

■ ABEL LEADERSHIP

A 3-week analysis on the leadership profile of Abel



Table of Contents

About the Author	2
Introduction to Analysis Booklet.....	2
The Portrayal and Biblical Story of Abel	3
1 st Action of Abel Leadership	6
A Foundation of Attitude	6
2 nd Action of Abel Leadership	7
A Gauge of Acceptance	7
3 rd Action of Abel Leadership.....	8
A Measure of Ability.....	8
Resources.....	9
Table of Figures.....	9
Works Cited.....	9
Further Study	9

About the Author



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Introduction to Analysis Booklet

I would like to thank you for taking part in what will prove to be a commanding study on understanding and attaining an Abel Leadership Style. This booklet has been designed to help guide us along as we together, analyze the leadership profile of this important, yet little mentioned Biblical character; Abel. This booklet has been divided into the three actions of Abel leadership with an abbreviated introduction to the portrayal and biblical story of Abel. It is my sincere desire that upon concluding this three week study; you will be sure of your leadership calling and become ready and willing to step out into the unknown of your potential to be used by God in the greatest measure to the fullness of your ability.

Nathan C. Strom

Rev. Nathan C. Strom

The Portrayal and Biblical Story of Abel

“Later she gave birth to his brother and named him Abel. When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd” Genesis 4:2a ‘NLT’ (Communications)

Abel; a son of Adam and Eve, the second generation of all mankind in history; who was he? What was he like? Although, there is not much detail in the one chapter of Genesis which reports the account of his birth, life, and death; all within the span of just 9 verses [Genesis 4:2-10], we can gather some insight by referring to other scriptures in Holy Writ and through digging into the historical and Hebraic facet’s of this young man’s life and story. Abel must have been a man of great faith to be listed first in the genealogy of faith written in the book of Hebrews. He must have been a man of great stature and character to be noted and declared righteous. What can we learn from this young man for our spiritual gain in this contemporary season so that we too might have the same accolades said of us, to live a life of faith and righteousness?

Abel in Hebrew is pronounced *HE-vel* and is the same Hebrew word that the author of Ecclesiastes frequently used in his wisdom literary work translated as vanity. Hevel actually means vapor or breath. Whether there is an etymological connection between Abel and the idea of breath or vanity is unclear (Parsons). Since Abel’s life was short lived and taken away from him may have some correlation to the reasoning why the author used this word for his depiction of life as emptiness and meaningless; just but a vapor. However, there is also an interestingly close relation with Hevel to the Hebrew word Hallel, which is pronounced *hal-LAYL*, in their pictography [See Figure 1 - Name Comparison]. Hallel, meaning Praise or praise songs, is the root word to the commonly quoted *Hallelujah* or praise to God. Could there be a comparison between Abel and the inspiration of praise to God? Might his life and actions be a beginning illustration of what God considers praise to Him? May Abel and his offering be the early indication of the latter tabernacle image of the vapor or smoke rising up to God as worshipful incense from the altar of sacrifice?

Figure 1 - Name Comparison

הבל	הלל
Hevel	Hallel
Vapor; Breath	Praise; Praise Songs

It is interesting to note that the only detail on the life of Abel and his daily routine is summed up in the phrase: “Abel became a shepherd”. It is unknown where he learned this trade from. His father Adam who was given responsibility over all the animals in the garden may have had some knowledge in tending sheep but likely very little. With all the job opportunities available to him and the many other functions that required leadership in those very early days, Abel somehow chose to be a shepherd.

Shepherding was then, and still is, a common industry in the Middle Eastern sector of the World. To be a shepherd is liken to being a common man. This may seem like very little information regarding who Abel was and thus giving us insight into leadership qualities which he possessed; yet there is more here than what meets the eye. In an early article I wrote on the passage of Jude 17-23, I began to describe the theme I saw in scripture of shepherding in relation to the contemporary call of pastoring in lieu of the description of the last days and the shepherds and hirelings of that season:

God has always trained and brought up good shepherds with a heart after His own to lead and guide His sheep. These shepherds, whom God called and chose to guide Israel, clearly exhibited the traits and attributes that He is looking for in the shepherds whom He calls and chooses to guide His church today. (Strom)

Abel was inaugurated into, and essentially commenced, this long biblical line of shepherds. A line that included many of the greats such as Abraham and Isaac, Moses and King David, those in Bethlehem's fields that glorious Christmas morning and Jesus Christ the chief shepherd. This line of shepherds should also include every minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ today (Strom). Abel's life, though only a vapor in scriptural reference, is imbedded into the Word of God to exemplify what spiritual and ministerial leadership is supposed to be. A leader in the attribute of a shepherd.



As a shepherd, Abel would understand the notion of offering a sacrifice and what it would all entail. Keeping watch over his sheep and protecting them at all costs. Bandaging up their wounds and tending to their every need, loving them as little children and caring for them. Time, energy and compassion were all incorporated into the task of shepherding. To then take one of your beautiful, precious, unblemished lambs as a first-fruit, and offer it as a sacrifice upon an altar; this truly would illustrate a love to whom the sacrifice was offered. Abel understood the cost, pain, and sorrow associated with such sacrifices. Yet, out of thanksgiving to God, Abel offered his sacrifice; a blood sacrifice. The same sacrificial system of blood being shed upon an altar, God would establish for His people during the Exodus for the Tabernacle in order to bring cleansing and renewal. This was instituted as a means to maintain the intimacy between God and the chosen people of Israel. Could it be that Abel comprehended, even before a divinely instituted sacrificial system was established, that due to what his parents committed in the Garden of Eden, blood was to be shed in order to have close relational communion with God? Perhaps Abel unfolded the prophecy which God spoke against his parents and against the serpent?

The popular story of Abel is not however, on his character, actions, or lifestyle but is actually on his death. Abel was the first person in recorded history who was murdered. The fame of this murderous story though, rests not in the act as much as in the one who committed the act; Abel's elder brother Cain. Cain is, in point of fact, mentioned more often in scripture than righteous Abel (Communications). This fact reveals to us that the moral of the story is of great value. The contrast of Abel's character with

that of Cain. It is easier to see the wrong in Cain's actions than the righteousness in the brevity of Abel's existence. So, much of our theological perception on Abel comes from the contrasting parallelisms made with Cain. The leading theological contrast debated on eternal life and eternal damnation. Cain was separated from the presence of God and Abel was welcomed. A contrast, which developed the premise of sanctification ideology and Judeo-Christo righteous justification. Regardless of the prophetic theological implications found in this vicious story, Abel and Cain provide a complete look at what leadership qualities God is looking for in His people today.

According to leadership experts, Leadership is influence (Maxwell). Abel influenced a long line of shepherds all the way to Jesus Christ and even into contemporary time, he influenced an offering means that became the standard in the tabernacle and which has fundamentally become the core of the Christian lifestyle, he influenced the concept of faith and righteous living, and even in his murder narrative Abel influenced a lifestyle of intimacy with God that has long confounded popular theology. In the short vapor of his life, Abel was perhaps one of the greatest and most influential leaders to the church today. His actions and lifestyle have shaped what is now considered as common place to both Jew and Gentile. From whose parents were disobedient sinners, an elder mentoring brother with a prideful demeanor and murderous spirit, came an able leader whose qualities ought to be imitated; there was Abel.

In Abel leadership: A 3-week analysis on the leadership profile of Abel, the goal is to encourage and equip a new generation of bold and courageous leaders who will, like Abel, cultivate new fields and forge new paths to bring the higher things of God to common place among the people of God so that the kingdom of God may persistently increase into the fullness of His glory and might.

1st Action of Abel Leadership A Foundation of Attitude

By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 1 John 3:10-16 ESV (Communications)

Read Genesis 4:1-16

Define Shepherd in your own words: _____.

According to Jeremiah 23:4 who will choose the shepherds?

Describe God's outline of a shepherd as discussed:

Who/What is the antithesis of Abel?

Cain was of the Evil One so then Abel was of the _____ One

Figure 2 - Brothers Keeper [שומר אחי]

ה ש מ ר א ח י א כ נ י	ה ש מ ר א ח י א כ נ י
<i>shomer achi anochi.</i>	<i>shomer achi anochi.</i>
Am I my brother's keeper	I am my brother's keeper

It's all in the what? _____.

Love is described as an attitude in 1 Corinthians 13

CHALLENGE: Are you more like Cain or Abel?

2nd Action of Abel Leadership

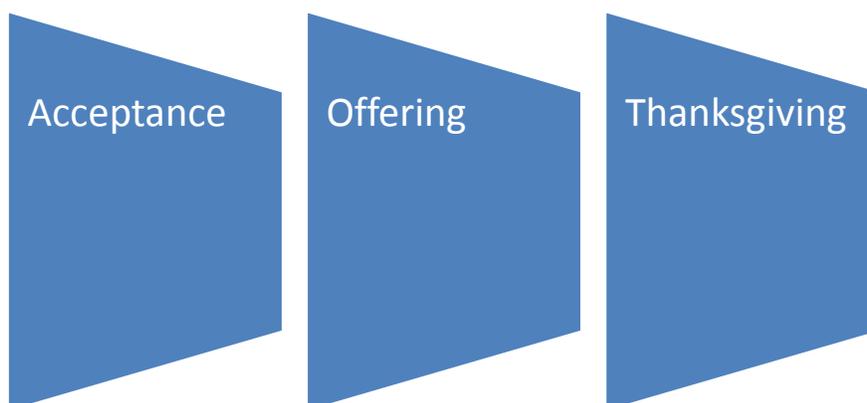
A Gauge of Acceptance

By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.
Hebrews 11:4 ESV (Communications)

It was for _____ that Abel was listed first in Hebrews faith genealogy.

Where did God's regard fall? _____.

Figure 3 - Faith Action Progression



Look up the following verses and describe the type of sacrifice mentioned

Psalm 107:22 –

Hebrews 13:15 –

Psalm 51:17 –

Illustrate the fire's purpose with the sacrifice:

1 Peter 5:2-5 – Opposition vs. Grace | Pride vs. Humility

Describe the battle in your life:

If we have lowly thoughts about ourselves, like Abel had, then we will not even think that others could be jealous of us. We would then be so insignificant in our own estimation that we would not imagine that anyone could possibly be jealous of us. Abel rejoiced in God's acceptance of him. But that did not lift his heart up in pride against Cain. No. He would not compare himself with Cain neither would he be a busybody in Cain's life. (Poonen, Knowing God's Way)

CHALLENGE: Analyze God's regard for your life and seek repentance at the altar of sacrifice

3rd Action of Abel Leadership

A Measure of Ability

Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion. Jude 8-11 ESV (Communications)

Abel went into God's presence

 Cain went out of the Lords presence

Write down the similar and contrasting parallels on the three below...

CAIN:

BALAAM:

KORAH:

ABILITY: **1.** Being Able; A natural tendency to do something successfully or well. **2.** Intelligence or Competence; having a high degree of intelligence or competence. **3.** Natural gift; A particular gift for doing something well. (Microsoft)

Do you have ability?

1.

2.

3.

Figure 4 - Seven habits to increase leadership ability (Covey)

- ✓ Be proactive
- ✓ Begin with the end in mind
- ✓ Put first things first
- ✓ Think Win/Win
- ✓ Seek first to understand, then to be understood
- ✓ Synergize
- ✓ Sharpen the saw

CHALLENGE: What/Who are you measuring yourself against?

Resources

Table of Figures

Figure 1 - Name Comparison	3
Figure 2 - Brothers Keeper [שֹׁמֵר אָחָיו]	6
Figure 3 - Faith Action Progression	7
Figure 4 - Seven habits to increase leadership ability (Covey)	8

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Further Study

A webpage has been developed to provide further study and resources to this topic. Please visit:
www.zeelandchurchofgod.net/Abel_Leadership.aspx