

1 JOHN 3:11-24

BLOG

3/31/19

This section continues John's theme of contrasting life and death, reality and falsehood, religion and regeneration.

The major contrast in this section is between Cain and Christ. Cain's life was characterized by unrighteousness and hatred. Christ's life was characterized by righteousness and love. They represent two opposing world views and systems. In [1 John 2:10](#), the contrast is stated clearly and starkly.

The challenging part in all of this for me, is that John's contrast in this letter includes a significant contrast with and battle between those who are religious and those who are regenerated. Cain and Abel both brought sacrifices in order to "worship". I think the text in [Genesis 4](#), and the New Testament references to it are pretty clear. The offering wasn't the issue. The attitude or character behind the offering was the issue. It appears that Cain gave a sacrifice that he determined the Lord should want, and he demanded that God accept what Cain gave. The worship was on Cain's terms. Abel's sacrifice was given from a heart of submission. The contrast in the two is seen in Cain's response. He was ticked.

God gave Cain a clear warning. Cain was at a crossroads. Rebellion is always sin, and it always leads to more rebellion. As good as religion looks and feels, it is a very dangerous thing, if it is about making us feel better about ourselves, rather than leading us into humble submission to God.

John contrasts that attitude with Christ's attitude and life. Cain's attitude resulted in hatred and murder. Christ's resulted in love and life. It is interesting both resulted in bloodshed. One shed of innocent blood because he demanded to be served. The other's innocent blood was shed because He came to serve, both His Father and others.

Jason quoted Matthew Henry yesterday, "In every generation there are two sets of worshippers. Those who are proud and self-absorbed, and those who are humble and God-absorbed." John says, "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers."

John once again says that the contrast is obvious. Who we love determines how we love, and how we love illustrates who we love.

Who do we love, and how do we know?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Why is John so adamant about us loving each other?
2. Is that a way for us to earn God's love? Why or why not?
3. What does it indicate about our love of God?
4. Is it possible to be religious and not really love Jesus or others? Is there a danger in that?
5. How do we know the difference and what do we do about it?