

# ABEL

Key Passages:

**Gen 4:2** “And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.”

**Gen 4:3** “And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. “

**Gen 4:4** “And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: “

**Gen 4:5** “But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.”

**Gen 4:6** “And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?”

**Gen 4:7** “If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.”

**Gen 4:8** “And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.”

**Gen 4:9** “And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?”

**Mat 23:35** “That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.”

**Heb 11:4** “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”

**Heb 12:24** “And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

Key Character Traits:

- **Faithful**
- **Trusting**
- **Righteous**

## **MEANING OF HIS NAME**

Hitchcock’s Bible Names states that his name means, “vanity”. Some commentators believe that Eve gave him the name as a sign of the state of her heart. C.I. Scofield stated that his name means “exhalation”, or “that which ascends”. This could imply that after his death, Abel was with the Lord.

## **EXPERIENCE**

Abel was the second son of Adam and Eve. He was a shepherd.

## **SPIRITUAL LIFE**

- **Faithful** – He offered the choice parts of the firstborn of his flock. (Gen 4:4)
- **Trusting** – Although his brother was angry, he didn’t put up his guard. Cain attacked him and killed him. There is no mention of a struggle. (Gen 4:8)
- **Righteous** – This is the word that Jesus Himself uses to describe Abel. (Mat 23:35) and in (Heb 11:4)

## **SHORTCOMINGS**

No weaknesses or shortcomings were documented.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

He was a good shepherd. He had reverence and trust in God. Reverence, because he gave to the Lord an offering that consisted of the very best part of his flock.

Trust, because the choicest firstborn were vital for the continuing survival of a flock. These prime lambs would be the foundation for the next generation.

## **GLORY TO GOD**

God was honored by Abel’s desire to please Him. He was honored by Abel’s trust in Him to provide for his future needs. By offering up the best lambs, Abel was weakening the immediate future of the flock. That act says that he trusted in God to provide for his future needs. He wasn’t taking action to secure the future of the flock on his own, but relied upon God to provide.

Through Abel’s life, God provided humanity with a foreshadowing of the coming of Jesus:

- **As a shepherd,**

Gen 4:2, “...And Abel was a keeper of sheep...”

Joh 10:11 “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”

- **As pleasing to God,**

Gen 4:4 “...And the LORD *had respect unto Abel* and to his offering” (“had respect” can also be interpreted as “approved” or “well pleased”.)

Mat 3:17 “And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, *in whom I am well pleased.*”

- **As a sacrifice,** (the sacrifice of Abel of both his sheep and himself has a link to the sacrifice made by Jesus)

Heb 12:24, “And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

## **ESSENTIAL TRUTH**

Abel had his eyes focused on God. He wasn’t concerned about his future, only in doing what would be pleasing to God. In contrast, Cain focused on himself. Cain only offered “the fruit of the ground”. There doesn’t appear to be anything special

about the offering... just some fruits. He didn't offer the sweetest most visually appealing fruits of his harvest. He was prideful and self-centered. Rather than a circumspect view of why his offering was not acceptable, he looked at outward reasons. He blamed Abel. In Gen 4:11 we learn that because Cain killed Abel, God cursed Cain.

The primary character trait exhibited in Abel's life is righteousness. He put "pleasing God" before concerns for himself. And served the Lord with excellence.

## **LIFE APPLICATION**

First and foremost, be obedient to God and trust Him completely. We shouldn't try to secure our future on our own strength. Be good stewards, YES! It's a matter of the state of one's heart. We shouldn't do it out of fear. We need to focus on the Lord. We need to seek out His will for our lives. Unlike Cain, we should focus on how we ourselves serve the Lord and not what others are or aren't doing. We don't have to worry about vengeance or justice, because He will take care of that for us.

**LEADING LESSON** - *What do you think is the leading lesson of this man's life?*

**IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE** - *How does the leading lesson impact your life? What specific changes do you need to make to become a person of like character?*

**FUTURE PLANS** - *What specific action do you plan to take to grow in this character trait?*

**EXPRESS OBEDIENCE** - *Pray to God your desire to be obedient in this area of your life*