

Peace be with you, listening friends. We greet you in the name of God, the Lord of peace, who wants everyone to understand and submit to the way of righteousness that He has established, and have true peace with Him forever. We are happy to be able to return today to present your program *The Way of Righteousness*.

Last time, in our study in the Torah, we saw that God, after Adam and Eve sinned, began to announce **His plan** to bring into the world One who would deliver the children of Adam from the power of Satan and sin and hell. We also saw how God refused to accept the clothes of leaves that Adam and Eve made for themselves. God wanted to teach them that sinners have no way of covering their shame before the Holy One who must judge them. Only God can save sinners from their guilt. Thus, we saw how God Himself sacrificed some animals, made clothes of skin, and put them on Adam and Eve. **God made the first blood sacrifice**. We also read how God announced that there would be two lines of people on earth: those who refuse to believe the Word of God, and those who believe it.

Today we will read about Adam and Eve's first two sons: **Cain**, who refused to believe God, and **Abel**, who believed God. As we saw, Adam and Eve were now living outside the Garden of Paradise. God had expelled them because of their transgression. Because of their sin, they could no longer live in the blessings of the Garden of Paradise. Their sin had spoiled their relationship with God. However, God still loved them and cared for them.

Now then, let us read together from the Torah. In the fourth chapter of the book of Genesis, it is written, *"Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, 'With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.' Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil."*

Adam and Eve bore two sons, Cain and Abel. They were sinners, just like their parents. The sin of Adam spread to his children, like a contagious disease. Cain and Abel were

conceived in sin. Thus, the Scriptures say: "*Adam bore sons in his own likeness.*" "Like father, like son." **Cain and Abel were born with a sinful nature.** The children grew physically and increased in knowledge. Cain became a farmer. He was a serious labourer and was not afraid of hard work. Abel was a shepherd. **Both knew about God.** They knew that God exists and that He is holy and hates sin. And both should have known that **to approach God, they needed to come by the way of the blood sacrifice which God had ordained.**

There came a day in the lives of Cain and Abel, when they decided to worship God and present to Him a sacrifice. Thus, the Scriptures say:

"In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favour on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favour So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast."

Let us consider what happened. Two people wanted to worship God. Both presented sacrifices to God. But the Scriptures say: "*The Lord looked with favour on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favour*" Why did God accept Abel's sacrifice, and refuse Cain's sacrifice? What was the difference between those two sacrifices?

Truly, Cain's sacrifice and Abel's sacrifice were very different. Cain brought to God **beautiful vegetables and delicious fruit.** As for Abel, he brought to God **the blood of a lamb without blemish.** God forgave Abel of his sins, but did not forgive Cain of his sins.

Why did God forgive the sins of Abel, who brought the blood of a lamb, and did not forgive the sins of Cain, who brought vegetables and fruit? Was it because God does not like vegetables and fruit? No, that is not the reason! Why, then, did God judge Abel as righteous, and leave Cain in his sin? Here is the reason: **Abel brought the sacrifice that**

God required, but Cain brought something else. What was it that God required so that He could forgive their sins without compromising His righteousness? He required the blood--**the life**--of an unblemished animal. Abel believed God and brought a blood sacrifice, just as God required. Thus, the Scripture says: *"By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his [sacrifice]."* Abel believed God, but Cain did not believe Him.

What does it mean to believe God? To believe God is to have confidence in God to the point of obeying His Word. To believe God is **to accept what God says as true**. If you say, "I believe in God," but you do not believe what God says in the Holy Scriptures, then you do not really believe God. **God and His Word are one**. If you believe God, you will believe and obey His Word. If you do not believe what God says, it is God Himself you are rejecting.

God accepted Abel because he believed God's Word and came with the blood of a lamb, as God had commanded. God did not accept Cain, because he did not honestly believe the Word of God. Cain claimed to believe in God, but his actions denied it, because he did not bring a blood sacrifice, as God had commanded.

Someone may be asking, "Why did God command animal sacrifices? Why did God say, *"Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin"*?" Here is the reason: God's holy Law declares that **the payment or penalty of sin is death!** That is why blood had to be shed. God did not say, "Sin's penalty can be paid with fruits and vegetables." Nor did God say, "The payment for sin is praying and fasting and doing good works." No! What God, in His holiness, did say is: The payment required for sin is **death!**

God, in the Writings of the Prophets, shows us that every person, every child of Adam has sinned and that each sinner has **a great debt** before God, the Holy One. The sinner must die and then pay that debt of sin in hell forever. The debt of sin is huge and you cannot produce enough good works to cancel it before God. **The penalty of sin is death and**

hell, which is why good works can never pay it off!

Let us try to illustrate it. Imagine that I owe a huge amount of money to a creditor, and I go to him and say, "I know that I owe you a lot of money. However, I am totally broke, and cannot pay my debt with money, but I have another plan to pay you. Here's my plan: Every day, I will sweep the porch of your house. Thus I will work for you until I pay off my debt." How would the creditor respond to my proposition? Perhaps he would get angry, or perhaps he would laugh at me, however, what is certain is that he would not accept my idea! Why would the creditor not accept my plan? Because there is no way I can pay my huge debt with my feeble "good works."

Similarly, no one can pay off their debt of sin with good works. Only one thing can pay for sin--not money or good works--but **death**. The penalty of sin is death and judgement. Consequently, God could not cancel Cain and Abel's debt of sin based on the works of their own hands. God's plan to cancel their debt of sin was through the blood of a sacrifice. The innocent must die in the place of the guilty.

Forgiveness of sin is not based on man's plan, but on God's plan. On the basis of **the substitutionary sacrifice – one sacrifice in place of another** - God opened a door of forgiveness and salvation for the children of Adam. In earlier generations, God decreed that every sinner must present an animal without blemish and slaughter it. The innocent animal would die as a substitute for the sinner. Because of the blood of such a sacrifice, God could be patient with Adam's descendants and **cover** their sins for a time. But the blood of animals **could not cancel** the debt of man's sin, because the value of an animal is not equal to that of a man. That is why the Scriptures say that animal sacrifices were *"only a shadow of the good things that are coming, not the realities themselves...because it is impossible for the blood of [animals] to take away sins."*

Thus, the most important thing to remember about animal sacrifices is that they were **mere illustrations of the Saviour** who was to come into the world to pay the debt of sin for the

descendants of Adam. This Saviour, whom God promised, would die *"for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring [them] to God."* As it is written in the Gospel {Injil}: *"All the prophets testify about [this Saviour] that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His Name."*

However, in past generations, God's plan of salvation required animal sacrifices. But Cain ignored God's plan. Cain came up with another way, a religion of his own making. Cain created **the first false religion**. He brought to God the works of his own hands. He sacrificed to God that which he had cultivated, that is, the produce of the cursed earth, which has no blood. Did God accept such a bloodless "sacrifice"? No, God did not accept it.

As for Abel, he brought to God a lamb without blemish and slaughtered it so that the blood was shed. After that he burned it. Because of that sacrifice, Abel had a clear conscience before God. He knew that, in himself, he deserved to die, but **the innocent lamb had died in his place**. Thus, Abel testified to his faith in the Redeemer who would come into the world, to die in the place of sinners, to bear the punishment for their sin.

We want to summarize today's story by asking a very important question. Why did God not accept Cain's sacrifice? Was Cain a greater sinner than Abel? That is not the reason.

They were both sinners. Both presented sacrifices to God. Cain was a religious person. On the surface, perhaps we can even say that Cain's sacrifice was more respectable than Abel's sacrifice. Vegetables and fruits are very beautiful, but a slaughtered lamb and its blood is not a pleasant sight! However, sin is an offensive thing to God and the way of forgiveness that God established declared: *"Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin!"* Thus, God refused Cain and his sacrifice, because Cain did not respect God's righteous way of salvation.

No one can come to God, unless he comes by the righteous way that God has ordained! **God's way is perfect and precise!** It is like mathematics. If a teacher asks a student at

school, "How much is two plus two?" There is only one correct answer. **Two plus two equals four.** The student who answers three is wrong. The one who says five is wrong. The person who says four and a half is also wrong. Two plus two can only equal four! That is the way it is with the righteous way of salvation that God has established. There is only one God and **one way** for sinners to be reconciled to God, the Holy One! It is **the way of the absolutely perfect Sacrifice.**

You who are listening today, do you know what the Word of God says concerning the holy Sacrifice that God has provided **to cancel your debt of sin permanently?** Do you know that God Himself sent down to earth an almighty Saviour so that you can be **forgiven** of your sins and have **a pure heart** before God? In coming lessons, we will be learning much about this wonderful Saviour. Concerning Him, the Holy Scriptures say: *"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."*

Friends, this is where we will stop today. In the will of God, next time we will complete our study about Cain and Abel....

God bless you as you take time to contemplate His basic law which says:

"Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin."

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