



# Abel

“In the Beginning”

*“By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he received approval as righteous, God bearing witness by accepting his gifts; he died, but through his faith he is still speaking.” Hebrews 11:4 RSV*

Abel is mentioned in at least six books of the Bible and yet we know very little about him. Actually three of the times are in the New Testament, and he was killed in Genesis! We know he was a son of Adam and Eve. We know that he was killed out of jealousy by his brother, Cain, even though the Bible says he was innocent.

We know that Abel was a shepherd, not the highest job in the rank. But, if we take a second to explore the role of a shepherd, we can see that it may have been his role not for that time alone to earn a living, but he led the way for us. Remember that the shepherds were the ones told that Christ was being born. We recall that Christ said “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” John 10:11

It was not considered a noble profession, but according to what we see when we look at Abel and Christ we couldn’t do much better than be in the hands of the good shepherd, one that would give his life for others.

And if we read the Bible passages that mention him, we realize that God had great regard for him and used him to explain life and faith to other people. We think he was probably only a young man or even a youth when he was killed. Why is his story important?

We don’t go out and kill our brother. Or do we? We hear people say that others do that because they see it on television, or they know children are learning it from playing war games? Cain didn’t have any of those “guidelines” but he had jealousy, a trait which all of us have to one degree or another. This passage talks a lot about faith – that simple thing that we cannot see, but that we must have if we believe in Christ as our personal Savior.

In a letter written to the Hebrews, the section containing the information about Abel is part of a great section on faith. “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old received divine approval.” Hebrews 11:1-2.

The writer then goes on to mention Abel and Enoch as having been approved by God because they had faith. We all want to have approval. We all want to be liked. But the ultimate is to be loved by God. Abel was loved by God because he had faith. We don’t know what Abel said to Cain when he was going to kill him, but we do know that Abel had God’s approval and blessing and so he now has eternal life. An old hymn about a shepherd comes to mind based on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm.

“The Lord’s my Shepherd, I’ll not want;  
He makes me down to lie in pastures green;  
He leadeth me the quiet waters by.

My soul He doth restore again,  
and me to walk doth make within the paths of righteousness,  
e’en for His own name’s sake.

Yea, though I walk in death’s dark vale,  
Yet will I fear no ill; For Thou art with me,  
and Thy rod And staff my comfort still.

My table Thou hast furnished me In presence of my foes;  
My head Thou dost with oil anoint, And my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me;  
and in God’s house forevermore,  
my dwelling place shall be.”

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You for the Bible and the words of wisdom that it gives to us. Sometimes we don’t understand why You have put something like this in there for us to read, and then as we see Your love, we realize that even in the worst circumstances You are there for us if we

only believe in You as our Shepherd and Savior. Help us, dear Lord, to realize this free gift is ours if we only ask. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

1. Why would such a good person have been killed by his brother in jealousy?
2. How did God use Abel's death to tell about faith?
3. Why does God bring it up again in the New Testament?
4. How can we be assured of approval by God and the gift of eternal life?
5. Are we willing to be guided by a shepherd? Did the shepherds guide anyone to Christ when He was born? Why were they chosen?
6. Do we have the same promise given to Abel?

Abel: Abel's life story is predominantly in Genesis 4. Other references in the New Testament include Matt 11:35; Luke 11:51; and Heb. 11:4

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