed on an altar, the worshipper was saying, "I am guilty, and I justly deserve death, however, allow the death of this substitute be reckoned as my death." Cain refused to do this; he was not prepared to take his place before God as a guilty lost sinner in need of mercy.

Furthermore, Cain, like all unbelieving religionists, could not see that, in blood sacrifice, there was also an acknowledgement of the righteous love and grace of God. In the blood sacrifice, the worshipper was saying by faith, "Not only am I guilty Lord, but Lord let your love grace and mercy, which I don't deserve, now pour out on me."

Mark this down, we must diligently avoid the error of Cain in coming to God on any other basis than the shed blood. We are baptized into Christ's death, and, therefore, we glory in the cross (Galatians 6:14). Christ crucified was the payment of the sinner's penalty, the extinction and tearing up of the debt that we owed.

As the cross is the payment, so the resurrection is God's receipt that declares that the payment has been made in full. Again we must remember that our faith does not make the payment, but is rather the simple recognition on our part that our payment has been made by the Lord Jesus.

Faith unites us to Christ and identifies us with the one who died and rose again. The good news is that, because of the finished work of the Lord Jesus, we are reckoned to have paid the penalty due to our sins and are treated as if we were the ones who had died.

"Until I saw the blood,
'Twas hell my soul was fearing:
And dark and dreary in my eyes,
The future was appearing,
While conscience told its tale of sin,
And caused a weight of woe within.

But when I saw the blood,

And look'd at Him who shed it,
My right to peace was seen at once,
And I with transport read it;
I found myself to God brought nigh,
And "Victory" became my cry.

My joy was in the blood,
The news of which had told me,
That spotless as the Lamb of God,
My Father could behold me,
And all my boast was in His name.
Through whom this great salvation came."

And that's the Gospel Truth!