

# Bible 350 interpretive question #2 essay



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INTERPRETIVE QUESTION #2: WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CAIN AND ABEL'S GIFTS? Source #1: Burton Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament Coffman believes the key to understanding the reason why Abel's gift was accepted and Cain's was rejected lies in Hebrews 11: 4, " By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks. " Abel offered his sacrifice in faith, Cain didn't do the same.

Coffman notes some form of the institution of sacrifice had to be in place at this time and Abel offered what God commanded of him. He dismisses any possibility this event took place without any divine guidance or as some type of spontaneous, voluntary, or simultaneous sacrifice offered by the two brothers. He also doesn't believe Cain's attitude was a reason for his sacrifice being rejected based on the fact that his evil attitude didn't manifest itself until after his offering was rejected. Source #2: Dr.

Constable's Notes on Genesis

Dr. Constable believes God " had regard" for Abel's offering because Abel had faith, Hebrews 11: 4. While the Bible does not say specifically, he goes on to explore some reasons as to what Abel believed in that Cain didn't. Abel's attitude revealed his faith while Cain's improper attitude toward God was evident in verse 5. Abel's faith is evident in him bringing the best of his flock (verse 3) whereas Cain's offering wasn't described (verse 4). Abel realized the need for the death of a living substitute to atone for his sins, but Cain did not. 1 2 Source #3: " Raising Cain" Study by Keith Krell Krell, like Coffman and Constable, says the New Testament teaches us that God

regarded Abel's sacrifice because he had faith while Cain did not. Based on this, he concludes that Abel is in a relationship with God and Cain was separated from God. He offers the following summation: God always inspects the giver and the worshipper before He inspects the gift, service, or worship.

1 This requires the one offering a gift, service, or worship to be in a relationship with God.

Otherwise, your worship is unacceptable. Krell also points out that Abel offered the "firstlings of his flock" while Cain offered "the fruit," not the first fruit of the ground. Abel brought his best in worship to the Lord while Cain simply did what he was told. God always seeks our best in worship. Finally, he says motive matters to God and we ought to ensure we are always doing the right things for the right reasons and not for the wrong reasons. I believe, as pointed out by all three of the sources I referenced, the basis for the acceptance of Abel's offering and the rejection of Cain's offering is Abel's faith as revealed to us in Hebrews 11: 4. I'm not sure how much Cain's attitude played a part in his offering being rejected. Coffman makes a good point in identifying that his evil attitude wasn't revealed until after his offering was rejected however how do we know that attitude didn't play a part in his offering?

Attitude isn't something that just "shows up," it's developed over time and is usually consistently manifested by individuals. I like and agree with Krell's thoughts on God inspecting the giver and the giver is required to be in a right relationship with God in order for the gift to be accepted. This brings into question what Cain's relationship was with God at the time of his offering but unfortunately we can only speculate

1Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. , More Hard

Sayings of the Old Testament. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1992), 20. 3 on this because the scriptures don't reveal and further clarification on this subject. Bottom line, Abel's faith allowed God to "have regard" for his offering. BIBLIOGRAPHY Coffman, James B. Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament. " <http://www.studylight.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=ge&chapter=004> (accessed February 19, 2012) Constable, Thomas L. "Notes on Genesis." (2012). <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/genesis.pdf> (accessed February 19, 2012). Kaiser Jr., Walter, C. More Hard Sayings of the Old Testament. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1992. Krell, Keith. "Raising Cain." (2006). <http://bible.org/seriespage/raising-cain-genesis-41-26> (accessed February 19, 2012).