

OFFERINGS

- **“In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord.” (Gen 4:3)**
- **“But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering . . .” (Gen 4:4)**
- Question! Why would Cain and Abel bring an offering to the Lord?

Please consider that they did so because God told them to. God has always been closely associated with His creation. When the earth was formless and void, His Spirit hovered over the waters (Gen. 1:2). When God created man He placed him in Eden but did not leave him alone. God taught Adam how to work in the garden and take care of it (Gen. 2:15). When the Lord created Eve He explained to Adam why, and then announced: **“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh”** (Gen. 2:24). Remember! God walked in the garden (Gen. 3:8). Adam and Eve could hear His voice (Gen. 3:9). Of course, all of creation is important to God. Every star even has a name (Ps. 147:4). Not one sparrow can fall to the ground without His knowledge (Matt. 10:29). In particular, however, God wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4) Man is created in God’s image and is uniquely important to Him. Even the very hairs of our head are all numbered (Matt. 10:30).

There can be little doubt, therefore, that God was involved in teaching mankind to make offerings. The “fruits of the soil” and the “firstborn of the flock” could easily have been eaten, but instead they were given as “offerings” to the Lord. Even though “No one has ever seen God” (Jn. 1:18), Cain and Abel still knew He existed. Surely it was God who taught mankind to make offerings. Years later the Psalmist would quote God as saying: **“I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it.”** (Ps 50:9-12) Obviously God does not need our offerings. Making offerings is for our benefit, not His!

When Noah came out of the ark he built an altar and offered “burnt offerings” to the Lord (Gen. 8:20). There were, of course, only a few animals and birds available. The fact that these offerings were “burnt” insured that Noah could not change his mind and take back something for himself. The flood was convincing proof to Noah that it is stupid to forget God. He correctly concluded that it was more important to have God’s blessings than to have a few more animals and birds. The survival of his family involved “trusting God” not “hoarding” earthly possessions.

Long before Moses, God gave “requirements”, “commands”, “decrees”, and “laws” (Gen. 26:5). Offerings were an integral part of God’s plan for mankind for they help us to never forget our Creator (Deut. 8:11). Remember! We cannot serve both God and Mammon (Matt. 6:24). Failing to give offerings to God is damning evidence that we trust in money more than Him.

Jesus said that the first and most important command is to **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”** (Matt 22:37). The “offerings” of Cain and Abel help us to understand this. But they also help us to understand the second great commandment: **“Love your neighbor as yourself.”** (Matt 22:39) The Apostle John said it like this: **“This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous.”** (1 John 3:11-13)

Offerings made to God should come first. When we give the “first fruits”, and the “first born” we demonstrate our priorities. So, in these “last “ day, let’s put God “first”.