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# THE OFFERING OF ABEL

We are all familiar with the story of the brothers Cain and Abel each bringing an offering to God. They were the first two children of Adam and Eve. Do you know what Cain and Abel gave God as offerings? Cain brought an offering of "the fruit of the ground", and Abel brought "of the firstlings of his flock" (see Genesis 4:3-4). So did Abel actually offer those firstlings as "a sacrifice" to God? **What really happened back then?**

In this article I will provide an explanation for this account that I don't think you, or anyone else in this age, have ever considered. We will carefully examine the account in Genesis, because Satan has deceived the whole world on this particular issue (see Revelation 12:9), as he has on very many other issues as well. That deception involves having us accept a number of unproved assumptions, which assumptions all readily appeal to our own bias on this matter.

But before I'll examine the actual account of what happened with Cain and Abel, I will first look at "the big picture". The reason I am going to do this is not because that will change anything in the explanation of the actual Bible verses that are involved. The reason I will first focus on "the big picture" is that it is my hope that this focus will weaken the hold which your personal bias has on viewing the actual verses for this account. If you can see "the big picture", then hopefully you will be more inclined to believe **what those verses actually tell us**, without reading your own preconceived assumptions into these verses.

Now "the big picture" is explained in detail in my November 2011 article "The Progressive Development Of God's Plan Of Salvation". That article is 90 pages long. That article explains, amongst other things, that at the time when God created Adam and Eve, **the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins was not yet a part of God's plan**. This is something most of the people in the various churches of God do not understand.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ was only added to God's plan at the time of the flood. The expression "the foundation of the world" in Revelation 13:8 is a reference to the time of the flood, and not to the time when God created Adam. This point is thoroughly explained in my other article "What Does 'The Foundation of the World' Really Mean?".

We should understand that the flood is not something God planned for at the time when God created Adam and Eve. The flood was **God's response to unanticipated human conduct and behavior**. And the flood clearly was a very drastic response, indicating that how humanity had developed over those approximately 1500 years was totally unacceptable to God. Clearly **something had gone terribly wrong**, as far as what God had expected was concerned. That is why God brought on the flood.

Now as far as the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is concerned:

The sacrifice of a life is never an original plan or intention for anything. Nobody, including God, starts out with planning such a profound sacrifice in order to achieve some goal or purpose. **A sacrifice always represents a response to an unanticipated emergency or development.** For us human beings a sacrifice of some kind implies: this is going to cost us more than what we had budgeted.

For God, that moment came approximately 1500 years after creating Adam, when "**it repented the Eternal** that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart" (Genesis 6:6). This

statement expresses the "**this is going to cost Us more than what We had budgeted**" moment for God the Father and Jesus Christ. This represents the moment when Jesus Christ was faced with the choice: am I going to lay down My life to still achieve the goal We set out to achieve, or do We scrap the whole "human project"?

At that point in time there were already several hundred million righteous angels in existence, as well as a hundred million plus demons (i.e. fallen angels). The plan of God had been moving along, and the one third "bad angels" represented a cost that **God was prepared to accept**. Perhaps God had anticipated a similar ratio for human beings rebelling against God's ways, in which case a success rate of 66% amongst human beings would have been very acceptable to God. But after approximately 1500 years of human existence a success rate amongst human beings of less than 0.000001% (i.e. only Abel and Enoch and Noah) was completely unacceptable to God.

We know the choice Jesus Christ made. He was prepared to give His life in order to still achieve the original intention of creating the Family of God. But now Jesus Christ was also able to approach this task **much more realistically** than before. **Now** Jesus Christ was in a position to approach the task of leading human beings to salvation from the correct premise that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5).

**This understanding had not been the premise for how God worked with human beings before the flood!**

Before the flood God had worked from **the assumed premise** that **a good portion of human beings** would be reasonable and willing to cooperate with God, and be willingly in submission to their Creator. The premise was that that particular portion of human beings would use their free minds to think rationally and thankfully and joyfully towards their Creator, who was freely giving them everything they needed to live happy and abundant lives.

God anticipated that He could work with those human beings, and lead them towards inculcating into their minds God's own perspectives of right and wrong, of what is desirable behavior and what is not. God anticipated that this portion of men and women would also freely develop a genuine outgoing concern for the well-being of everyone else.

While God certainly wanted that figure to be 100% of human beings, God was prepared to accept a less than 100% success rate. I suspect this to be the case because of how God answered Abraham regarding perhaps finding only 50 or 45 or 40 or 30 or 20 or 10 righteous people in Sodom (see Genesis 18:23-32). God is willing to accept a less than 100% success rate, when dealing with free moral agents.

**But before the flood God had worked from a wrong premise!**

Since the flood God has worked from the correct premise! That correct premise is: **every imagination of the thoughts of human hearts is "only evil continually"**. But this understanding had not been God's premise on the day when He created Adam. If that had been God's premise from Adam's creation onwards, then God would also have dealt differently with people from the very beginning.

Understanding the correct premise caused God **at the time of the flood to add the second resurrection** to His plan for leading human beings to salvation. This correct premise also means that without the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the God who had created human beings, it would be impossible for human beings to ever attain to salvation. It was when God accepted this correct premise regarding how the human mind functions, that **the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was added to the plan** for building the Family of God. That was God's "this is going to cost Us more than We had budgeted" moment.

Now before creating Adam and Eve it wasn't really possible for God to know **how many** human minds, what portion or percentage, would be willingly submissive to God, and what portion of human beings would be hostile and resentful towards their Creator. It is not a question of knowing that **some** human beings would resent God's ways and end up being hostile towards God. That had, after all, also happened with the angels.

It was really a matter of finding out: is there **at least a portion** of human beings who will appreciate the life God has given them, and the blessings and opportunities God wants to give them? Is there some portion of humanity that will **choose** to live to please God with their actions and behavior?

As an analogy let's consider Sodom.

Sodom very likely had a population larger than 1000 people, since Sodom had its own king (see Genesis 14:2) and also a small army. So when God said that He would not destroy Sodom if there were 10 righteous people in the city, then that figure of 10 might perhaps have represented around 1% of Sodom's population. The exact percentage here is immaterial.

While I have no way of knowing that this is correct, I suspect that before the flood God may perhaps have considered accepting a success rate of at least 1%. That 1% would have meant that out of every one million people 10,000 would have submitted their lives to God. That would have amounted to 100,000 believers for every ten million people before the flood.

You understand that I am only presenting this as a totally hypothetical illustration, right?

So if before the flood **at least 1%** of human beings had submitted their minds to God, like Abel and Enoch and Noah had done, then from the first **one billion people** before the flood there would have been **ten million** who would have been prepared to become a part of the Family of God. Had there really been such a 1% success rate, **I suspect that God would have accepted those odds, and not ever brought on the flood!** Why? Because that is a far less drastic way for building a Family of God, than for the Creator God to have to lay down His own life as a sacrifice.

So if the statement "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" had applied to only 99% and not to 100% of all human beings, then God would very likely not have brought on the flood.

There would have been **no need for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ**, if even 1% of human beings were of a mind to willingly submit themselves to the will of their Creator. One billion people is less than the current population of either China or India, and an achievement of ten million members for the Family of God from every one billion people (i.e. 1%) would have been a considerable number indeed. A total worldwide human population of one hundred billion, spread out over seven thousand years, would have yielded **one billion members for the Family of God** at this 1% rate. All the other human beings would in due course be blotted out and they would be as though they had never existed. There would be no permanent pain or suffering for those who never accepted God's ways.

Yes, while God may have hoped for a 66% success rate, as achieved with the angels, I suspect that God was willing to go as low as perhaps 1%. That's why God kept things going for over 1500 years, in the hope of perhaps still achieving a 1% success rate. **And no Savior would have been needed** if 1% of human beings had responded to God like Abel and Enoch and Noah had responded.

But the actual success rate of considerably less than 0.000001% (that's less than one one-millionth of one percent) was absolutely not acceptable.

It was a revelation to God that for 99.999999% plus of human beings "every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was **only evil** continually". **That was something God had not anticipated.**

To illustrate this point: there were always **several centuries** between one man freely submitting to God and the next man submitting to God. It was centuries between Abel and Enoch, and it was more centuries between Enoch and Noah. And for half a millennium after Noah's birth there was nobody else. And after the flood it was several centuries before God eventually found Abraham. So when there was one person who faithfully obeyed God, then **God had to wait several centuries before finding one more person** with that type of character. That's what God was speaking about in Genesis 6:5.

And God's approach in dealing with human beings before the flood had not taken this universal hostility towards God's way of thinking and living into account.

But this realization then became **the foundation for God's way of dealing with humanity after the flood**.

This understanding, that virtually 100% of human beings don't willingly submit their minds to God's way of thinking and behaving, forms the premise for today in this present age not opening the minds of any human beings to God's truth, except for the small number that God the Father Himself would "draw" (John 6:44, also verse 65) for an opportunity to understand and to **then** choose what to do ... either accept God's calling and submit to God, or ignore God's calling and walk away from it.

We should understand that even with **this careful screening process by God the Father Himself** regarding which people to call in this age, there will still be large numbers who don't respond to that calling, and who then walk away from it. And God knows this. That's why Jesus Christ said that "many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). That's why there truly is "joy in heaven" over every sinner who repents (see Luke 15:7) ... it is such a rare occurrence.

Of all those who are called, those "by the wayside" never bother to respond at all in any way; and both "those upon stony places" and "those among thorns" also walk away, after initially seeming to respond positively to God's calling. You know the parable in Matthew 13, right? (This is explained more fully in my October 2014 article "Our Eternal Destiny Rests In Our Own Hands".)

This statement by Jesus Christ (i.e. many are called but few are chosen) is based on God's post-flood understanding that "every imagination of the thoughts of human hearts is only evil continually". And so even when God the Father carefully selects people to call, there are still large numbers who either don't respond, or else who don't hold fast to that calling till the end of their lives. Yes, today human nature is still exactly the same as it was before the flood.

And that understanding of the human mind, expressed in Genesis 6:5, is the foundation for how God has worked with human beings since the flood. And that understanding also necessitated the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in order to make forgiveness of sins possible for those who would submit their minds to God's will. And that understanding also led to the establishment of a priesthood, whose job it would be to facilitate direct contact between God and man.

When God established the priesthood of Aaron, then God also established a set of sacrificial offerings (the burnt offering, peace offering, etc.), some of which pointed towards the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Since the time of Moses some animal sacrifices have pointed towards the sacrifice that Jesus Christ would bring for us.

But what about before the time of Moses and the Aaronic priesthood? And what about even earlier ... what about before the flood? Have sacrifices always foreshadowed the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ?

## A QUESTION

When I have explained that at the time of Adam the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was not yet a part of God's plan, and that the sacrifice of Christ was only added to the plan of God after the flood, then some people have presented a very valid question. And that question goes like this:

**We know** that the sacrifices foreshadowed Jesus Christ's sacrifice for our sins. So if the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was not a part of God's plan before the flood, as you claim, then **why did Abel before the flood bring a sacrifice**? Didn't Abel's sacrifice point to Jesus Christ? Abel's action looks like Abel seemed to know about the sacrifice which Jesus Christ would bring at a future time. Doesn't that prove that Jesus Christ's sacrifice must have been a part of God's plan from the very beginning?

We always have to be very careful when we argue from a "we know ..." position. "We know" is always intended to allow us to dispense with having to provide proof for what we then present. "We know" implies that what we say is obviously correct, and not in need of proof. And there are indeed times when what we refer to as "we know" is perfectly correct. But there are also other times when our appeal to "we know" only relies on **falsely assumed premises**.

So let's consider a number of different things:

1) There is no biblical evidence that **any** "sacrifices" **before** the time when God instituted the Aaronic priesthood "foreshadowed the sacrifice of Christ". What evidence is there that any sacrifices before Aaron "foreshadowed" Christ's sacrifice? There is **no evidence** whatsoever for such a claim! This claim is simply assumed to be true, but there is no proof.

For example:

Could **a non-Israelite priest** ever perform a sacrifice that "foreshadows the sacrifice of Christ"? In the presence of Moses, his Midianite father-in-law Jethro "took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God" (Exodus 18:12). Did these actions by this non-Israelite priest actually "foreshadow the sacrifice of Christ"? Did Jethro himself **know** that what he was doing "foreshadowed the sacrifice of Christ"? Did Jethro himself understand anything at all about "the sacrifice of Christ"?

When **pagan priests** in the past, before the time of the exodus, sacrificed animals, did those sacrifices "foreshadow the sacrifice of Christ" ... or even the sacrifice of one of their own pagan "gods"? Can someone do something (i.e. bring an animal sacrifice) without knowing that what he is doing "foreshadows the sacrifice of Christ", when that someone is in fact thinking of something totally different from "the sacrifice of Christ" while doing his thing (i.e. while performing an animal sacrifice)?

Sacrifices go back a long way, as we all know. Before the time of Moses, **what symbolism, if any, was attached to bringing sacrifices?** Why did pagan nations bring animal sacrifices ... to picture the death of one of their "gods"? No, that's not the meaning they attached to their sacrifices, is it? No, when people before Moses brought sacrifices, they thought of these sacrifices as **gifts** or presents or tribute that they were bringing to their "gods".

Before God revealed in the days of Moses that some animal sacrifices would picture "the sacrifice of Christ", were human beings allowed to attach **other meanings** to the act of sacrificing an animal? Were human beings allowed to say: **I want to give God a present** in the same way that I give a present to a human king when I come into the king's presence? Could human beings say: I want to give God an offering consisting of food items, i.e. clean animals? And if I offer one of my animals to God, I must kill

that animal; otherwise it would just go back to my herd, or else it would starve to death.

The only way I can offer as a gift one of my animals to God is to kill that animal. **Why** does that action then have to represent "the sacrifice of Christ"? I just wanted to show my respect for God by giving Him one of my best animals, that's all. Just because you can look at my actions (i.e. bringing a sacrifice) and find some parallels based on your knowledge, that doesn't mean that your parallels had anything to do with my motivation for my actions (i.e. for my bringing a sacrifice).

Before Moses, **can we assume** that God has already secretly revealed to some people, since it wasn't recorded by Moses, that certain animal sacrifices would point to the death of the Messiah? What gives us the right to make such an assumption? Otherwise how could any human being possibly know that certain animal sacrifices would point to Jesus Christ, if God didn't reveal this until the time of the priesthood of Aaron?

2) Let's consider an illustration that involves the flood:

When God re-created the surface of this earth at the time of Adam, and straightened out the environment, that included the establishment of the cycle of rain and sunshine and plants growing as a result of receiving rain and sunshine. I assume you understand that from the days of Adam onwards there were "**rainbows**" in the sky after it had rained, not after every rain, but when atmospheric conditions were right, just as it is today.

God established the meteorological cycles **before** God ever decided to bring a flood upon the earth. And we would have rainbows today even if the flood had never occurred. So rainbows existed for over 1600 years of human history, before God Himself ever attached any symbolism to the rainbow.

Now after the flood God said that **from then onwards** rainbows would represent the token for God's commitment to never again bring a worldwide flood upon humanity (see Genesis 9:11-14). But in the pre-flood world there had never been any kind of symbolism attached to rainbows ... or to waterfalls ... or to snowstorms ... or to any other already existent physical phenomenon, because God had never yet considered bringing on a worldwide flood. But rainbows have a physical explanation, and they certainly did exist in the pre-flood world.

Can you here see a parallel to "sacrifices" before the flood?

Why did sacrifices before the flood (**if** any sacrifices were ever performed before the flood!) have to have the symbolism that God chose to attach to certain sacrifices in the days of Moses? Rainbows didn't have any specific symbolism before the flood. And likewise sacrifices, **if** they were ever performed before the flood, didn't have to have the symbolism that was later attached to certain sacrifices.

**Now I have said "if" because I don't believe that any sacrifices were ever performed by anyone before the flood!**

Apart from the statement about Abel, there is no indication of any sacrifices ever being performed before the flood. We'll examine the account with Abel shortly.

## NO SACRIFICES BEFORE THE FLOOD

Before the flood Jesus Christ walked up and down amongst human beings, much like He walked up and down amongst people during His later earthly ministry as a physical man. Enoch took the opportunity to

"walk with God" (Genesis 5:22, 24), as did also Noah (Genesis 6:9). Jesus Christ was present on earth during the entire period before the flood.

There were no pagan religions anywhere on earth before the flood. There was no such thing as "false gods" before the flood, not with Jesus Christ being here on earth all the time.

As we've already seen, over 99.999999% of human beings were "only evil continually". This means that none of them would have considered bringing any voluntary sacrifices "unto the Eternal", and the concept of "other gods" or "other religions" was unthinkable with Jesus Christ being here all the time. "Other gods" only became an issue after Jesus Christ was no longer present and visible. "Other gods" only became an issue after the flood, after Jesus Christ was no longer here on earth.

None of those more than 99.999999% of human beings before the flood were looking for contact with God. None of them wanted to please God. So none of them would have had any motivation to bring any kind of animal sacrifices to Christ, assuming they were even familiar with the concept of sacrificing animals to God.

And so there is nothing in the Book of Genesis that would indicate any animal sacrifices before the flood ... apart from the one brief passage about Abel. Now let's examine that passage.

## CAIN AND ABEL BOTH BROUGHT AN OFFERING

Here are the three verses that are involved.

And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground **an offering** (Hebrew "minchah") unto the LORD. 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** ("minchah"): But unto Cain and to **his offering** ("minchah") he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. (Genesis 4:3-5)

At this point both Cain and Abel were already well over 100 years old. Within a few days of this account Cain killed Abel. Once Abel was dead, Adam had a son whom Eve named Seth. And Eve specifically called Seth a replacement for her dead son Abel (see Genesis 4:25). And Adam and Eve were 130 years old when Seth was born (Genesis 5:3). That means that Abel was almost certainly in his 120's when he was killed.

Now the statement "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Eternal" means exactly what it says. **Cain walked up to Jesus Christ** and presented his fruits and/or vegetables to Jesus Christ. He presented these fruits and/or vegetables as "**an offering**". Cain "**brought**" this produce to Jesus Christ. The word "brought" tells us that Cain walked up to Christ with his produce. Cain didn't put it on some altar and then try to burn it as a sacrifice of some kind. No, Cain presented his fruits to Christ in person, or at least attempted to do so.

The statement "Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock **and of the fat thereof**" likewise means exactly what it says. Abel also "**brought**" his animals to Jesus Christ. Abel brought his animals to Jesus Christ in person as an offering. He didn't bring his animals as a sacrifice; he brought them as an offering.

**This says absolutely nothing about Abel "sacrificing" any animals!**

"An offering" is not the same as "a sacrifice".

Let’s keep in mind that Genesis is the very start of God’s revelations to mankind. **This is the start of the story.** When the reader gets to chapter 4 of Genesis, he hasn’t heard anything at all about "Israel", and about "sacrifices", and about God sending "prophets" to His people, and about "a Savior for mankind", etc. So when something new is introduced, then we need to be cautious with interpreting whatever is "new" with knowledge we have gained from already knowing what’s in the rest of the book, because we have already read the whole book.

For example, the very first time a sacrifice is performed in the Bible is when Noah came out of the ark. At that time Jesus Christ was no longer walking on earth, and so bringing a sacrifice was one way of seeking contact with God who was in heaven. So when this very first sacrifice was performed by Noah, sufficient details are presented to us, so we can follow the account.

Here are the relevant verses:

And Noah built **an altar** (Hebrew "mizbeach") unto the LORD; and took of **every clean beast**, and of **every clean fowl**, and **offered** (Hebrew "alah") **burnt offerings** (Hebrew "olah") on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savor; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart *is* evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. (Genesis 8:20-21)

Not having been given any information at all about sacrifices thus far (i.e. not in the first 8 chapters), this tells us that first of all you need **an altar**, because you don’t perform a sacrifice on the regular ground that people walk on. Next, it tells us that all clean animals are potential candidates for sacrifices to God. And then the obvious implication is that these animals **are killed** on the altar. And the word for "burnt offerings" tells us that the killed animals are to be burned up before God.

The Hebrew verb "alah", here translated as "offered", basically means: to go up, to climb, to ascend. So **"burnt offerings" are something that "goes up" to God**, because the God of the pre-flood world was by then back in heaven. That’s what this Hebrew word for "burnt offering" means ... what is "offered" is something that "goes up".

So to make this quite plain:

**"Sacrifices" only entered the picture after Jesus Christ had left earth and returned to heaven.** As long as Jesus Christ was here on earth, there was no point in bringing any sacrifices, because Jesus Christ was here for the explicit purpose of being available for all people who would choose to walk with Him. Nobody needed to bring a sacrifice to try to establish contact with Christ. That access to Christ was freely available to all before the flood.

This is the same principle as with fasting.

As Jesus Christ pointed out during His ministry: as long as He was here on earth there was no need for His disciples to fast. The need for fasting only arose after Christ "was taken from His disciples", i.e. after He was no longer here on earth. See Matthew 9:15 for this principle. So as long as Jesus Christ was here on earth before the flood, there was no need for sacrifices. There was no need for anything "to go up", because **God was here on earth**.

Before the flood the concept of sending anything "up" didn’t exist, because the only God human beings knew about was here on earth with them. It wouldn’t have made sense to send the smoke of a sacrifice "up to heaven" while standing (or kneeling) in front of the only God they had any knowledge of. The concept of another God Being in heaven (i.e. God the Father) was unknown to human beings. And without a God in heaven a burnt sacrifice is pointless.

## THE HEBREW WORD FOR "SACRIFICE"

Let’s consider the meaning of a number of different Hebrew words.

1) The basic **Hebrew verb** for "**to sacrifice**" is "**zabach**". This word means: to kill an animal in sacrifice, to slaughter an animal for sacrificial purposes.

2) From this Hebrew verb we get the noun "**zebach**", which refers to "**a sacrifice**", referring literally to "**one slaughtered in sacrifice**". This is the general word for "a sacrifice" which does not identify the type of sacrifice that is involved. Thus the five types of sacrificial offerings later identified in Leviticus (i.e. burnt, meal, peace, sin and trespass offerings) all have their own specific names. "Zebach" is the word that means "a sacrifice" without further specifications.

3) From the Hebrew verb "zabach" we also get the noun "**mizbeach**", which means "**an altar**". This word is used 402 times in the Hebrew Old Testament, and it is always translated as "altar". It has no other meanings. Noah was the first one to ever build a "mizbeach", recorded in Genesis 8:20. "Mizbeach" literally refers to "**a place for animals slaughtered in sacrifice**".

Note that without a "mizbeach" it was impossible to bring an acceptable sacrifice. The "mizbeach" is absolutely essential for the process of sacrificing an animal to God. So "no altar" means "no sacrifice".

While one of these three words is used for Noah after the flood (i.e. "mizbeach"), together with the word for "a burnt sacrifice", none of these three words are used for what Abel did. Instead, the offering Cain brought and the offering Abel brought are both identified by the Hebrew word "**minchah**".

Cain brought a "minchah" to Jesus Christ, and Abel brought a "minchah" to Jesus Christ. This should already tell us that what Abel brought could not possibly have been "a sacrifice" that required "an altar". Since the "minchah" of Cain wasn’t "a sacrifice", therefore the "minchah" of Abel could not have been "a sacrifice" either. The same Hebrew word describes the "offerings" of both men. And furthermore, nothing whatsoever is said about "an altar" in the account with Cain and Abel. Building an altar was always something noteworthy.

This Hebrew word "**minchah**" means "**a gift**, **a present**, **a tribute**, **an oblation**, **an offering**". This word is used 211 times in 194 different verses in the Old Testament. It does not mean "a sacrifice", though in five of those 211 places in the KJV it is inappropriately rendered as "sacrifice" in the expression "evening sacrifice" (i.e. 1 Kings 18:29, 36; Ezra 9:4, 5; Psalm 141:2). In those places it should have been rendered "evening offering". But 205 times "minchah" is appropriately translated as "offering, present, gift, oblation", illustrating that these are the correct meanings for this word. This word is also commonly used for the "meat offering", which was a "flour offering", which obviously is not an animal sacrifice.

"Minchah" does not involve killing an animal in sacrifice! For the sacrificial process you had the Hebrew words "zabach" and "zebach", words that are never used before the flood. The word "minchah" tells us that Cain and Abel both brought something to Jesus Christ. The items they brought were different, but in both cases qualified for the designation "a gift" or "an oblation".

Now let’s briefly look at one other point.

## DEFINITELY NO PASSOVER PARALLEL

Sometimes people have wanted to reason that Abel bringing "of the firstlings of his flock" was something like Abel bringing an animal for the Passover, in that way looking forward to Jesus Christ later giving His life for our sins.

There is no truth whatsoever in this line of reasoning.

Very briefly, this involves a grammatical technicality that I explained 15 years ago in my article "Some Scribe Changed The Text Of Deuteronomy 16:1-6".

The Bible **never** refers to the Passover as "**a sacrifice**"! In addition to the Hebrew verb "**zabach**", there is also the verb "**shachat**". "Shachat" refers to "slaying victims" and also to "killing persons". So where the verb "zabach" means "**to sacrifice**", the verb "shachat" means "**to kill a victim**". And "shachat" never means "to sacrifice".

However, to justify their unbiblical Passover traditions, the Jews have wrongly accepted that "shachat" supposedly can also mean "to sacrifice". This was done explicitly to justify using the unbiblical term "the sacrifice of the Passover".

Now the Hebrew text never uses the words "zabach" and "zebach" to refer to the Passover. For killing the Passover the Hebrew text **always** uses the verb "shachat" because killing the Passover involves "killing an innocent victim". (For the question involving Deuteronomy 16 see my above-mentioned article on that subject.)

The point is: **if** God wanted us to associate Abel's action with "bringing a Passover", **then** God would have used the word "shachat" to describe what Abel was doing. But the word "shachat" is never used before the flood.

As a matter of interest, the very first time the word "shachat" is used is when Abraham was going to kill his son Isaac. Let's notice this incident.

And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife **to slay** (Hebrew "**shachat**") his son. (Genesis 22:10)

The use of the verb "shachat" here in Genesis 22:10 is the strongest proof that what God had led Abraham to do here in Genesis 22 was **to foreshadow the killing of the later instituted Passover**, which in turn foreshadowed the killing of Jesus Christ for our sins.

The total absence of this verb "shachat" in the account with Abel makes quite clear that what Abel did had no connection whatsoever with the Passover. This is explained in detail in my above-mentioned article on Deuteronomy 16.

So what Abel had done was not a sacrifice, and neither was it an allusion to the Passover. Abel had simply given one or more live animals to Jesus Christ, where Cain had given Christ some of his fruits and/or vegetables or grains.

And there was nothing to foreshadow the later sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins, because at that time the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was not even a part of God's plan. It was only added to God's plan at the time of the flood.

But this raises another question.

If the animal Abel brought was not intended as a sacrifice, then why did God not accept Cain's offering

"of the fruit of the ground"?

## WHY WAS CAIN'S OFFERING REJECTED?

The assumed standard answer to this question has always been: God expected Cain to bring **an animal** as an offering, and the fruit of the ground was just not acceptable. This assumed answer is based on the premise of "**we know** ...". It is based on "we know that it had to be an animal because it was supposed to represent the later sacrifice of Jesus Christ". That is a very convenient answer indeed.

But I don't believe that this answer is correct.

I don't believe that answer, because that answer is predicated on **the assumption** that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was a foregone conclusion. But there is no way that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was a part of God's plan from the very beginning, no way! That is something I have proved in my "Progressive Development" article.

So let's take another look at Genesis 4.

And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD **had respect** (Hebrew verb is "**sha'ah**") unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he **had not respect** (Hebrew "**sha'ah**") . And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. (Genesis 4:4-5)

The Hebrew verb "sha'ah" means: to look at with interest, **to look at with approval**. So when Cain and Abel brought their offerings (i.e. gifts) to Jesus Christ, then Christ "looked with approval" at the offering Abel had brought, and Christ "did not look with approval" at the offering Cain had brought.

In plain terms, Jesus Christ said to Abel "**I like** the offering you have brought Me", and to Cain Jesus Christ said "**I don't like** the offering you have brought Me". So then Cain spontaneously became very angry because Jesus Christ didn't like the offering Cain had brought.

So then Jesus Christ immediately confronted Cain face-to-face and said: **why** are you angry? See Genesis 4:6. Then Jesus Christ proceeded to explain to Cain **why** He did not like Cain's offering. Here is what Christ said to Cain:

**If you do well**, shall you not be accepted? and **if you do not well**, sin lies at the door. And unto you *shall be* its desire, and you should rule over it. (Genesis 4:7)

So **why** did Christ not accept Cain's offering? Was it because Cain should have brought an animal? Would Christ have accepted Cain's offering if only Cain had brought a firstling lamb?

**No, even if Cain had brought a firstling lamb, Christ would still not have accepted his offering!**

Can you understand this?

The problem with Cain was **not what** he brought as an offering! The problem with Cain was **how he lived**, how he behaved and conducted himself. Cain was not "doing well" in how he lived his life! The problem with Cain was that "**the thoughts of his heart** were only evil continually"! And this is proved by his spontaneous anger at not being shown approval, and then his subsequent action of killing his brother!

**How his mind worked and reasoned** was Cain's problem, not the fruits or grains or vegetables he brought to Christ as an offering. **If Cain had straightened out his attitude** and begun to exercise some control over the thoughts that entered his mind, then his offering would have been accepted. But Satan, a murderer from the beginning, was putting thoughts into Cain's mind, and Cain then entertained those thoughts and put them into action.

That's what Jesus Christ is addressing in Genesis 4:7. Christ was not saying: listen, Cain, you know you should have offered Me a lamb, and not some carrots or some wheat. The offering was not the issue! The issue was Cain's character, and the fact that Cain in his life was "not doing well".

We need to be careful that we don't read our own preconceived ideas into Jesus Christ's words. The facts are: **Jesus Christ did not say a single word about the offering Cain had brought**, not a word. It is totally wrong for us to say:

When Jesus Christ said "if you do well ..." Christ basically meant "you should have brought Me a clean animal".

It is not the offering that is the big deal here! Cain's character is the real issue! And the occasion of bringing an offering was simply **the opportunity to highlight the real problem**, that in his life Cain, the very first human being to ever be born, was not "doing well". **Cain was starting the trend** that "every imagination of the thoughts of human hearts was only evil continually".

Jesus Christ pointed out to Cain that if he did not exercise control over his mind, then **sin was waiting right there** "at the door". With the expression "and unto you *shall be* its desire" Christ was saying: **Satan desires to control your mind** by tempting you to sin! With the expression "you should rule over it" Christ was saying: you need to control all the wrong thoughts and impulses that Satan sends to your mind; you need to reject all the wrong thoughts.

**Regarding Christ not accepting Cain's offering, we should understand that God never accepts any offering from unrepentant people!**

This is a very basic point. See Scriptures like Jeremiah 14:12; Hosea 8:13; John 9:31; Amos 5:22; etc. to illustrate this principle.

So when an unrepentant man or woman gives a $10,000 offering to the Church of God, then that offering is **not accepted by God**. Did you know that? The principle of Matthew 5:24 applies to this type of situation. That principle is: **leave your offering at home**, and **repent first**, "and **then come and bring your gift**". While the Church may be very happy to receive offerings from unrepentant people, God in heaven will not accept those offerings, any more than God was prepared to accept Cain's offering. God doesn't want a person's money; God wants a person's mind, a repentant and submissive mind.

Offerings from unrepentant people have no value whatsoever before God! And God's rejection of Cain's offering is the proof for this statement.

## ANOTHER POINT ABOUT ABEL'S OFFERING

Let's look one more time at verse 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: (Genesis 4:4)

Note the expression "and of the fat thereof". What does that mean? It means "**the very best thereof**". The Old Testament also refers to land as "fat". For example:

- Genesis 45:18 = ... you shall eat **the fat of the land**.

- 1 Chronicles 4:40 = And they found **fat pasture** and good ...

- Nehemiah 9:25 = And they took ... **a fat land** and possessed ...

- Nehemiah 9:35 = ... and in the large and **fat land** which You gave ...

This is a way of saying "the very best". So when Abel brought "of the fat" of his firstlings, it is telling us that Abel brought to God **the very best firstlings** he owned. This little phrase in Genesis 4:4 reveals Abel's attitude towards God ... that Abel gave to God the very best animals that he had. This shows Abel's respect for God and his desire to please God.

Genesis 4:3 could have told us that Cain "brought of the fruit of the ground, **of the fat thereof**, an offering unto the Eternal". In other words, if Cain had brought his produce "of the fat of the land", then this would have indicated that Cain was bringing **the very best of his produce**. That would have indicated his respect for God. But Cain didn't do that.

This little phrase "of the fat thereof" is highly significant, because it indicates the attitude of the person involved. By including this phrase for Abel and omitting it for Cain, it exposes two contrasting attitudes.

We should understand that **God will never accept** something that is only **second-best**. Recall what God said in Malachi chapter 1.

You said also, Behold, what a weariness *is it* (to obey God)! and you have snuffed at it, says the LORD of hosts; and you brought ***that which was* torn**, and **the lame**, and **the sick**; thus you brought an offering: **should I accept this** of your hand? saith the LORD. But cursed *be* the deceiver, who has in his flock a male, and vows, and sacrifices unto the Lord **a corrupt thing**: for I *am* a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name *is* dreadful among the heathen. (Malachi 1:13-14)

The principle here is: God says that when we offer something to God that is only the second-best of what we own, then God will not accept that offering.

Now as long as Cain was in a resentful attitude towards God, God was not going to accept any offering from him, be the offering good or bad. But when someone is in a wrong attitude towards God, then it is also quite likely that, in the event of this person wanting to give an offering to God, this person will reserve the best for himself / herself and offer God something they deem "good enough". So this may also have been the case with Cain, since Cain did not give an offering "of the fat of the land".

Let's understand that Cain's resentful attitude was already there before God even rejected his offering. God's expression of disapproval only brought an already existing attitude out into the open.

So let's summarize some of these things.

**IN SUMMARY:**

1) Jesus Christ was here on earth for the whole pre-flood period.

2) When Christ created Adam, Christ had not yet considered later bringing on a worldwide flood.

3) The flood was God's drastic response to the totally unexpected way humanity had developed, with more than 99.999999% of all human beings having minds that were "only evil continually".

4) During the pre-flood period the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was not yet a part of God's plan.

5) Adding the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to God's plan for leading human beings to salvation after the flood was based on the recognition that virtually 100% of human minds are spontaneously hostile towards God.

6) The concept of sacrificing an animal to God did not exist in the pre-flood world. There were no sacrifices of any kind before the flood. And Abel never at any time brought "a sacrifice" to God.

7) Sacrifices only entered the picture after the flood, when the sacrifice of Jesus Christ had been added to God's plan.

8) The Hebrew words for "a sacrifice" and "to sacrifice" and "an altar" are never used before the flood ... because sacrifices were never performed.

9) The Hebrew word for "offering" in Genesis 4 does not mean "sacrifice". It really means "a gift, a present", etc. This word for "offering" does not involve killing any animals.

10) The reason God rejected Cain's offering was not because it consisted of grains / fruits / vegetables. The reason Cain's offering was rejected by God was that **Cain's character was extremely evil** ... as proved by Cain killing Abel within days of this rejection.

11) There is absolutely no parallel to the Passover in Abel bringing an offering to God.

12) We should also recognize that God **never** accepts offerings brought by unrepentant people.

Well, these are the facts that apply to the situation with the offering that Abel brought to Jesus Christ. You think this through for yourself. And try to not read any assumptions into the verses that talk about Abel. And it all really does blend perfectly with the fact that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was not a part of God's plan before the flood.

As a parting thought consider what the Apostle Peter said.

For **Christ also has once suffered for sins**, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also He went and preached unto **the spirits in prison**; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited **in the days of Noah**, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. (1 Peter 3:18-20)

What was this all about?

When God the Father and Jesus Christ modified the plan to also include Jesus Christ suffering for our sins, which modification they implemented after the flood had started, and before the flood ended, then **Jesus Christ confronted Satan and all the demons** (i.e. "the spirits in prison") during that one year of the flood and told them in no uncertain terms:

It is because of your perverse influence on the minds of human beings that I now have to lay down My

life for their sins. We have had to make some changes in Our plan because of your perverse influence on human beings. But **Our plan will succeed. And your eternal punishment**, once we have built our Family, **is certain** and irrevocable.

At that time "the prison" for the demons was the flooded earth, a foretaste of their future eternal punishment in "the blackness of darkness" (see Jude 1:13).

Frank W Nelte