

Elder Bobby Willis



The rendering of the story of Abel in the book of Genesis is a clear help in defining the nature of what **“faith”** really is. **“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain”** (Hebrews 11:4). Notice the word **“offered”**! It is a verb which shows it to be an act of obedience unto God. Obedience is works, so this is done to show our love to God, NOT to obtain eternal life which is by His grace.

In all the renderings of **“By faith”** found in this chapter, there is a strong element of obedience. Verse 5 says that Enoch **“pleased God.”** Verse 6 says **“without faith it is impossible to please him...”** without believing **“that he is.”** Then in verse 7 Noah, **“moved with fear, prepared an ark..”** Verse 8 states that Abraham **“obeyed, and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”** Then in verse 13 we find those who **“died in faith, not having received the promises”** were **“persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”** And, these acts of obedience continue throughout Hebrews 11.

Abel did not simply **“believe”** that a sacrifice might be acceptable to God, he followed what he knew concerning the Lord observing and being mindful of His children. We are not free to live just any old way, or as we please, but with the understanding that God knows our very thoughts and actions. Notice what Solomon said in Proverbs 15:3, **“The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.”**

Then, we find the Apostle Paul declaring the same meaning in Hebrews 4:12-13), **“...is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”**

True worship and faith in God embraces more than just having good intentions, it embodies **“substance”** as well (Hebrews 11:1). The young lad Abel truly exhibited what James wrote about in James 2:18, **“Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will**

shew thee my faith by my works.” Having and exercising your faith is a positive way of showing your love for God; not in order to obtain eternal life, but because He has given you the gift of it. Abel did not obtain eternal life because he had faith, he had faith because he possessed eternal life. **“Think About It”**