

By Nate Bock

Edgar Allen Poe wrote a short story called *"The Tell Tale Heart"* - summarize story

The attitude of the murderer in this story was one of guilt. One take away from this story is that the attitude of our heart tells a lot about us. What's the attitude of your heart like?

In Scripture we find a story about two brothers who had very different attitudes. They were the first brothers recorded in Scripture! Cain and Abel. Hebrews 11:4 says, **"By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith though he died, he still speaks."**

If Abel still speaks, what is he saying?

To understand the story of Cain and Abel we must look to Genesis 4:2b-10.

"...Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the first born of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."

Cain spoke to his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" And the Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of you brother's blood is crying to me from the ground..."

There are differing opinions about how to interpret this passage. We will quickly examine three of these: (I've named these, to my knowledge there are no real names)

1. The Ritual view- says that God accepted Abel's sacrifice because it was what God was looking for in an offering. Abel's sacrifice was living, Cain's was lifeless. Abel cut up the offering as God desired, giving the fat portions as the offering. So Abel did well according the ritual prescribed for this kind of offering. Cain did not.
2. The Possessions view- says that Abel gave of his prize possessions, the best he had. But Cain gave only out of his possessions, out of what was left over or what was not of value to him. Therefore God accepted Abel's offering of his best and did not accept Cain's offering of his leftovers.
3. The Attitude view- says that Abel's attitude in offering God a sacrifice was pleasing to God and that Cain's attitude was not. Abel had an attitude of faith and obedience and Cain's attitude was of self-preservation and self-glorification. Abel's had faith in

God and Cain only did what was prescribed; Cain didn't understand what worship really was. Abel worshipped God in faith.

Hebrew 11: 6 says, "**And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.**"

So, I feel that the best way for us to understand this passage is the third view. God accepted Abel's offering because of Abel's faith in God's existence, that he is faithful to fulfill what He has promised, that God rewards those who seek Him.

Although Abel died, his voice continues to speak of faith that wins approval from God. Remembrance of the faith of Abel (as apposed to a profession of faith) harmonizes with the other examples given in Hebrews 11. Abel had faith! He believed God. His attitude was one of obedience and love.

How can I know if I am like Cain or like Abel? Other than just looking to a "profession of faith" that I may or may not have made.

To answer this question we need only look at Cain. Cain didn't have faith. His attitude was not one of obedience and love. He was not humble before the Lord but left the presence of the Lord angry! Then he killed the guy that he blamed!

Cain didn't love God and didn't love man.

This is where I'd like to take a moment to talk about seed planting. Hosea has challenged us all to be about planting seeds. And I think that we can all examine ourselves through this story.

Our faith in God will directly relate to the way we treat our fellow man. Abel had more than a profession of faith. His faith moved him to obedience and love for God in his worship of God. Cain's lack of faith moved him to action as well. Anger towards God and his brother.

Show me a person who loves God and we will see a person who loves their fellow man. Show me a person who does not love their fellow man and we will see a person who does not love God.

Jesus said, "they will know you are my disciples by the way that you love one another."

There is no greater love than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. My friend, Jesus laid down his life for you, me and our fellow man. How can we claim to love God and not tell others about him? How can we claim to love God and not worship Him in faith? How can we claim to love God and leave here today without humbling ourselves before him today to ask for forgiveness and to place our faith in Him? Will you be like Abel or Cain?