

Aphids and Abel

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Information also drawn from Character First! Business Character Bulletin 3rd Edition No. 7,
various Character Councils, & other websites

presented by Vanessa C. Justice, 10 June 2015



Gratefulness lesson 1~ Using gifts to help others honor the ways of God.

Psalm 26:7 That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.

Aphid 'āfid,'afid/ noun (from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/aphides>)

1. a minute bug that feeds by sucking sap from plants. It reproduces rapidly, often producing live young without mating, and may live in large colonies that cause extensive damage to crops. Also called a plant louse.
2. Origin of aphid 1880-85; back formation from aphides, plural of aphid; 1765-75; < New Latin, first recorded in a Gk lexicon of 1523 as *áphis*, with the Latin gloss *cimex* bedbug; perhaps originally a misreading of Greek *kóris* bug

Damage

Both adults and nymphs pierce plant tissues to feed on plant sap. Their feeding may cause rolling, twisting or bending of leaves. Heavily attacked leaves can turn yellow and eventually wilt. Aphids feeding on flower buds and fruits may cause malformed flowers and fruits. Aphids excrete a sugary, sticky liquid called honeydew that accumulates on leaves and branches. Sooty moulds (a fungal growth) grow on honeydew deposits turning leaves and branches black. Heavy coating with honeydew and sooty moulds may reduce photosynthesis, affecting plant growth and yield.

Note: It is able to multiply rapidly and destroy crops and may very well be one of the “pestilences” God uses to judge His people and the wicked when His ways are violated... 1 Kings 8:35-39 When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them: Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance. *If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence*, blasting, mildew, locust, *or if there be caterpillar*; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be; What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house: Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, *even* thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;)

Honeydew is a favourite food of some ant species. Thus, black ants are commonly found on plants with aphid infestations. These ants protect the aphids from natural enemies and are therefore considered indirect pests. Ants may even transport aphids from plant to plant. Many species of aphids have been implicated as major vectors of plant viral diseases.

Note: Scriptural application Sharing gifts with others to fulfill the design of all involved... Knowing that working together brings

Affected plant stages

Seedling stage, vegetative growing stage flowering stage and generative stage.

Affected plant parts

Growing points, stems, leaves, inflorescences, fruits and whole plant.

Symptoms on affected plant parts

Curled leaves, abortion of flowers, stunted growth and dieback. Sooty black mould becomes evident in heavy infestations. Black ants are very common in plant with aphid infestations. However, sooty moulds and ants are also associated with other honeydew-producing insects such as mealybugs, scales and whiteflies.

Biology and Ecology of Aphids

Eggs are very tiny, shiny-black, and are found in the crevices of bud, stems, and barks of the plant. Aphids usually do not lay eggs in warm parts of the world.

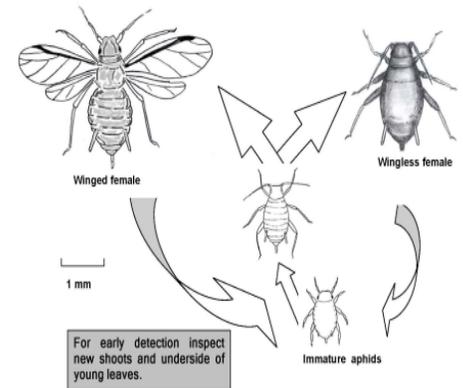
Nymphs (immature stages) are young aphids, they look like the wingless adults but are smaller. They become adults within 7 to 10 days.

Adults are small, 1 to 4 mm long, soft-bodied insects with two long antenna that resemble horns. Most aphids have two short cornicles (horns) towards the rear of the body. The mouthparts are needle-sharp, resembling tiny straws. Their body colour varies from black, green, red, yellow, pink, white, brown, greyish, or purple. Adults of the same species may be wingless or winged (with two pair of wings). Winged aphids are usually dark in colour. Wingless forms are the most common; winged aphids are produced when they need to migrate, for example under overcrowded conditions with limited food source or when environmental conditions are unfavourable.

Aphids lifecycle

Aphids have complicated life cycles. Females can reproduce with or without mating. Female aphids may lay eggs or give birth to wingless offspring, known as nymphs. In the warm parts of the world, as in the tropics, no male aphids are produced and female aphids do not lay eggs but give birth to small nymphs. A female can produce from 20 to over 100 nymphs. Young aphids grow quickly, becoming adult in about one week and start to reproduce. Thus the numbers increase rapidly under favourable conditions. Aphids live in clusters (known as colonies) on leaves and stems. Initially they are present on tender parts of the plant (young shoots and leaves), but as their number increases they can cover the whole plant. As the colony grows winged aphids are produced which fly away looking for new plants to start a new colony. Warm and dry weather is particularly favourable for rapid increase of aphid numbers.

from... <http://www.infonet-biovision.org/default/ct/75/pests>



So how do aphids show the character of giving of self a gift to others to show the glory and love of God? Farmed by the ants, they produce a sticky sweetness and do not fight back, but submit. They have developed a mutual interdependence to the good of both the ants and the aphids...

Note: A Scriptural application might be to get over the personal politics, the power struggles of the old man, and to edify each other

Ephesians 4:12-16 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Go twain, we are told.... remember the context... the discourse on “eye for eye” and “tooth for tooth” revengeful attitude... Christ pointed to a different way of handling “impressment” by those whom we may regard as enemies... **Matthew 5:41** **And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.**

from Vincent’s Word Studies... **Shall compel thee to go (ἀγγαρεύσει)**

This word throws the whole injunction into a picture which is entirely lost to the English reader. A man is travelling, and about to pass a post-station, where horses and messengers are kept in order to forward royal missives as quickly as possible. An official rushes out, seizes him, and forces him to go back and carry a letter to the next station, perhaps to the great detriment of his business. The word is of Persian origin, and denotes the *impressment* into service, which officials were empowered to make of any available persons or beasts on the great llines of road where the royal mails were carried by relays of riders.

Aphids.... they provide for their “oppressors”, if you will... the ants... who in turn protect them from things that prey on them...(yet without those predators, we would lose whole gardens...)

Righteous Abel

Firstborn sons.... Adam... Jesus.....Cain....

Adam, made by the hand of God and our first ancestor; Jesus, God taking on flesh for us; Cain, wholly flesh and the firstborn of man outside the Garden, no longer protected by Eden's angels and initial standing.

What is God's design for a firstborn?

In the Hebrew tradition, male firstborns were the "firstfruits" of a man's life...the picture of God's continuing involvement with mankind... the next generation.... So, the first borns are special to God... the vanguard of that family's continuation...

In Adam and Eve's case, it is very possible they expected much of Cain~their firstborn~especially when it came to recovering their place in the Garden. After all, Eve was awaiting the Redeemer promised through her...Gen 3:15... and possibly her pronouncement in Gen 4:1 was with great enthusiasm.

Name Meanings: from www.meaning-of-names.com/hebrew-names/cain.asp#ixzz3cqaw7HNQ & <http://www.meaning-of-names.com/hebrew-names/abel.asp#ixzz3cqc1BkL6>

Meaning of "Cain"

Hebrew name In Hebrew, the name Cain means - Spear; possessed. In the Bible Cain was the first murderer having killed his brother Abel in a fit of jealousy.. Other origins for the name Cain include - Hebrew, Israeli, Welsh, Irish.The name Cain is most often used as a boy name or male name.

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Hebrew name In Hebrew, the name Abel means - Breath; son; breathing spirit. In the Old Testament, Abel was the son of Adam and Eve who was killed by his brother Cain in a fit of jealousy.. Other origins for the name Abel include - Hebrew, Biblical.The name Abel is most often used as a boy name or male name.

Hebrew Name Meaning - Breath; son; breathing spirit. In the Old Testament, Abel was the son of Adam and Eve who was killed by his brother Cain in a fit of jealousy.

Origin - Hebrew

Note: other commentators also suggested it means vanity, vapor and may express her disappointment in her firstborn's failure to gain back the Garden....

Context...from the Contemporary English Version.... note the attitudes....

Gen 4:1 Adam and Eve had a son. Then Eve said, "I'll name him Cain because I got him with the help of the LORD."

Gen 4:2 Later she had another son and named him Abel. Abel became a sheep farmer, but Cain farmed the land.

Gen 4:3-5 One day, Cain **gave part** of his harvest to the LORD, and Abel also gave an offering to the LORD. He killed the first-born lamb from one of his sheep **and gave the LORD the best parts of it**. The LORD was pleased with Abel and his offering, but not with Cain and his offering. This made Cain so angry that he could not hide his feelings.

Gen 4:6-7 The LORD said to Cain: What's wrong with you? Why do you have such an angry look on your face? If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling. But you did the wrong thing, and now sin is waiting to attack you like a lion. Sin wants to destroy you, but don't let it!

Gen 4:8 Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go for a walk." And when they were out in a field, Cain killed him.

Gen 4:9 Afterwards the LORD asked Cain, "Where is Abel?" "How should I know?" he answered. "Am I supposed to look after my brother?"

Gen 4:10-12 Then the LORD said: Why have you done this terrible thing? You killed your own brother, and his blood flowed onto the ground. Now his blood is calling out for me to punish you. And so, I'll put you under a curse. Because you killed Abel and made his blood run out on the ground, you will never be able to farm the land again. If you try to farm the land, it won't produce anything for you. From now on, you'll be without a home, and you'll spend the rest of your life wandering from place to place.

Gen 4:13-14 "This punishment is too hard!" Cain said. "You're making me leave my home and live far from you. I will have to wander about without a home, and just anyone could kill me."

What does all of this have to do with using our gifts to help others honor the ways of God?

Abel's gift was meant to honor God by bringing Him the best of what God had allowed him to have... his flocks. "The best part" in verse 5 indicates "the choicest part" or the best of the flock, be it the best of the fat or the best of the firstlings... and the sacrifice was from among the firstlings of this year's lambings... that indicates a first lamb from a ewe.... God has a design for firstborns, and looks to them with a special eye... it is NOT favoritism; it is positional... He chooses our time of birth and placement in the line of siblings....

Cain was the firstborn man... but somehow felt "put upon" and his attitude led him to being the first human true rebel recorded... later we see his family continuing the choice of sinful ungodliness... Lamech... first recorded polygamist that killed a man for wounding him.... did he get in a fight? No clue, but he boasted of a revenge killing....

Abel's name can be a continual reminder of the brevity of life on earth.... a breath, a vapor... and was known later as a prophet.... Jesus suggested such in Luke 11:47-51 **Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation. Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.**

Who knows what it was that led to the deadly confrontation? Could they have had words before this, and Cain's anger finally boiled over at little brother, say, telling him how to do stuff, how to please God better, how to whatever? (Second borns often are seen by firstborns to "get away with stuff" that they couldn't... maybe that human attitude was resident in Cain from the beginning...)

Abel's offering would seem to have precisely fulfilled an atonement for sin, later to have been finished at the cross by Jesus the promised Messiah... so much so, that it is listed in Hebrews 11:4 ~ "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Abel served all the functions of a prophet when he sacrificed to the Lord, and it is no great leap to think he probably tried to explain God's reactions to their separate offerings to his brother, whose own pride, rebellion and anger carried him away on a tide of wrath that eventuated in Cain's killing of Abel. Scripture seems to pretty clearly indicate that Cain's wrath centered on Abel, but was really reactive towards God Himself; he resented his brother and despised the truth Abel shared and the holiness God expected...

Resentment and gratitude cannot coexist, since resentment blocks the perception and experience of life as a gift. My resentment tells me that I don't receive what I deserve. It always manifests itself in envy.
Henri J. M. Nouwen

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Then I will proclaim
with the voice of
thanksgiving

And tell of Your
wondrous works!

Psalm 26:7

What about us???

This story centers on giving a sacrifice, a gift to God Himself... what about us? our daily choices? perhaps even our daily sacrifices... We need to develop the heart of a shepherd and know that the world may not be kind, but God calls us to go the second mile, live with respect to self and others, and remember our gifts are given us so we might draw others to Him...