

# What Does Abel Say?

Dub McClish

Abel is credited with speaking three times in the Bible. But in each case, he “speaks” without words. In Genesis 4:10 Abel’s blood cries; in Hebrews 11:4 and 12:24 Abel’s sacrifice speaks. Influence, whether good or bad, is powerful. Abel’s life has been speaking for thousands of years, but what does it say?

## Faith Gives Its Best

Abel brought of the “firstlings of the flock and of the fat thereof” (Gen. 4:4). Abel’s “more excellent sacrifice” might refer primarily to quantity, to a generous sacrifice. God was pleased with his “gifts” (Heb. 11:4), implying an abundant offering.

Faith makes the difference between the acceptable and unacceptable offering, whether it be money, worship, or time. “By faith” Abraham offered his own son (Heb. 11:17). The Macedonians abounded in the riches of liberality and gave beyond their power because they first gave themselves to the Lord, a definition of real faith (2 Cor. 8:2-5).

How we use our money is an accurate measure of our faith. We advertise our unbelief when we can drive two or three good cars, live in a comfortable, well-furnished house, wear expensive clothes, eat the best food, buy the newest gadgets, spend several hundred dollars on recreation each year – and return a mere token of our wealth to the Lord. Some day we shall have to explain how we acquired a financial estate for ourselves but could not share our spiritual estate with the lost. Abel shouts to us, “Bring your firstlings!” Christ echoes, “Seek ye first His kingdom!” (Mat 6:33).

## Faith Justifies

Abel was pronounced righteous by faith. His parents and brother were rejected by God because they lacked faith. Abel personifies man’s appropriate response to God. Abel was the first to demonstrate the principle announced in Habakkuk 2:4: “the righteous shall live by faith,” also a frequent New Testament quotation.

## Faith Obeys

“By faith Abel offered...” (Heb. 11:4). Only when his faith led him to obedience did God bear witness to him “that he was righteous.” Cain tragically illustrates the end of a mere intellectual belief in God that disregards God’s instructions. His offering was rejected. Faith,

which comes by hearing God's Word (Rom. 10:17), does not play presumptuous games with God. The interdependence of faith and obedience is a recurring emphasis of the New Testament. The two are used interchangeably by Christ, as recorded in John 3:36. The availing principle with God is "faith working through love" (Gal. 5:6). Disobedience and unbelief are used synonymously in Hebrews 3:18-19. The doctrine of salvation by faith alone is not Biblical. Biblical faith is always an obedient, working faith.

### **Faith Is Worth the Price**

Abel's faith likely evoked ridicule from Cain. Cain was careless in his offering, rebellious when it was rejected, jealous of Abel's acceptable sacrifice, and sarcastic when asked about Abel's disappearance (Gen. 4:4-9).

Whatever influence his brother might have used to weaken him, Abel's faith remained firm. His death was directly related to his faithful sacrifice. The first example of faith in all history is one which cost the believer his life! Servants of God are not promised immunity from suffering but are rather warned that they will suffer for their faith. Abel exhorts, "Keep your faith regardless of the price."

Abel's faith has not been silenced. Nor can it be, for true faith endures. After we are dead, what message will our influence speak?

[NOTE: Written for and published in *20<sup>th</sup> Century Christian* quarterly, March 1974, published by 20<sup>th</sup> Century Pub. Co., Nashville, TN.]

**Attribution:** From *thescripturecache.com*; Dub McClish, owner and administrator.