

# Gospel Power



*“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation...” (Romans 1:16)*

*The Gospel Power is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.*

**Anderson  
church of Christ**  
5900 Highway 207  
Anderson, Alabama

**Visit Us On The Web**  
Anderson-church.org

**Men Privileged To Serve:**  
Sunday, May 11th:

#### *Bible Classes*

Song Leader  
..... Daniel Clemmons  
Bible Reading ..... (Deut. 4:9-14)  
..... Brad Hammond  
Prayer  
..... Jimmy Glass

#### *Morning Worship*

Song Leader  
..... Daniel Clemmons  
Prayer  
..... Eddie J. Hammond  
Lord's Supper  
Presiding ..... Phil Pressnell  
Assisting ..... Aric Butler  
Serving ..... Rodney McCrary  
..... Hunter Cox  
..... Corey Goode  
..... Ethan Pressnell  
Closing Prayer  
..... Rocky Rose

#### *Evening Worship*

Song Leader  
..... Brian Word  
Bible Reading ..... (Deut. 4:15-24)  
..... Brian Blakely  
Prayer  
..... Cecil Cox  
Lord's Supper  
..... Phil Pressnell  
..... Aric Butler  
Closing Prayer  
..... Andrew Gatlin

Volume XV

May 11, 2008

No. 19

## *Abel vs. Cain*

**W. Frank Walton**

*“By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks” (Hebrews 11:4).*

Abel's worship is presented as an example to us of faithful, God-honoring worship. It was a “better sacrifice” (NASB; lit., “more sacrifice”; Greek, *pleion*, “plenary” means “fully constituted”). This means it was the fullest example of supreme devotion in obedient worship that pleases God. Fausett observes it “partook more largely of the true virtue of sacrifice.” This is a good reason to learn the difference between the acceptable worship of Abel in contrast to the unacceptable worship of Cain.

### **Acceptable Worship Must Be By Obedient Faith**

Why was Abel's worship accepted and Cain's rejected? Abel was “righteous” (Hebrews 11:4, Matthew 23:35) and therefore his attitude and action in worship must have been according to God's righteous will (Psalm 119: 172). Yet, Cain's worship was not, and it is listed among his “evil works” (1 John 3:12). Worship to God is supremely concerned with offering what God wants, not in fulfilling selfish human desires.

The “faith” to be “righteous” before God comes from doing God's will and following His directions (Hebrews 10:36-38). How would Abel know that God wanted an animal sacrifice (kill it and burn it up as an offering), unless God had given instructions? How then did Abel and Cain come to offer their worship at the same time? Both contextually point to God having given some specific instructions about worship He wanted.

A. R. Fausett observed,

*“Now faith must have some revelation of God on which it fastens. The revelation was ... God’s command to sacrifice animals ... in token of the forfeiture of men’s life by sin”* (JFB: NT Commentary, 2:566).

How do we get “faith” to believe that what we offer to God is acceptable? “Faith ... comes by hearing the Word” (Romans 10:17). Faith is a trusting response to God. The “righteous live by faith” (Romans 1:17), which is to “walk by faith” (2 Corinthians 5:7). This means following God’s instructions in “the obedience of faith” (Romans 16:25-27; Hebrews 11:7-8, 17, 28, 30).

Faith to rightly obey must rest on divine testimony. The rejection of Cain and his offering of worship would also entail his lack of faith to not fulfill God’s instructions of acceptable worship. God accepted both the worship and the worshipper in Abel’s case, whereas He rejected both in the case of Cain.

### **No Substitutes for Blood Sacrifices Required of Sinners**

Cain’s offering was rejected because he failed to offer, by faith, the needed blood sacrifice to be right with God. For sinful men to approach a holy God, His grace and mercy ordained the life-blood of an innocent substitute offered to make atonement. “All things are cleansed with blood and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22). This substitutionary system was planned from the foundation of the world, since Christ Himself was “a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8, ASV). This principle of blood atonement was operative in covering Adam and Eve’s shameful nakedness, as visible evidence of their sin and alienation, which needed to be remedied in restoring fellowship with God (Genesis 3:7-11). In Hebrew, “to atone” means “to cover.” In Genesis 3:21, God mercifully restored fellowship with Adam and Eve by slaying innocent animals and “made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.” Ryrie observes, “The garments of skin were God’s provision for restoring Adam and Eve’s fellowship with Himself and imply slaying of an animal in order to

provide them.” The Hebrew writer says that Jesus’ “blood ... speaks better things than the blood of Abel” (Heb. 12:28). Abel’s blood sacrifice was only a temporary provision for man’s sin problem. Animal sacrifice was provisional and could only look forward to the perfect sacrifice of Christ, which would fully and finally mediate the lasting covenant between God and sinful men (Hebrews 10:1-7).

We understand that Cain must have substituted a more convenient vegetable offering instead of the needed animal sacrifice. It wasn’t that Cain just had a bad attitude. The text specifically says God “did not accept Cain and his gift” (Genesis 4:7, NCV), meaning both Cain himself and His worship were unacceptable to God.

Cain was the first religious innovator, which illustrates the error of “will-worship” (Colossians 2:23) or “self-chosen religion.” Those who “reject authority” (Jude 8), as in worship and add unauthorized items, have dangerously entered “the way of Cain” (Jude 11). This is the way of rebellion against God’s appointed way of acceptable worship and fellowship. In prompting Abel’s murder, Cain’s unauthorized worship is specifically enumerated as “his works were evil” (1 John 3:12). A rebellious person is a selfish person, who is more concerned with presumptuously doing what he wants in religion than submitting to what God requires. O Lord, keep us back “from presumptuous sin” (Psalm 19:13)!

An Internet blogger observed: “Cain... showed that he desired to be independent of God by worshipping Him according to his own ideas, and his offering of the fruit of the ground displayed the fact that he was trusting in his own good works, and not in ... [God’s grace] for justification. ... If we think we can worship God correctly without his Sovereign prescription, why should we think that we can’t be saved as a result of our own efforts? If we are entirely dependent upon God’s grace for salvation, then we must also be entirely dependent on the instructions of God’s word for our worship.”

-via *Biblical Insights*; Vol. 7 No. 11; November 2007.

# *Influence In The Home*

Will Dilbeck

I have forgotten a lot of the things I was taught in high school. I have forgotten how to solve the Pythagorean Theorem. I have forgotten almost all of the French language I had learned. I can't even remember who the tenth president was. However, I can remember an interesting statement about influence. More than one teacher instructed us to be on our best behavior in front of the younger kids. They would say, "You never know who is watching you." In other words, we needed to watch our actions because if a younger, impressionable child saw us doing something wrong, they might try and emulate that wrong. It is a practical concept I have constantly tried to remember. However, my influence on those closest to me is perhaps more important. It is easy to get into the "comfort zone" with those we love. We feel we can relax and let our guard down. When this happens, we can become less aware of our influence toward them. We must remember they are watching us as well.

Let us imagine that a man is coming home from work. He has had a difficult day at the office, but he has maintained his composure because he is a Christian and wants to influence others in a positive manner. However, he "lets his guard down" at home and is bitter, distant and cold toward his wife and kids. Most of the time, he is a great father and spouse, but not today. The next day he has an even more difficult day, but his demeanor at work is that of a Christian. Therefore, he shines even though the situation is severely affecting him. Again he comes home and takes it out on his family. He is not mean or abusive, but he is not displaying the same attention to his influence as he does at his job. Why? Is his family less important? Sometimes we may think our family "knows how we really are" and will overlook our attitude. However, these are the times when our influence can have the greatest impact.

The book of Ruth is a fantastic story in a

difficult time in Israel's history. It is definitely a story of influence. In the beginning of the book, Naomi loses her husband, Elimelech, and her two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. Before her sons died, they married two Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. After the deaths in her family, Naomi wanted to leave Moab and return to the land of Judah. She told the wives of her sons to each return to their mother's house in Moab (Ruth 1:8). However, Ruth did not want to leave Naomi's side. Ruth said, "For where you will go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die" (Ruth 1:16-17). This is a tremendous statement of loyalty, but why is Ruth so loyal? Her loyalty is due in part to the influence of Naomi. Ruth's statement about "Naomi's God becoming her God" is a testament to the faith of Naomi. She had influenced Ruth in such a way that Ruth did not want to ever leave her. She was going to be completely devoted to her in all aspects of her life.

Naomi had suffered much more than simply a "bad day at the office." But throughout her life, she had definitely influenced Ruth. Later in the book, Ruth marries Boaz, a kinsman of Elimelech. She would later conceive a child who would become the father of Jesse. Jesse would eventually become the father of David. More importantly, this is the lineage of Jesus. Our influence toward anyone has implications. But our influence toward our family often has implications far beyond imagination.

-via *News & Notes*; Madison, Alabama.

## *News & Notes*

**THE SICK:** *Faye Hammond* is at home now following her stay in the hospital... *Luke McIntyre* was able to be at Bible study Wednesday night after being sick over the weekend ... *Lisa Word's father, Austin Dillinger*, is at home now and is dealing with congestive heart

failure... **Arica Butler** was able to be at Bible study Wednesday night after being sick over the weekend ...**Marcia Cooper** is now at home ... **Jack and Onzell Tucker** continue to be confined at home ... **Buffy Wallen's grandmother and James McConnell's aunt, Nadine Thompson**, is in the Lauderdale Christian Nursing Home in Killen ...**Eric White's father, Jim White**, continues his cancer treatments...**Steven Crunk's niece, Abby Vandiver**, is in Children's Hospital in Birmingham and is seriously sick with a blood disorder ... **Judy Williams' mother, Flossie Kazzaire**, continues in a nursing facility in Fayette.

**GWANDA, ZIMBABWE:** Remember the work we are involved in helping our brethren in the church at Gwanda, Zimbabwe. We will be packing and sending another shipment this week.

**OUT OF TOWN:** **The Butlers:** *Aric, Andrea and Arica* are in Florida visiting with Aric's mother this weekend... **The Parkers:** *Steve, Melissa, Jackson, Caroline and Keaton* are in South Carolina this week... **Jerry Best** has been in Texas this past week on vacation... **The Coxes:** *Kerry, Tyler, Hunter and I* are with the Market Street church in Athens today. I am preaching the morning and evening services in their gospel meeting that begins today.

**GOSPEL MEETING:** The **Market Street church** in Athens is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Wednesday evening with services at 7:00. The speakers will be as follows: *Sunday – David Cox; Monday – Bill Hall; Tuesday – Everett Conn; Wednesday – Douglas Eubanks.*

**PREACHING TODAY:** Due to my absence today **Cecil Cox** will be preaching this morning and **Jimmy Glass** will be preaching this evening. I know that you will enjoy hearing them speak and I appreciate their willingness to fill in while I am away.

**THE RECORD:** Attendance: Week of May 4th

**Sunday:** Bible Classes ..... 99  
Morning Worship ..... 118  
Evening Worship ..... 82  
**Wednesday:** Bible Classes ..... 82

**Schedule of Services**

**Sunday**  
Bible Classes ..... 9:45 a.m.  
Morning Worship ..... 10:45 a.m.  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 p.m.  
**Wednesday**  
Bible Classes ..... 7:00 p.m.

**Elders**

Michael Clemmons ..... (256) 247-0836  
Scottie Goode ..... (931) 565-3391

**Deacons**

Jimmy Glass ..... (256) 247-0571  
Eddie J. Hammond ..... (256) 247-3038  
Mark McIntyre ..... (256) 729-8316  
Steve Parker ..... (256) 247-7843  
Phil Pressnell ..... (256) 232-8509  
Rocky Rose ..... (256) 247-0011  
Brian Word ..... (931) 565-3799

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