**Abel**

**Introduction**

There are certain Biblical characters that we have so much information about and we are pretty comfortable feeling like we know their whole story. For example, we meet David when he is a young man and know something about his life all the way up until his death. I am always amazed at how much time the Biblical story focuses on Ahab, king of Israel. He is very wicked, but the Biblical text gives us many details about his rule and life (1 Kgs 16-22; 2 Chron 18). Other characters we are barely introduced to and know very little about. Today, I want to talk about one of the minor characters we do not have much information about but feel is beneficial.

***Scripture References***

* Genesis 4
* Matthew 23:35 (Luke 11:51)
* Luke 11:51 (Matthew 23:35)
* Hebrews 11:4
* Hebrews 12:24
* 1 John 3:9-12

**1. Genesis 4**

Genesis 4 is primarily told from the perspective of Cain. Abel is called Cain’s brother, God talks with Cain twice, and Cain’s line is given in 4:17-24. However, we do learn a handful of things about Abel in Genesis 4. We learn about Abel’s birth, occupation, sacrifice, and death.

Occupation: Keeper of the flocks (4:2)

Sacrifice: Firstlings of his flocks, fat portion (4:4)

God Response: Had regard (Heb. shâ‘âh) for him and sacrifice (4:4; Heb 11:4)

* “Regard” (Heb. shâ‘âh) is used 14 times in OT
* Gen 4:4-5; Ex 5:9; 2 Sam 22:42; Job 7:19; 14:6; Ps 39:13; 119:117; Isa 17:7-8; 22:4; 31:1; 41:10, 23
* Idea seems to be God notices and is pleased with Abel
* First person in the Biblical text which is said to be pleasing to God in some way

**2. Abel was a Prophet and Righteous**

In the NT scriptures Abel it is hinted that Abel was a prophet and clearly stated he was righteous.

a) Prophet

* Luke 11:49-51

This verse seems to indicate that Abel was a prophet, perhaps the first prophet. While we have no prophecy from him it seems he spoke for God in some way.

b) Righteous

Of the five references that are made to Abel in the NT, three of them indicate that he was righteous.

* Matthew 23:35: “…so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of ***righteous Abel*** to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.”
* Hebrews 11:4: By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that ***he was righteous***, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.
* 1 John 3:12: not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and ***his brother’s were righteous***.

**3. Every passage speaks of Abel’s Murder**

* Genesis 4: Records story
* Matthew 23:35 (Luke 11:51): First righteous person killed
* Hebrews 11:4: Blood still speaks
* Hebrews 12:24: Jesus’ blood better than blood of Abel
* 1 John 3:9-12: Abel was killed because Cain was evil

Abel does not speak in Genesis 4, but the Bible tells us that his blood and life are an example

* Genesis 4:10: Abel blood ***cries out*** from the ground
* Hebrews 11:4: Though he is dead, he still ***speaks***
* Hebrew 12:24: Jesus blood ***speaks*** better than the blood of Abel
* So, what message does Abel have? How does he speak to us?

a) Righteous people will suffer

The first righteous person who is seeking to worship God and serve Him is killed. He was killed because he was righteous (1 Jn 3:12). What does John say we should learn from this? Don’t be surprised if the world hates you (1 Jn 3:13). We might be hated and mistreated simply because we are wanting to do what is right.

In Matthew 23, Jesus pronounces several “woes” on the religious leaders because they are not directing the people to God as they should. Jesus says they are guilty of rejecting Him which is God’s ultimate prophet. He sums up the righteous people who have suffered by starting with Abel. He was the first righteous person who suffered, but there were many others. All of these righteous, innocent suffers look forward to the suffering of Jesus (Mt 23:37-39).

b) Jesus blood better than blood of Abel

* Hebrews 12:24

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Jesus’s blood is better than Blood of Abel** | |
| **Abel** | **Jesus** |
| Righteous | Righteous |
| Betrayed by brother (Gen 4:8-11) | Betrayed by own (Jn 1:11) |
| Example still speaks to us (Heb 11:4) | Speaks to us through word and example |
| Innocent and suffered | Ultimate example of innocent sufferer |
| Was not sinless, but no sin recorded | Sinless, perfect life |
| Made acceptable sacrifice to God | Sacrificed self, Lamb of God (Jn 1:29) |
| Blood cries out to God from ground (Gen 4:11) | Blood forgives sins, starts new covenant (Mt 26:27-28) |
| Was murdered | Gave life willingly |

Abel was righteous but did not know he was going to be murdered at the hand of his brother.

Jesus came to earth to suffer and die. The cross is always in His mind (Jn 3:14; 12:27-28). Jesus was the ultimate righteous sufferer who knew He would suffer and chose to be faithful to His Father and endure it for us. Yes, we might suffer for being righteous but may we faithfully endure for Him as He did for us.

The blood of Abel cries out, “Is death the end? Do those who mistreat and kill get to go on living while the righteous experience violence at their hands?” The answer in Jesus is death is not the end but there will be a resurrection of the righteous and the wicked (Jn 5:28-29). Those who are righteous will live again (Jn 11:25-26). The resurrection of Jesus causes us to look forward to our own resurrection. Jesus has prepared a place for us (Jn 14:1-6).

The Best is always yet to come!