

What is “The Way of Cain”?

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In the book of Jude, we read the following: “Woe to them! For **they have gone in the way of Cain...**” (verse 11). What exactly is, “the way of Cain”?

The main accounting of Cain is found in Genesis, chapter 4:

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, “I have acquired a man from the LORD.” Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time it came to pass that **Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering...** (verses 1-5).

Why was it that God did not respect Cain’s offering? In Hebrews chapter 11, we are told that, “By faith **Abel** offered to God **a more excellent sacrifice than Cain...**” (verse 4). What was it, that **made** Abel’s sacrifice “more excellent” than Cain’s?

(As an aside, let’s understand that the Bible does **not** indicate that ploughing the ground is in any way a “sin.” Nor does it indicate that there’s anything wrong with being a farmer. For proof of that, see 1 Kings 19:19 and Luke 9:62.)

Scripture does *not* tell us, specifically *why* God did not respect Cain’s offering. Yet consider this: We just read that in *Abel’s* offering, he brought “of the **firstborn** of his flock.” As for Cain, it’s quite *possible* (and even *likely*) that Cain—unlike Abel—put forth **very little effort** in **choosing the BEST** of his produce for the offering.

Furthermore, it’s *extremely likely* that the **main** reason for God’s disapproval of the offering, was because of Cain’s **attitude** in *making* the offering. Afterall, as we proceed, we will see that Cain did have some very *serious* **spiritual problems...** and that **one of** those problems was that he **lacked proper respect and reverence** for God!

In fact, let’s notice an *example* of that now. When we come before God to make an offering, we should do so in profound **humility** towards God. Yet, we read in verse 5, that when God did not respect Cain’s offering, “**Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.**”

Now... if Cain had *truly* come before God in **humility**, then—*instead* of being *angry* at God’s disapproval—Cain would have been humbly **asking himself** what he had done (or failed to do) that **displeased** God! So... it’s very *obvious*, that Cain had **not** made the offering with the right **attitude!**

Consider now a *second* example of Cain's **disrespect** for God. After Cain killed Abel, God asked him where Abel was... and notice the snarky and extremely *disrespectful* reply which Cain made to God: Cain replied, "...I do not know. **Am I my brother's keeper?**" (verse 9). How *disrespectful!*

Four Attributes

"The Way of Cain" can be described by the following attributes:

- (1) **Lack of *proper reverence* for God**
- (2) **Jealousy, Anger, Bitterness**
- (3) **Blaming others for our *own* shortcomings**
- (4) **Lack of LOVE for fellowman**

We have *already* discussed #1. **Let's now consider #2 ... "Jealousy, Anger & Bitterness."**

Going back to Genesis chapter 4, notice verses 6 to 8:

So the LORD said to Cain, "**Why are you angry?** And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you **do not** do well, **sin** lies at the door. And its desire *is* for you, but **you should rule over it.**" Now 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 **killed** him (Gen. 4: 6-8).

Plainly, Cain killed his brother because of *jealousy, anger and bitterness!* **He failed to "rule over" those negatives emotions!** *Instead,* Cain allowed those negative emotions to **fester.**

"Anger"—if *left to fester*—can become "**bitterness.**" And, the Apostle Paul *warns* us that "**a root of bitterness**" leads "many" people to become **defiled**" (Heb.12:15).

Many, if not most, of humanity's evil thoughts *come from* Satan, the devil. And, how does scripture *describe* Satan? It describes him as "a **murderer** from the beginning" (John 8:44).

In fact, scripture states that Cain "**was OF the wicked one and murdered his brother**" (I John 3:12).

The account in Genesis chapter 4, gives **NO hint of regret** on Cain's part. There is only *self-pity* in response to the *punishment* imposed on him by God. In verse 13, Cain cried out, "My punishment *is* greater than I can bear!"

Blaming Others for Our OWN Shortcomings

As for the human tendency to "blame others for our *own* shortcomings," that is clearly the case with Cain! He had **no reason** to be angry with Abel. Yet, he *blamed* Abel. Why? The answer, again, is plainly given in I John, chapter 3: "And **why** did he [Cain] **murder** him? Because his

[Cain's] works were evil and his brother's righteous" (verse 12). In other words, Abel's righteous works (*including* his "more excellent sacrifice") made *Cain look bad!*

So... Cain *blamed* Abel, and then allowed *bitterness to fester*, and then *killed him!*

Lack of LOVE For Fellowman

Notice the following passage: "In this the children of God and the children of the devil are **manifest**: Whoever does not practice righteousness **is not of God, NOR is he who does not LOVE his brother.** For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that **we should love one another, NOT as Cain who was OF the wicked one** and murdered his brother..." (I John 3: 10-12).

The passage above says that "**he who does not LOVE his brother,**" "**is NOT of God!**" Yes, *loving our fellowman* is *so important* that Jesus Christ said that "...On these two commandments [**love of God and love of neighbor**] hang **all** the Law and the Prophets"! (Matt. 22: 35-40).

The Apostle John said this: "If someone says, 'I love God,' and **hates his brother**, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that **he who loves God *must love his brother also***" (I John 4: 20-21; cf. Rom. 13: 8-10).

No, Cain did not love his brother—and therefore, he did not love God! Cain was "of the wicked one"—he was *of* Satan, the devil—who was "a *murderer* from the beginning" (John 8:44).

Conclusion

The *history of mankind* has been to go "The way of Cain." *Even we in God's Church—from time to time—are guilty of going that way!*

In closing, let's take one final look at the *four* characteristics of going "The way of Cain":

- (1) Lack of *proper reverence* for God
- (2) Jealousy, Anger, Bitterness
- (3) Blaming others for our *own* shortcomings
- (4) Lack of LOVE for fellowman