

Genesis 4:7 reads: ***“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.”*** The LORD asks Cain, *“If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?”* The answer is **YES**. If Cain does by faith what God’s Word says, God will indeed receive Cain’s deeds.

Chapter 4 begins with the conception and birth of Cain and Able. Verse 4 begins with the statement *“In the process of time.”* The boys grew up and as adults they were commanded to offer a sacrifice to God. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep while Cain was a tiller of the ground. We see agriculture and the domestication of animals among the earliest humans. Adam and his descendants did not spend tens of thousands of years living as hunter-gatherer cave dwellers. ***Genesis 4:3-4 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. (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:***

Cain brought an offering of vegetation (**the fruit of the ground**). Many assume that this was the difference between their offerings, but I don’t think it was what Cain offered that was the problem, rather it was the way it was offered. Later the Israelite’s grain offerings were acceptable before God (Lev. 2:1-16). The problem was not that Cain offered vegetables and Able offered a lamb. The word for offering, *minchah*, is used in its broadest sense, covering any type of gift man may bring. I see nothing pointed to say the problem was offering the fruit of the ground.

The writer to the Hebrews makes it plain that it was a faith matter that made the offering of Abel accepted and the offering of Cain was rejected: ***By faith Abel offered up a more excellent sacrifice than Cain (Heb 11:4).*** It seems there was some information given to these brothers on what to sacrifice that we do not have. Faith come by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17). Perhaps God said, “Bring me the best you have” for **Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat**. The **fat** of the animal was prized as its “luxury.” The burning of fat in sacrifice before God is called *a sweet aroma to the LORD* (Lev. 17:6).

The offering of Cain was probably more aesthetically pleasing. There was a basket full of varying colors of fruit. Abel's offering would have been a bloody mess. But God was more concerned with faith in the heart than with artistic beauty. This reminds us that in worship God is more pleased with the inward heart than the outward appearance.

Notice the progression. Here, it is one lamb for a man. Later, at the Passover, it will be one lamb for a family. Then, at the Day of Atonement, it was one lamb for the nation. Finally, with Jesus, there was one Lamb who takes away the sin of the whole world (John 1:29).

***Genesis 4:5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.*** We don't precisely know how Cain and Abel knew their sacrifices were accepted or not accepted. Seemingly, there was some outward evidence making it obvious. Because of this unacceptability **Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.** Context seems to support that Cain's anger was rooted in pride. He couldn't bear that his brother was accepted before God and he was not.

The epidemic of sin is quickly becoming worse. Cain now commits the rather sophisticated sins of spiritual pride and hypocrisy. In verses 6-7 we see God's warning to Cain. ***Genesis 4:6-7 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? (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.*** Its verse 7 that we get the title of this lesson, "*Sin lieth at the Door.*" God warned Cain about the destructive power of sin. Cain can resist sin and find blessing, or he can give in to sin and be devoured. Sin is described as the "*pleasures of sin*" in Heb 11:25. We understand that sin is a ploy of Satan. Here God tells Cain that it is sin's desire to rule over you. We prevent sin from ruling over us by allowing God to master us first. Without God as our master, we will be slaves to sin. God reminds Cain that if he does not obey His Word, then sin is present. Sin wants to control, dominate, Cain. However, the LORD God says Cain can overcome it. Cain can

still do right if he so chooses. Notice the issue of free will. He can walk by faith in God's Word to him, and have victory over sin or he can give in to sin that lieth at the door. Notice again how the LORD is very patient with Cain. God is generous in allowing ample time for Cain to get right even now. While Cain willfully disregarded His Word, He still gives Cain the opportunity to reform. Reminds us of 2 Peter 3:9. ***The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.***

There are two ways Cain can go at this point. His first option is to let sin continue reigning over him and let sin ultimately destroy him. The second option is to conquer sin by faith, and thereby obtain fellowship and favor with God. What will Cain do? Verse 8 is the historical record: ***“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.”*** Cain ignored God's way of escape and gave in to sin and kills his brother. Able had not injured Cain in any way. Cain's murderous rage was inspired purely by a spiritual jealousy. No human had ever died or been killed before, but Cain saw how animals were be killed for sacrifice and likely killed Able in the same way. ***1 John 3:12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.***

God confronts Cain of his deed and renders punishment. ***Genesis 4:13 And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear.***

Cain had a choice to make. We today have choices to make when it come to sin. ***“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.”***

Invitation