



# Abel and Enoch

## Hebrews 11:4-5

### 1. Do You Worship God like Abel?

### 2. Do You Walk with God like Enoch?

Open your Bibles to the book of Hebrews. We come this morning to Hebrews, chapter 11, and verses 4 and 5. As you are turning there, I want to tell you about John Rogers, a great man of faith.

John Rogers was born in 1500 A. D. He was educated at Cambridge. He later went to Antwerp as chaplain for an English merchant company. It was there in Antwerp that he met William Tyndale, who worked tirelessly to translate, print, and distribute the English Bible throughout Europe. Tyndale made a great impact upon the life of John Rogers.

After the death of William Tyndale, John Rogers picked up the mantle of the task to print and distribute the English Bible throughout Europe. He did everything within his power to fight against the superstition and corruption of the Catholic Church, preaching salvation in Christ alone by faith alone. About a month after Queen Mary took the throne in 1553, Rogers preached against the "pestilent Popery, idolatry and superstition" of the Roman Catholic Church. Within 10 days, he was summoned to stand before the leaders of the Catholic Church in England to account for his words. Soon afterwards, he was imprisoned and sentenced to death for his Protestant views.

When the time came that he should be brought out of Newgate Prison to Smithfield, the place of his execution, Mr. Woodroffe, one of the sheriffs, first came to John Rogers, and asked him if he would revoke his abominable doctrine, and the evil opinion of the Sacrament of the altar. Rogers answered, "That which I have preached I will seal with my blood." Then Mr. Woodroffe said, "Thou art an heretic." Rogers replied "That shall be known at the Day of Judgment." Mr. Woodroffe added, "I will never pray for thee." Though Rogers responded "But I will pray for you."

Such was his spirit as he awaited his death on February 4th, 1555. Though he was denied even a last moment with his wife, John Rogers went cheerfully to his death. Thus, he became the first of hundreds to die at the hands of Queen "Bloody" Mary for believing what we believe.

[\[1\]](#)

John Rogers is an example of faith for us to follow. He held steadfastly to the doctrine of justification by faith alone. We would do well to imitate his faith.

This morning, we will look at two other men, whose lives are worthy for us to follow as well. Their stories are briefly told in Hebrews, chapter 11, verses 4 and 5.

#### Hebrews 11:4-5

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. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God

In these two verses, we have two examples of people who lived by faith. In verse 4, we see the faith of Abel. In verse 5, we see the faith of Enoch. These are the first two in a whole line of those given in Hebrews 11, who lived by faith in the Old Testament times. Verse 7 speaks of Noah. Verse 8 speaks of Abraham; verse 11 speaks of Sarah. Verse 20 speaks of Isaac; verse 21 speaks of Jacob. Verse 22 speaks of Joseph. Verse 24 speaks of Moses. And verse 31 speaks of Rahab.

Over the next few weeks and months, we will be taking an in-depth look at each of these people. But, this morning, our attention is focused upon two: Abel and Enoch. These men lived in different times. Abel lived near the beginning of creation. Adam and Eve were his parents. Enoch, on the other hand, lived more than 500 years later, which would make for a much different life.

These men lived in different circumstances. Abel lived in the shadow of the garden of Eden. He knew everybody on the planet personally. Everyone was either his parent, brother or sister, his own children, niece or nephew. My guess is that he may well have been able to name them all. Enoch, on the other hand, lived when the earth was being populated with many, many people. Perhaps some cities were even being formed. These men faced different outcomes with their lives. Abel was murdered by his brother. He knew the pains of death. Enoch, on the other hand, was taken up into heaven, without knowing death.

But, as different as these men were, they both had a unifying theme to their lives. They both lived by faith. And this is the application of our text this morning: Do you have a similar faith to these men? Is your faith like Abel's faith? Is your faith like Enoch's faith?

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10, that the circumstances surrounding the lives of those in the Old Testament are examples for us (see verses 6 and 11). And that's the case with those here in Hebrews 11. The author puts forth their faith as something for us to follow. But, an example to follow isn't the only reason for this chapter. Remember, the original readers were Jews, who were in danger of returning to their Judaism. And, for as much emphasis as the Jews placed upon the priesthood and the sacrifices and the temple worship and feasts and festivals, still - at the end of the day - every single person accepted by God during the days of the Old Covenant still came by faith, just like we need to come to Jesus by faith. There is continuity between the Old and New Testaments. It's not the religious works that will get us to God. It never has been. It's our faith that will get us to God.

Such is the author's point. And such is my point this morning. We must approach God by faith.

Well, let's look at these men; let's particularly look at their faith. And let's ask ourselves how we compare. By way of outline this morning, I have two questions to ask of you. The first is, ...

#### 1. Do You Worship God like Abel?

When the writer mentions Abel, he mentions his worship. Look again at verse 4, ...

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.

Do you see the issue in this verse? It's one of presenting offerings to the Lord. It's one of coming before the Lord in worship.

Cain and Abel both brought sacrifices before the Lord in worship. We read here that Abel's sacrifice was better than Cain's sacrifice. Now, it's not better, as in Abel received a B+ for his effort, and Cain received a C- for his. No. Rather, it's that Abel received an A+, while Cain flunked his offering. I say this, because God received Abel's offering. But, He did not receive Cain's offering. We know this because of the account of Cain and Abel given to us in Genesis, chapter 4. So, let's turn back there in our Bibles: Genesis, chapter 4. We read beginning in verse 1, ...

Genesis 4:1-2

Now the man [that is, Adam] had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD." Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

This is the first family that was on the earth. Adam and Eve were the first parents. Their first two children were boys. Cain was the oldest. Abel was the second born. In verse 2, we see them grown up, working at their professions. Abel was a shepherd of animals. Cain was a farmer of the fields. Both of these are noble professions.

Look at verse 3, ...

Genesis 4:3-4

So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. ...

We don't know exactly what this "course of time" was. We don't know what the circumstances surrounding this occasion was. Neither do we know why Cain and Abel sought to bring their offerings to the LORD. But, they did come to worship. The sense we get from the text is that it was some special occasion which called for the worship of God. Cain brought his offering from his labors. He was a farmer, so he brought from the fruit of his labor - some produce from his field. Abel brought his offering from his labors. He was a shepherd, so he brought from the fruit of his labor - an animal from his flock.

They were different offerings. And God received them differently. Verse 4, ...

Genesis 4:4-5

... And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard.

How? We don't know. The big question that comes to us in the text is this: Why? Why did God receive Abel's offering? Why did God reject Cain's offering? There are many who think that the issue here was the type of sacrifice. Abel came to God with the blood of an animal, (they say), but Cain came to God with the produce of the ground. They argue that God has always wanted blood. They point back to the garden, when God clothed Adam and Eve with the skin of an animal (3:21), which indicates that a sacrifice took place to provide for them. So likewise, when coming before the LORD, we need blood. We need a sacrifice. This, then of course, looks forward nicely to the blood of Christ that God would ultimately accept.

But, as I have read and thought and prayed, I don't believe that this is the issue here with Cain and Abel. I don't believe that there was anything inherently wrong in their offerings. Later, when God would give the law to the Israelites, there were provisions in the law for both animal sacrifices as well as grain offerings (i.e. Lev. 2).

So, what was the issue here with Cain and Abel? It was their hearts. Or, more specifically, it was their faith (or lack thereof). I say that, because that's what the writer to the Hebrews said. Hebrews 11:4 says, "By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain." The

implication here is that Cain came to the LORD without faith. Faith was what made Abel's sacrifice acceptable before the LORD. Faith is what makes all of our worship acceptable before the LORD.

Church family, this is where this is such a vital question for all of us, here this morning! It is particularly vital as we come to worship the Lord each week in this place. Can you imagine, coming to church, and singing the songs, and praying the prayers, only to have God reject your worship? That's what Cain did. He made an offering. He was seeking to worship the LORD, but was rejected. We very easily can be rejected as well.

The difficult thing is that we don't see God's scorecard in heaven. We don't see how well God looks at what we have done. And there are many who think that they have done well but haven't. Case in point: the Pharisees.

But, the good news is this, we know how he grades. He doesn't grade on performance or talent or sound or volume or energy. No, God grades our worship on one thing: faith. And so, as you come to worship the Lord day-in, day-out, week-in, week-out, are you believing the promises of God? Are you believing that your righteousness is found by faith in Jesus, and in Him alone? That's the true measure of our worship, because believing in God magnifies the Lord.

John Piper well illustrates this point. He says, ...

Your daddy is standing in a swimming pool out a little bit from the edge. You are, let's say, three years old and standing on the edge of the pool. Daddy holds out his arms to you and says, "Jump, I'll catch you. I promise." Now, how do you make your daddy look good at that moment? Answer: trust him and jump. Have faith in him and jump. That makes him look strong and wise and loving.

But if you won't jump, if you shake your head and run away from the edge, you make your daddy look bad. It looks like you are saying, "he can't catch me" or "he won't catch me" or "it's not a good idea to do what he tells me to do." And all three of those make your dad look bad."

But you don't want to make God look bad. So you trust him. Then you make him look good—which he really is. And that is what we mean when we say, "Faith glorifies God" or "Faith gives God glory." It makes him look as good as he really is. So trusting God is really important. [\[2\]](#)

And this is the issue when it comes to worship. We need to come to the Lord with faith, believing what He has said. We need to come to the Lord with a right heart. We need to commit ourselves entirely to Him!

Here in Genesis, we have enough clues here in Genesis to see that Cain's heart was not right before the Lord, which made His offering unacceptable to the Lord. First of all, look at the offerings that Cain and Abel brought to the Lord. It says in verse 3 that "Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground." Now, as I said before, there is nothing inherently wrong with bringing produce from the field to offer to the LORD. But, we get a clue that Abel's offering was a step above Cain's. Verse 4 tells us that, "Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions."

Do you see the difference here? When it came to bringing an offering, Abel brought "the firstlings of his flock." It's also mentioned here that Abel brought "of their fat portions." The sense is here that Abel brought his best to the LORD.

Proverbs 3:9-10  
Honor the LORD from your wealth  
And from the first of all your produce;  
So your barns will be filled with plenty  
And your vats will overflow with new wine.

God delights when we give our best to Him! This is not because He needs it, but because it's a reflection of our heart toward the LORD.

When David bought the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, he insisted that he would pay for it. Araunah wanted to give it as a gift to the king! But, the David said, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God which cost me nothing" (2 Sam. 24:24). I do believe that this was an issue with Cain and Abel. Abel was giving his best--the firstlings and the fat portions. And I suspect that Cain didn't give his best (because nothing is mentioned of it in the text). Abel's offering was an offering of faith. But, Cain's offering was an offering of duty. There's a big difference.

And here's the application for us: Do You Worship God like Abel? Oh, there's much in Abel's life that doesn't apply to us. He lived before the Cross. He even lived before the law. But, the way that he worshiped the Lord does apply. When it comes to worship, do you have the heart of Abel? Do you bring the best that you have? Do you bring the best financially? Do you bring the best physically? Do you bring the best spiritually? Or, does God get the leftovers of your life? You give Him whatever time you have left over; you give Him your leftover talents; you give him your leftover treasure.

How many of you like leftovers? Do you like it when yesterday's dinner is today's lunch? Recently, the kids had macaroni and cheese for lunch. There was a lot left in the pot, and Hanna asked me if I wanted to eat any of what was left. She said that someone had to eat the rest of it, because otherwise it would be left over. And, no one in the house was going to eat left over macaroni and cheese. No one in our family likes it when it is left over!

Cain's heart becomes obvious as we continue on in verse 5. Let's look at verse 4 again, ...

Genesis 4:4-5

... And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering [God] had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

Cain knew that he was wrong. He knew that God hadn't accepted His offering. And He was angry. With whom was Cain angry? Certainly, he was angry with God, for not accepting his offering. But, as things played out, we find that he was also angry with his brother. In verse 6 and 7, we see God's warning.

Genesis 4:6-7

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

How kind of God to confront Cain personally in his sin! And He gave him an opportunity to repent! But rather than mastering sin, sin mastered him! And the tragedy comes in verse 8, ...

Genesis 4:8

Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

Such has marked Cain down through the centuries as a wicked man, and rightly so. Of the false teachers, Jude says, "Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain" (Jude 11). He is faithless, murderous, unfaithful. John says in his epistle, that we are to love one another, "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" (1 John 3:12). It's an amazing thing, isn't it? That one man's righteousness stirred the anger and resentment of his brothers? You seek to do good things, and are hated for it. How strange is that?

Oh, it's not really that amazing or strange. Such was the experience of Jesus. Though Jesus had never done anything wrong, He was spurned by His brothers as well. In John 7, we read that before the feast, His brothers were ridiculing Him,

John 7:3-5

"Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which you are doing. For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If you do these things, show Yourself to the world." For not even His brothers were believing in Him.

In a few short years, the Pharisees, who hated His righteousness came and killed Him. Jesus was hated "without a cause" (John 15:25). Jesus "committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; "and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; While suffering, He uttered no threats, But kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Peter 2:22-23). Such was the life (and death) of Jesus. He was hated and killed so that we might have life! Likewise, Abel lived a righteous life and was killed for it. But, he didn't die in vain.

Let's get back to Abel. Turn back to Hebrews 11. Again, in verse 4 we see, ...

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.

I want to focus our attention upon the last phrase in verse 4, "through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks." Abel was the first martyr. It didn't take long for the effects of sin to culminate in such a wicked deed -- the murder of a brother! It took only one generation! Never be surprised at the power and severity of sin! It rears its ugly head here in Genesis 4. But, the flip is also true. Never be surprised at the effect of righteousness, even when you are gone! Think about it, here it is thousands of years later, and we are still talking about Abel.

On Monday, it's Martin Luther King Jr.'s Day. It's the day when we as a nation remember this remarkable man. But, do you remember what makes him so memorable? April 4, 1968, when the assassin's (James Earl Ray's) bullet entered his right cheek, traveled through his spinal cord, and lodged in his shoulder. He was pronounced dead an hour later. It was his death that makes him remembered. To be sure, he did much good for the civil rights movement. But, had Martin Luther King Jr. lived his whole life fighting for civil rights, I doubt that we would be remembering the day of his birth.

There's something about a martyr's death that will immortalize people. They will be remembered for years to come. Such is the case of Abel, "though He is dead, he still speaks." Jesus spoke of him (Matt. 23:35), referring to "the blood of righteous Abel." We are talking of him. A righteous life will have a similar effect. Abel speaks a life of worship. Do You Worship God like Abel?

Well, let's turn our attention to our next question, ...

2. Do You Walk with God like Enoch?

Verse 5, ...

Hebrews 11:5

By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.

Enoch is a pretty obscure figure in the Old Testament. His name occurs in only three passages in the Old Testament. Every time, it occurs, it's always in a genealogy (Gen. 4, 5; 1 Chron. 1) which means that about all we know of Enoch is his parents and his children. However, the genealogy in Genesis 5 give us a small glimpse into his life. The comments here in our text this morning refer to Genesis 5:21-24, which reads like this, ...

Genesis 5:21-24

Enoch lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Methuselah. Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

My application question for you comes from this phrase found twice in Genesis 5, "Enoch walked with God" (verses 22 and 24). That phrase describes a soul, who lives with God and for God. It describes one who lives in close communion with God - one who is always rejoicing (1 Thess. 5:16), always praying (1 Thess. 5:17), always giving thanks (1 Thess. 5:18).

Matthew Henry (in his commentary) described it this way, "[Enoch] was really, eminently, actively, progressively, and perseveringly religious in his conformity to God, communion with God, and complacency in God." That is, Enoch was constantly finding his pleasure in God. Does this describe you? Is God your passion? Is God your friend? Are you daily in His word? Do you constantly speak with Him? This is what Enoch did.

And, according to verse 5, He was "taken up so that he would not see death." That stands in stark contrast to everyone else in the genealogy in Genesis 5. Normally, in genealogies, you don't hear of people dying. But, in Genesis 5, you hear of how everyone died. Regarding Adam, Gen. 5:5 says, "and he died." Regarding Seth, Gen. 5:8 says, "and he died." Regarding Enosh, Gen. 5:11 says, "and he died." Regarding Kenan, Gen. 5:14 says, "and he died." Regarding Mahalalel, Gen. 5:17 says, "and he died." Regarding Jared, Gen. 5:20 says, "and he died." Regarding Methuselah, Gen. 5:27 says, "and he died." Regarding Lamech, Gen. 5:31 says, "and he died."

There was only one in the entire genealogy who didn't die: Enoch. Rather, we read that he was "taken up." That is, he went directly into the presence of the Lord without dying first. He was, if you will, raptured. He was like Elijah (2 Kings, 2:11), who "went up by a whirlwind to heaven." He was like all of us who are alive and remain when the Lord returns. We will be "caught up together ... in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 5:17). One moment, Enoch he was here on the earth. And the next moment, he was with God in heaven. As people looked for him (and they did), they didn't find him, "because God took him up" (verse 5).

So, why was he taken up like this? The reason is given at the end of verse 5: "He obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God." In other words, God looked down upon him and was pleased with the way that Enoch was living. He was pleased with the way that Enoch was walking with the Lord. And so, to save him from the pains of death in an increasingly wicked world, God chose to take him up into heaven.

And notice what the writer to the Hebrews says. It was "by faith [that] Enoch was taken up." And, we find out from verse 6, that it's only by faith that we please God. Look at verse 6: "And without faith it is impossible to please [Him], for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." I would love to move on to this verse, but, I want for us to spend next week savoring it. I want to spend a whole week looking at the existence of God and the reward of God.

Notice that it wasn't Enoch's works that so pleased God. It wasn't his sacrifices. It wasn't his attendance at worship. It wasn't the songs that he sang. It wasn't the prayers that he prayed. It wasn't the ways that he served others. No, it was his faith that pleased God. Enoch's faith was demonstrated in his walk with God. And so I ask you, how's your walk? Are you walking with the Lord?

I was outside this past week in my driveway. I had opened the garage door to do something, and I happened to catch my neighbor. He was walking up his driveway at a brisk pace; obviously, he was coming back from a walk. I say, "Hey, did you enjoy your walk? It sure is cold out here." He said, "Yes, I did. I've determined that I'm going to take a walk every day, regardless of the weather."

So, I saw him a few days later, when there was a bit of snow on the ground. I said, "Taking a walk in the snow, huh?" He said, "Yep. Every day." I asked about whether his was had been joining him, and he told me how treacherous it can be with the snow and the ice. He said she would not join him in this weather. He told me how he has even fallen down a few times on his walks. But, he's committed to walking every day, probably for his health.

And so, I ask you, have you made a similar commitment to walk with your Lord every day? My neighbor is doing it for his earthly health. Will you do it for your spiritual health?

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on January 16, 2011 by Steve Brandon.  
For more information see [www.rvbc.cc](http://www.rvbc.cc).

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[1] <http://www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/john-rogers.html>

[2] John Piper, in a sermon from 1999. This can be found at: <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/sermons/faith-in-hope-against-hope-for-the-glory-of-god>